UNDERSTANDING ACADEMIC WRITING PRACTICES IN MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITY CLASSROOMS

NUR HUSLINDA BINTI CHE MAT

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
University of East Anglia
School of Education and Lifelong Learning

2020

ABSTRACT

My study seeks to understand students' experiences of academic practices in the higher education context in Malaysia. Adopting an ethnographic case study approach, I explore undergraduate students' academic writing practices, their second language (L2) writing approaches and the challenges they encounter when writing in the university. As an insider researcher, I collected data over an academic semester in a public university in Malaysia through semi structured interviews, classroom observations, audio recording of the interviews and documentary analysis. My research participants were ten university students from three different disciplines and three academic writing teachers participating in the mandatory academic writing courses.

Applying a framework based on conceptual debates and insights from Academic Literacies (AcLits) and approaches grounded in Sociocultural Theory, I explore how student writers conceptualize two transitions in terms of academic writing practices: from writing at school to writing at university and from English as a second language (ESL) to English used as medium of instruction (EMI). I also examine how student writers shape power relations, authority and identities in relation to writing in the new discourse community where group work is the main writing modality in academic writing courses. Significantly, the dilemma of power relations between less proficient and better writer has an impact of power relations on student writing. In identifying and working towards common goals in the university writing classrooms, the hierarchic power relationships were backgrounded. Here, student writers demonstrated individual motivation, self-expression and responsibility.

The findings show that in a university context where English is used as medium of instruction, student writers navigate the new writing context by bringing in their past writing experience from school. Student writers grapple with the question, *how do you write in the university,* firstly by making sense of their existing skills and strategies they bring from their school experience, using these to 'cross the bridge' to academic writing in the university. As student writers make sense of what *is* academic writing or writing in the university, the transition also involves a change in writing identity. My findings show that as novice writers improve by modelling the successful

characteristics of other group members who they view as *better* writers, their identity as L2 writer undergoes a change.

The study also shows tensions in the feedback processes between both student writers and their academic writing teachers and between peers, and how power relations and authority are involved in learning to write in the university context. In this, my study contributes to extending insights not only on how undergraduate students address the transition from school to university but also, given the increasing dominance of English in academia, the transition from ESL to EMI.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AcLits	Academic Literacies
AoMLS	Academy of Modern Language Studies
AW	Academic Writing
CDC	Curriculum Development Committee
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
DLP	Dual Language Programme
CoP	Community of Practice
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
ELC	English Language Course
ELT	English Language Teaching
EMAS	The English of Malaysian School Students
EMI	English as the Medium of Instruction
EOP	English for Occupational Purposes
EPU	Economic Planning Unit
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
ETeMS	Teaching of Science and Mathematics in English Language (English for PPSMI)
EWC	English Writing Course
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IELTS	International English Language Test
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MBMMBI	*Memertabatkan Bahasa Malaysia Memperkukuh Bahasa Inggeris* (Upholding the Malay Language and Strengthening Command of English)
MEB	Malaysian Education Blueprint
MKO	More Knowledgeable Other
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MUET	Malaysia University English Test
NPE	National Philosophy of Education
PPSMI	*Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik* (Malay for ETeMS)
SPM	*Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (Malaysian Certificate of Education in English, equivalent to O level)
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

STPM	*Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia* (Malaysian Higher School Certificate in English, equivalent to A level)
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
UEA	University of East Anglia
UCLES	University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UoN	University of Nusantara
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This seemingly impossible journey materialised through the support, guidance and encouragement of many individuals. As this acknowledgement cannot address all those who have supported me, I would also like to express my sincerest thanks to those not mentioned in the following acknowledgements.

Firstly, I thank Allah for this enriching experience.

I am especially indebted to Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) for affording me the financial assistance without which I would not have been here in the first place. I thank my home university for allowing me to take a 4-year unpaid study leave so that I could go back to school for my Doctoral degree. I also wish to acknowledge and give thanks for the financial support provided by the University of East Anglia, through their Hardship Funds program, that helped to patch the holes in my pockets when I needed it most.

My appreciation goes to my two supervisors, Dr Anna Magyar and Prof Anna Robinson-Pant for their constant, insightful and supportive supervision when guiding me through the development and formulation of ideas during this literacy journey. Their patience, understanding and moral support gave me confidence and encouragement and helped me face the challenges that arose.

Special thanks go to my PGR EDU colleagues. I will miss your smiles, kindness, stories and cakes. My thanks go to the rest of the beloved EDU staff for their help and kind hospitality. My special gratitude goes out to *warga* Norwich who have become my second family.

Thank you to the Dean of my Academy, my three highly respected colleagues and ten student writers for making my data collection possible. Dear students, your struggles writing in the university helped me to reflect on my own struggles while writing for my Degree, and I am glad to say that we made it through to 'cross the bridge' as novice student writers. Dear teachers, you made me reflect on my own teaching.

Not to forget, this special thank you note also goes to everybody out there for the support and understanding during the final leg of my candidature.

Special thanks go to my father, my mother and my siblings for their never-ending prayers, encouragement and love. Last, but certainly not least, I would like to express heartfelt gratitude to my husband for his admirable patience, understanding and sacrifice throughout my study. To my children, Daniel, Emrie, Dalia and Yash, - Look! 'the book' is finally here! I could never express enough thanks to you all for providing me with the space to immerse myself in my PhD journey.

Thank you all for your love, your belief in me and your prayers. Alhamdulillah.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The global spread of English and its socio-economic importance, in terms of its promise of social mobility, has made this inherited language into a commodity (Rajadurai, 2010). This is certainly true in the Malaysian context where English is seen as an important tool for learning, especially when dealing with terminologies in various fields of study. English is required for obtaining and expanding knowledge through the Internet, and for understanding reference materials - as most reference books for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in Malaysia are published in English (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007). In Malaysia's primary and secondary schools, English is taught as a compulsory subject for 11[1] years, aimed at equipping students with basic English language skills and knowledge in order for them to communicate in and out of schools in different situations (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 1995).

English appears to play a substantial role in developing students' ability to communicate, read and write as well as helping them with academic subjects. As an example of this, in 2003, English was reinstated as the medium of instruction for teaching mathematics and science in Malaysian schools (Nik Suryani, 2003). The move was beset with problems as students from the rural areas had ineffective English communication in the classroom and insufficient support in terms of teaching resources which required significant shifts to Dual Language Programme (DLP) in 2016 (Saeed et al., 2018). The DLP aims to strengthen English proficiency by using English as the medium of instruction (EMI) for maths and science subjects while upholding the national language, *Bahasa Malaysia* for non-language orientated subjects (Ministry of Education, 2012). At an advanced level, English as a subject was introduced to sixth form or pre-university curriculum to fill the two-year gap in preparation for the Malaysian University English Test (MUET)[2] as a pre-requisite for admissions to all public universities and colleges in Malaysia (Yunus &

[1] Since independence, English has been a subject taught in school, Malaysia school system is structured on a 6+3+2+2 model, with six years of compulsory primary education beginning at age seven, followed by three years of lower secondary, two years of upper secondary, and two years of pre-university senior secondary study (Postlethwaite & Thomas, 2014)

[2] The Malaysian University English Test (MUET) is a test of English language proficiency, largely for university admissions. The test is set and run by the Malaysian Examinations Council.

Chien, 2016). For tertiary education, students continue learning English but to enhance proficiency and writing modules are hence designed to support their induction into the writing practices in the university.

Though the reinstatement of EMI is a move that contradicts the provision of its national language, *Bahasa Malaysia*, in the Constitution of Malaysia, the higher education institutions (HEIs) managed the language in policy issue delicately (Nor Liza Ali, 2013). The introduction of English is not a new policy and applicability of EMI in Malaysia as the former colony has an impact on national economic development (Selvaratnam, 2019). Gill (2004) highlights Malaysia has been quick to respond to internationalisation in higher education (HE) that English has been incorporated as the medium of instruction. In order to internationalise, Malaysia as one of the Asian countries, reshaped its education policies and adopted a corporate model to attract fee-paying students by introducing a number of English medium programmes (Kirkpatrick, 2011). Regardless of the path chosen, English is emphasised at all levels as a means of enhancing student's competency in a variety of contexts and facilitating them in their studies (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2007).

Based on my previous experience of teaching academic writing in HE I have found that, despite 11 years in school learning English, students generally do not gain the necessary academic reading and writing skills needed to ensure a successful transition to university. HE (Higher Education) is used here to refer to education at tertiary level, such as for diploma, degree and postgraduate studies. There appears to be an implicit assumption that students will be able to transfer the language skills learnt in schools (primary and secondary) to the HEI context. HEI (Higher Education Institution) refers to bodies or organisations, such as colleges and universities which offer HE programmes. This thesis challenges this assumption by exploring the transition, in terms of academic writing, from the students' perspectives. I look at whether, and to what extent, English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers in school prepare their ESL students for the writing expectations and demands of HE.

Up to this time, L2 (second language) writing research in Malaysia has mainly emphasised structure, mechanics and linguistic knowledge with regards to the teaching of writing. These research have overlooked the importance of teaching writing as a

process and ignored the social nature of writing (Chow, 2007; Mohammadi et al., 2012; Palpanadan et al., 2015; Stapa & Majid, 2012).

This thesis seeks to fill this gap by understanding the academic practices that students encounter in HEIs, and looking critically at the different approaches to L2 writing that are adopted, in school and HEI settings**.** I feel that there is a missing link regarding the expectations of university writing between school and HEI contexts. ESL teachers in school regard teaching as a set of skills and emphasize *good* writing, enabling students to meet the teacher's expectations, but miss out on learning how to write through processes. In the HEI setting, students juggle between what they have learnt about *good* writing in school and *how to write for this course*. This can be challenging for the students and also for their teachers. Students might experience, unwittingly, the process of university writing in a context in which the focus shifts from form to meaning making. Researching the topic is of significance, given that student writing in the university remains an underexplored area in the field of L2 writing in the context of Malaysia. Through the lens of the Academic Literacies (AcLits) and the approaches which are grounded in Sociocultural Theory, writing in the university is seen as being about how student writers shape power relations, authority and identities in relation to writing in the new discourse community. Where group work is the main writing modality in academic writing courses, there is the dilemma of power relations between students of mixed abilities working together. This study seeks to identify how students understand the process and practice of writing in university classrooms by examining what factors enhance or inhibit L2 writing in groups.

This chapter introduces my trajectory into Academic Literacies research. My motivation as a teacher for doing the research was inspired by my interest in understanding students' experience in their university classrooms. The chapter also highlights my stance as an academic writing teacher and my return to my home university, University of Nusantara (UoN) (pseudonym) to share my research findings that could validate other teachers' and students' experience to improve one's teaching and learning of writing. The place that the English language has in the Malaysian HE system is discussed, its significance evaluated and then later linked to the statement of the problem. The aim of the research is presented and the last section of this chapter provides an overview of the thesis.

1.1 MY TRAJECTORY INTO ACADEMIC LITERACIES RESEARCH

While conducting this ethnographic case study about academic writing practices in Malaysia's university classrooms, my research interest was influenced both by my experience as an ESL learner and as an academic writing teacher in an HEI in Malaysia. From my experience, I found that generally students ascribed their writing problems to their lack of grounding in English grammar and seemed to anticipate that grammar would be taught in HEIs, despite being informed through course literature that grammar would be taught *incidentally*. Grammar is recognised as the foundation to writing and therefore there is a tendency for teachers (myself at any rate) to feel frustrated that grammatical errors lead to a failure to understand students' writing. I can still hear the question I found myself repeatedly asking my students: '*What did you learn after going through 11 years of learning English in school?'* However, this has also been an issue for myself, struggling to become a better L2 writer, even up to this time when writing my Doctoral thesis and I often consider how I negotiated the challenges of writing at university level, when transitioning from my previous ESL writing experiences. Through my own and my students' experiences, I have come to understand that making the transition from school to HEIs presents a huge adjustment to learning, teaching and assessment styles and writing practices.

Studies on different writing approaches in Malaysian university classrooms are few and far between, but those that have been carried out suggest that the dominant writing approach in Malaysian ESL classrooms is form focused, with teachers emphasising structure and content, and focusing on surface level errors and language mechanics (Mahaletchumy, 1994). Even when teachers claim to use a process-oriented approach they are found to respond only to the mechanics on drafts (Morra & Asis, 2009). This indeed appeared to be true in the writing classrooms that I observed. Emphasis on form over process is therefore not confined to schools and other L2 settings but also prevails in first language (L1) writing classes in HEIs. Although Silva (1993, p. 657) identifies L1 and L2 are "identical or at least very similar", he still points out that L2 writing is "more constrained, more difficult and less effective" in terms of "fluency, accuracy, quality and structure" (Silva, 1993, p. 668). The assumption that to be *successful* at writing is to focus on *good* English, most likely alludes to linguistic features and seldom to rhetorical concerns (within the context of traditional writing classrooms). It is challenging for

students in HE when they eventually understand that what they say on paper is more important than how they say it. Chow (2007) states that at tertiary level, students are required to realise how to communicate unmistakably, adequately and viably through their writing, particularly when given writing tasks. I now see that these changing expectations can leave many students feeling at a loss in university writing classrooms.

From my experience in this field, I felt that, despite 11 school years of learning English and at least two basic mainstream English university courses[3] in their Foundation or Diploma years, many of the first and second degree students participating in my case study at the UoN, were struggling to meet the expectations of what constitutes 'effective' academic writing. In the dual role of academic writing teacher and researcher, my aim became that of understanding students' writing practices, approaches and challenges encountered in L2 writing. In addition, because writing in pairs and groups is explicitly referred to in the course scheme of work[4] in this particular HEI, I also wanted to investigate group writing as a practice and the rationale that underpins it. My overarching research question is: What are students' experiences of academic writing in a second language (L2), with specific attention to the higher education (HE) context in Malaysia? The sub research questions are:

- How do students understand the significance of L2 writing in HE?
- How do students understand the process and practice of writing in groups?
- What factors enhance or inhibit L2 writing in groups among students in HE?

Based on the limited literature on academic literacies in Malaysia, there is a consensus that the acquisition of academic literacy for L2 students, knowledge of one's own discipline, reading and writing skills and other factors will eventually determine students' approach to their L2 academic literacy (Wahiza et al., 2012). At this level, learners are taught different types of academic conventions; the incorporation of multiple sources in their writing; the correct acknowledgement of these sources; and engagement in academic criticism (Ida Fatimawati, 2012). Another research study conducted with L2 writers, Shafie et al. (2011, p. 2) reports that students "struggle to comprehend advanced level reading texts in English […] lack reading skills and are not critical readers". Shamsudin

[3] The components for basic mainstream English university courses in Foundation and Diploma years encompass reading, speaking, listening and writing.
[4] To encourage teamwork through peer support and cooperation with constant facilitation by the Academic Writing teacher

and Mahady (2010, p. 1) found that Malaysian university students' ability to write in English was "not at the most satisfactory level" (2010, p. 1) and another study found that "low proficiency learners are still struggling to write" (Puteh et al., 2010, p. 580). Hyland (2007) argues that a particular form of thinking is needed in tertiary literacy; students' ability to sustain arguments and synthesise ideas in English for academic purposes is crucial for academic success. Through my initial discussions I found that most students 'expected to get good grades in their writing course'. However, as reported by Isarji et al. (2008, p. 41), 29% of 132,000 students who had gained entrance into local universities in 2007 came into MUET, Band 2 as Limited Users (refer Appendix A to see MUET's grading system). These students generally had poor communication skills and limited ability to function in the language. To address these issues and to contribute towards understanding L2 writing in university, my research aims to understand the kinds of difficulties students face in their academic writing practices in HEIs as a basis for identifying best practices to be adopted to enhance students' university writing experiences.

1.2 REFRAMING MY STANCE AS AN ACADEMIC WRITING TEACHER

My purpose is to contribute to research on academic writing in the context of Malaysia university classrooms. In conducting this ethnographic case study I join a growing number of researchers interested in student writing in HEIs (e.g. Bailey, 2009; Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis & Turner, 2001; Ivanič, 1998; Ivanič & Lea, 2006; Knudsen, 2014; Wingate, 2012). My work is grounded in an Academic Literacies framework tradition, arguing that writing should be seen not just as a skill but a complex, contextually based set of meaning-making practices (Gourlay, 2009).

Given that writing is one of the forms used to measure student outcomes and learning in HE, I argue that rather than criticising students by, for example, asking them again and again '*What did you learn after going through 11 years of learning English in school?'*, it would be more constructive for teachers to understand what students bring to the university writing classrooms and how they experience the transition from school to higher education, in terms of academic writing. By learning about students' previous writing experiences I hope to understand what factors helped them to successfully transition to university writing. Although writing is a complex and challenging

intellectual task involving many component skills[5] (some of which students may lack completely or have partially mastered), there is the assumption that these skills will develop throughout their first year as they become aware of the expectations of their teachers and their own writing abilities. I believe that students' previous writing experiences may influence expectations and strategies when writing in HEIs. In addition, I found no evidence during my research reading, of discussion regarding the issue of ESL writing transition from school to HEIs in Malaysia, through students' voices, and I would like to contribute this to the body of knowledge in this field.

I imagined that my position as academic writing teacher at UoN would be an advantage in terms of access. What surprised me most during my data collection was how insecure I felt about my position as an insider researcher. The process of gaining access was not as straightforward as I had imagined. It took longer than I expected to gain trust from my own colleagues and to get their consent to participate in the research. After about a month of negotiating with teachers at the Academy of Modern Languages, UoN, three of them agreed to be part of my study, their classes being within the following disciplines: Electrical Engineering, Law, and Applied Science. Their students worked towards: English for Report Writing, English for Executive Summary and English for Academic Writing respectively. Ten students and three teachers shared their insights on how writing practices were used in learning and teaching.

1.3 POSITIONING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE MALAYSIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

The issue of EMI is much debated and has not been formally rectified at the macro level of language policy, unlike its provision in Malaysia private HE where English is clearly stated as the medium of instruction. However, some semi-funded public HEs are now moving towards EMI. As HE students are assessed in the English language, it means that the ability to communicate in English has become essential in determining success in many academic subjects where assessment is predicated on written assignments.

[5] These skills involve among other things reading comprehension, analytical skills, writing skills including writing mechanics (grammar, sentence structure, spelling, etc), planning a writing strategy, communicating ideas clearly and concisely, constructing a reasoned, demonstrable argument, effectively marshaling evidence and using sources appropriately and organizing ideas effectively. Definition is adapted from Eberly Center (2016). *Why are students coming into college poorly prepared to write?* Retrieved from www.cmu.edu

The Malaysian University English Test referred to earlier is set and run by the Malaysian Examination Council (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2007). This council or *Majlis Peperiksaan Malaysia* of the Ministry of Education is accredited by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate (UCLES). Instructors are provided with a MUET skills-oriented syllabus (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, ibid) concentrating on listening, speaking, reading and comprehension and writing skills (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2007). The teaching of English in Form Six is directed at this exam:

- to prepare students for entry into tertiary level education and future occupations
- as a vehicle for research
- to seek to enhance the communicative skills
- to highlight critical thinking skills

As for the teaching of English in Matriculation Colleges and Centres of Foundation (pre-university programmes established by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), instructors are provided with syllabus specifications which take into consideration the aspirations of the pre-university programmes (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2008) such as,

i. helping students become effective and efficient language users in social and academic contexts
ii. having an English language programme that bridges the gap between the language needs of secondary and tertiary education
iii. preparation of students for current and future English language assessments, including the Malaysian University English Test (MUET)

After having received the Malaysian Certificate of Education or Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination results, qualified students would *transition* to HE study. Numerous options would be available for these students including: Public Universities/University Colleges and Private Universities/University Colleges; Form Six class; Matriculation College; Foundation Programme; Teacher Training Institute; Polytechnic and Mara Community College.

Apart from emphasizing the importance of MUET as a benchmark to gauge the level of English Language competency among Malaysian students upon entering any pre-university, diploma or degree programmes, Nik Suryani (2003) states that,

> … most students could not see the connection between the learning of the English language in their English classes with their performance in the academic subjects. Hence, they have negative attitude and low motivation towards learning the English language….
>
> Nik Suryani (2003, p. 124)

In addition, Lee (2001) points out that students learning English language in high schools, colleges and HE often face an uphill task given the length of study required to gain even a moderate degree of proficiency. In my own experience as an ESL and Academic Writing teacher in the university, a high score in the English language examination from school does not necessarily mean that the students are excellent communicators or good 'writers' in English. It is quite common to meet students who scored a reasonably good grade but are unable to communicate or write well.

In 2016, the Prime Minister of Malaysia reiterated the significance of MUET and made it a reliable yardstick for students who seek entry to HEIs in the country (Yesuiah, 2016). Yesuiah (ibid) also reports that the education authorities took steps to ensure that MUET was a compulsory requirement for entry into university, but this requirement varies according to the field of study: Band 2 for Arts and Social Sciences, Band 3 for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) courses and Band 4 for Law and Medical courses (refer Appendix A to see MUET's grading system).

The primary aim of the university English course is to equip students with written and oral communication skills thus enabling them to perform well in multiple workplace situations and subjects covered include:

a. Writing resume and cover letter, to enable the students to write clearly and effectively for a job application
b. Individual job interview which helps to develop self-confidence and polish students' communication skills to help market themselves to potential employers

c. Case Study which enhances students' communicative and critical thinking skills when reaching consensus by allowing them to participate and manage group discussions and report writing

d. Product innovation that provides opportunities for students to apply critical and creative thinking collectively in coming up with innovative ideas and presenting those ideas via oral presentation and written executive summary.

(Undergraduate course booklet, 2018)

Sarudin et al. (2008) reported that most students in HEIs were aware of the importance of English but that they would rather focus on their faculty subjects than their writing courses. Isarji et al. (2008) discovered that the majority of the students had insufficient writing skills to complete academic writing tasks, limited ability to express ideas and insufficient speaking skills to conduct presentations and to participate in group discussion (p. 51). These weaknesses are seen to make it difficult when applying for jobs after graduation (Sirat et al., 2008, p. 146).

When students move from schools to HEIs, they move from a context in which the aim is English language acquisition to a context where they require English Language academic literacy competency. According to Wahiza et al. (2012), students generally consider themselves relatively competent in the Malay language yet their perception of their English language ability is otherwise. Zuraidah, Stephanie and Mohana (2008) conducted a study into English language proficiency of 405 students at six Malaysian Public Universities in 2006 and found that 54.6% of the students were limited (or very limited) users of English. These findings suggest that the scale of the problem of EMI in HE has not only become a real challenge for the learners but has also placed a greater burden on the shoulders of the instructors.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The English language is taught as a compulsory subject in Malaysian primary and secondary schools. In some Malaysian public universities, English holds a special position as it is used as the medium of instruction for nearly all programmes offered to

other academic courses to enhance the English language proficiency of students, particularly in writing. The skill of writing in English is not only tested in every valid language examination at different levels of education, it is also a skill that students need to possess and demonstrate in academic contexts, especially since assessments in the university require a form of writing.

As a writing teacher myself, I observed that students in their first-degree year struggled to meet the expectations of effective academic writing. This puts students at-risk as their lack of mastery of English undermines what they can achieve (McKeachie, 1988). I feel that making students responsible for their writing incompetency is unhelpful and this could perhaps be better addressed by understanding their challenges and finding out ways to improve their academic writing as an area of interest. In order to be aligned with the English language curriculum and assessment according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)[6], "to perform tasks which translate the CEFR descriptive scheme into practice, some collaborative tasks in the language classroom are therefore essential" (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 29). Therefore, in the university understudy, I observed that group writing was one of the criteria for academic writing practices, per the requirements of their courses. The writing assignments in the university understudy require the students to work in pairs and in bigger groups in order to accomplish a goal required by the tasks within a specified time frame. The philosophy behind group work is imbedded in the descriptors used by CEFR such as "facilitating collaborative interaction with peers" and also "collaborating to construct meaning". These are among the advantages of group writing (ibid, p. 118). Along the same vein as viewing through a sociocultural lens, Prior (2006) states that students who engaged in the writing task with other people found it to be a social activity in which novice writers could learn from more experienced writers. Even from the perspective of academic literacies, Street (2005) asserts that learning processes are co-constructed within contexts through interactions and learning could take place. From a teacher's perspective, the expectation is for learning to take place and students could write successfully when writing with peers. However, how different learning to write in university is from students' understanding of what writing is, is yet for us to discover. Since group writing

[6] CEFR was recommended by an inter-governmental Symposium held in Switzerland in 1991 aiming to be used "as a reference tool by almost all member states of the Council of Europe […] CEFR is being used not only to provide transparency and clear reference points for assessment purposes, but also increasingly to inform curriculum reform and pedagogy" (Council of Europe, 2018).

is a salient characteristic of writing, I sought to further explore what factors enhance or inhibit students' writing in university classrooms. By understanding students' needs and their beliefs, perceptions and expectations of their writing tasks, I hope that the findings of this research will help university students to achieve their goals and meet the expectations of writing in HEIs, and for academic writing teachers to ensure that their teaching aligns with the stated learning objectives.

1.5 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The overall outcome of the research is intended to be the development and implementation of a more effective pedagogical approach within Malaysian universities. I focus in particular on group writing as this is a salient characteristic of writing practices in the EAP classes I investigated. The overarching research question that will guide this study is: ***'What are students' experiences of academic writing in a second language (L2), with specific attention to higher education (HE) context in Malaysia?'*** The sub-questions are designed to get responses from students' and academic writing teachers' perspectives:

Sub-Research Question 1:
How do students understand the significance of L2 writing in HE?
Sub-Research Question 2:
How do students understand the process and practice of writing in groups?
Sub-Research Question 3:
What factors enhance or inhibit L2 writing in groups among students in HE?

It is hoped that this research will spark interest among colleagues in Malaysian HEIs towards understanding students' needs and difficulties when engaging in group writing (required in course assessment). This research investigates not only the present experiences of HE students but also looks at the writing experiences they bring into the university classrooms that might affect their beliefs, perceptions and expectations towards writing. The findings of the study are hoped to encourage knowledge building and reflection among Academic Writing teachers and help to prevent the teaching of writing (and attitudes towards it) from becoming stale and routine (Casanave, 2014).

1.6 CONCLUSION AND THESIS OUTLINE

The primary aim of this chapter is to provide an account of the journey which led me to my research questions. I have indicated the research gap in terms of looking at HE L2 writing in Malaysia through the lens of academic literacies. I have given a rationale for the study, set out its objectives, its research questions and the significance of the study. My journey in understanding students' L2 writing practices in my university led me to ask myself – '*Have I been teaching writing the way that students understood and expected when I was trying hard to meet the expectations of the syllabus myself?'* To some extent, my questions reflected a dearth of research on university writing practices in the context within which this study was conducted (see Chapter 2). The students' and teachers' narratives I present in the findings chapters show how the aims of this study evolved throughout the research process. This evolution was not just about what I sought to achieve, but also my own stance towards the dual roles that I took up from the beginning of my research journey, which are reflected both in the methodological and theoretical perspectives that inform this thesis (see Chapter 9).

In Chapter 3, I discuss the key theoretical perspectives on which this study is grounded and critically discuss different approaches to L2 writing, different views on what distinguishes ESL writing in schools from writing in HEIs and conceptualisations of academic writing in the HE context. In Chapter 4, I discuss the approach and methods employed in this study. Viewing writing as a social and situated practice required a methodological approach that allowed me to "describe the contrasting cultural norms of academic writing and academic writing instructions" (Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995, p. 542). As I demonstrate in that chapter, the most suitable means to achieve this is the ethnographic case study approach.

In Chapters 5 to 8, I analyse and discuss the pedagogical issues within teaching L2 writing, students' transition of writing experience from school to university, group writing as the main writing modality, and using feedback on drafts as a means to facilitate students' writing development. Generally, the sequencing of my analysis chapters follows the order of my subsidiary research questions (see Section 1.5). Chapter 5 deals with academic writing teachers' practices in their university classrooms such as using feedback, sample writing and code switching to facilitate students' learning to write in

their L2. Chapter 6 examines students' previous ESL writing strategies in school and what it means for them to write in HEIs. This chapter further discusses how students in university writing classrooms transition from writing in school to meeting writing challenges in the university. Chapter 7 explores the roles of group writing, how students write when they write with other people and how they face challenges. Chapter 8 looks at students' perceptions on ways of communicating feedback to other students and how these perceptions changed. In Chapter 9, I discuss the key themes drawn from Chapters 5 through 8 and conclude the thesis by drawing some implications for theory and practice as well as my methodological and theoretical approaches.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the status of the English language in Malaysia's education system and explores how the changes in policy have influenced English language teaching in Malaysian schools and HEIs.

My discussion in this chapter draws largely on document analysis. I begin the chapter by providing an overview on the status and use of English language in Malaysian education, its shifting of roles and teaching approaches used in schools through to HEIs, before looking in more detail at L2 writing in university. I conclude the chapter by looking at the academic writing support within the university that I chose for my case studies.

2.1 EXPLORING THE STATUS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN MALAYSIAN EDUCATION

Due to its colonial past and a long history of educational reform, the role of English language in Malaysia has shifted frequently over time in parallel with the shifting focus of the education system (Foo & Richards, 2004). Before Malaysia achieved its independence from Britain in 1957, the education system separated schools for different medium of instruction and curricula for the main ethnic groups: Malay, Chinese and Indian. In moving towards national unity, after independence in 1970, the Malay language (known as *Bahasa Malaysia*) became the official language for its multicultural society and English has been the second official language[7] there ever since (Gill, 2008).

Due to the demands of globalisation and in terms of moving forward as a developed country, English language teaching has a special position in the education sector (Mahathir Mohamad, 1991). In primary and secondary schools English is taught as a

[7] After the independence, English lost its position and was relegated to a second language. The reality is that English usage in a multicultural society like Malaysia has the features of first, second and foreign languages depending on individual's use of the language in the country (Razianna, 2000). For instance, a person who has learned English from birth and s/he speaks the best will be his/her first language. When English is used in the major cities as the language of communication in businesses and other daily transactions, English is their second language. However, due to the minimal quantity of exposure and usage of the language in the rural areas, English can be regarded as a foreign language for some Malaysians (Gill, 2005; Mustafa, 2009).

compulsory subject for 11 years, with the aim of equipping the students with basic English language skills and knowledge in order to enable them to communicate in and out of schools and in different situations (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1995). English was also used as the preferred medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools between 2003 and 2008. However, a debate ensued among academics, politicians and the public regarding the effectiveness of using students' second language as a medium of instruction, particularly with regards to its ineffectiveness in the teaching of Science and Mathematics.

The teaching of Science and Mathematics in English Language (ETeMS), known by its Malay acronym, *Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik* (PPSMI), was introduced in stages in 2003 under the administration of Malaysia's fourth Prime Minister, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad (now also serving as seventh Prime Minister), who believed that English was important in order to elevate Malaysia to a global level. The policy was fully implemented in all Malaysian schools by 2008 but "caused a furore with both Malay and Chinese nationalists treating the decision as an attack on their identity" (Yang & Ishak, 2011, p. 449). Its opponents saw ETeMS as ineffective because use of second language as the medium of instruction hampered the learning of these two subjects, particularly among students with poor command of English. These concerns culminated in 2012 with the announcement that the policy would be reversed. After much deliberation, the Education Ministry decided that the teaching and learning of Mathematics and Science should be conducted in Malay, which is "in line with the position taken by UNESCO[8] that the mother tongue is the best medium of instruction in schools" (Why PPSMI is abolished, 2011). In relation to the command of English among Malaysians, when competing in the globalised world, the Education Ministry has taken comprehensive measures to improve students' command of English through the Upholding the Malay Language and Strengthening Command of English Policy (MBMMBI) policy (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2014), by

i. improving methods of teaching and learning in schools
ii. increasing English hours
iii. hiring quality English teachers (including from abroad) to help students' proficiency in English (ibid)

[8] UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Regarding the move towards EMI in universities, in 1996 the Minister of Higher Education announced that by September 2005, all courses in the field of science and technology for first year undergraduates would be taught one hundred percent in English and other disciplines would be encouraged to follow suit (Gill, 2008). According to Nor Liza Ali (2013) "encourage" could be interpreted to mean recommended but not necessarily required, whereas in reality there was strong pressure towards English Medium Instruction (EMI) at tertiary level, not least as part of internationalising education in view of its potential as a source of economic development and prosperity. To legitimise the freedom to select the medium of instruction, the Education Act 1996 and the 1996 Private Higher Education Institution Act were introduced. The former policy approved the use of EMI for technical areas and postsecondary courses and the latter allowed use of English in dual programmes with overseas institutions and offshore campuses (Zaaba et al., 2011). In order to assist the Malaysian government in the development of the private higher education sector in the country, the Malaysia Association of Private Colleges and Universities was established on 18 March 1997. Significant numbers of international learners were attracted to its public universities and stakeholders began establishing foreign university branch campuses in Malaysia. However, the top-down approach to the policy-making process from the Federal government did not address the real problems regarding language-in-education and the interests of Malaysians as a whole (Zaaba et al., ibid).

MUET (see Chapter 1), a localised version of IELTS (International English Language Test System) and TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), was introduced in 1999 (Abdul Samad et al., 2008; Chan & Wong, 2004) to "bridge the gap" of English language proficiency between secondary and tertiary education. MUET was initially introduced to bring about a "higher level of English proficiency"[9] among Malaysian students. Since 2000, MUET results have been used to segregate students when they enrol in undergraduate programs and also, in some cases, as an exit certificate from public universities (Malaysian Examinations Council, 2011). MUET scores obtained by candidates are reported in a six-band scale with corresponding aggregated band scores ranging from 0 - 300 (Appendix A), and assess candidates' ability in the four language

[9] 6th form learners in school attend 240 minutes preparatory class as part of school syllabus since MUET's inception in 1999 (Souba & Chuah, 2011) and candidates who have not sat for the test but already pursuing degree at the university should explore learning avenues incidentally through their English Language Proficiency (ELP) and/or English for Academic Purposes courses as no provision classes are prepared for them.

skills. Abdul Samad, et al. (2008) have criticized the validity of MUET as an instrument to measure ability in language use due to the unequal weight of language components (Appendix A), and Ida Fatimawati (2012) argues that the main concern regarding MUET is that it does not measure learners' academic English, yet is commonly used for placement purposes in the tertiary context. Certainly the fact that MUET places the emphasis more on reading and writing, seems pertinent, as Baker (2011) stresses that for students to be successful in the university, they need good writing skills. Wahiza et al. (2012) points out that MUET provides the context for language use that is related to tertiary academic experience by developing critical thinking through the competent use of language skills.

Nonetheless, English as the medium of instruction has not been formally ratified as *the* language policy in public universities, and, unlike its provision in private institutions (Zaaba et al., 2011), has been left open to interpretation by academic staff and remains unclear to many university managements (Gill, 2004). Nor Liza Ali (2013) investigated policy related documents from the Ministry of Education (MOE) to find out how one semi-funded public university in Malaysia was managing the shift to EMI. The study found that there was no specific reference to the use of EMI in the policy text. However, Nor Liza Ali (ibid) reports that there is a provision in the policy text explicitly requiring assessment questions to be written bilingually in Malay and English and that the learners be given the option to respond in the language of their choice, regardless of instruction in the classroom.

Thus English is currently the medium of instruction in some, but not all, HE institutions as part of the country's development. The global spread of English and its socio-economic importance has made this inherited language into a commodity due to its promise of social mobility (Rajadurai, 2010). In response to the role of English in higher education as a medium of instruction, Azirah and Leitner (2014) expressed concern about students' widely differing English language proficiency.

2.2 A GLANCE AT ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT) AND POLICIES IN MALAYSIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Given the important role that English language plays in Malaysia's HE institutions, it is worth understanding the connection between policies, guidelines from the Ministry of

Education and teaching practices. According to Chan and Wong, (2004, p. 5) "competence among learners has been on the decline since a change in language policy was changed from that of English to Malay language in 1970". Heng and Tan (2006) assert that the decline in the use of English language in Malaysia has led to a rise in the number of unemployed undergraduates due to a lack of competence in the language, particularly during job interviews. Gill (2002) argues that all Malaysians have to face the competitive nature of economic globalisation and that, in order to compete globally, citizens must be able to communicate effectively in the English language. He stresses that,

> If we do take a protective stand and make a decision that we do not need English, we will be left behind in this age of rapidly advancing developments in the field of science and technology. We have the swirling waters of globalization all around us and unless we learn to swim in them as strongly as we can, we will sink and drown.
>
> (Gill, 2002, p. 15)

Hng (1998) refers to former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mahathir Mohamad's belief that mastery of the English language was key to the acquisition of knowledge:

> […] The better our mastery of these languages, the easier it will be for us to acquire knowledge contained in that language. Whether or not we are prepared to admit it, the fact remains that most of the knowledge required for development was not explored, documented or pioneered by us. We are not even able to translate into our own language knowledge that is critical because to do so would require a person to be skilled in three areas - mastery of his own language, fluency in foreign language, and knowledge in the field concerned.
>
> (Hng, 1998, p. 95)

As an advocate of ELT in Malaysia, Gill (2002) argues that, for Malaysia to attain the status of developed nation, it is imperative for the country to have a generation of people who are able to communicate effectively in English to be able to compete on the international platform. In addition, the mastery of the English language will also help individuals to develop skills for better communication, essential to transforming Malaysia into a centre of academic excellence (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Although there is no explicit English language policy to prescribe how English language should be taught in HEIs (Too, 2017), ELT in HE is greatly influenced by the role of

English language in Malaysia National Education Philosophy policy (Ministry of Education Malaysia, ibid). The National Education Philosophy, for instance, guides all courses and ELT is emphasised as providing disciplinary knowledge (Ministry of Education, 2012). Too (ibid, p. 111) has proposed that "English language can be a vehicle to develop these soft skills", namely communication, critical thinking and problem solving, team work, lifelong learning and information management, entrepreneurship, ethics and professional moral and leadership skills (ibid). In a survey of ELT teaching practices in Malaysian HEIs, most of the participating instructors felt that all these skills, except for entrepreneurship, could easily be incorporated through group work when teaching English language. This was in line with the principles adhered by the National Philosophy of Education (NPE) for holistic education in Malaysia Blueprint (Ministry of Education, 2012).

The importance of English language in the NPE is reflected in the compulsory course programme in the university (Too, 2017). In Malaysian universities, local undergraduate students are required to register for a stipulated credit hour of English courses based on the results of their MUET (Hiew, 2012). These courses include English Language Proficiency (ELP), English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) and provide students with exposure to an alternative way to approach English language from how they had learned in schools. ELP courses are for prospective students whose English proficiency level has not met the requirements of the programme; EAP courses are aimed at familiarising students with the language conventions and requirements within a specific discipline and EOP courses prepare students for their professional and workplace settings. Ever since the medium of instruction for science changed from Malay to English in public universities, EAP and EOP have grown in importance (Thang et al., 2012). When it comes to equipping students with the necessary academic studying skills, Pillai et al. (2012) reported that university students lacked confidence and needed more training in communication skills in English language, specifically with speaking and writing. Of the four language skills, writing seems to be the most difficult to master (DiPardo & Freedman, 1988; Hill, 1991; Ivanič, 1998; Silvia, 2007). Some of the factors contributing to why writing is regarded difficult are noted to the teaching method itself (Al-Khasawneh, 2010), conventions, punctuation and language use (Ghabool, 2012), problems with creative and critical thinking skills (Kho et al., 2013) and generating ideas (Riswanto, 2016). Thus, it is possible that the English language

course may not give students the actual skills that they need to ensure their success in the academic context, as the faculties also require them to have other relevant skills that are applicable to their respective programs.

English language courses in universities are therefore compulsory in order to accommodate students' language needs, with a strong focus on writing skills. From my own experience and observations, Malaysian students are not taught academic writing in their first language, yet upon entering tertiary level, they are expected to comprehend new discipline content in English and will also be assessed in English.

2.3 ACADEMIC WRITING IN MALAYSIAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE ISSUES

According to Bacha (2010), academic writing is seen as an area in which English as a Second Language (ESL) learners struggle. Osman and Bakar (2009), Razianna (2000), Tan and Miller (2007) investigated problems faced by L2 academic writing students in Malaysia. Tan and Miller (ibid) discovered that students focus on what was acceptable when writing in school and that school examinations did not encourage them to develop their writing skills beyond these requirements but to adopt "a range of pragmatic and expedient tactics" (p. 124). This alludes to the mismatch in terms of writing practices and expectations between school and university. Learners are expected to have good cognitive and negotiating skills in order to gain an in-depth understanding of what they read, allowing them to make meaning and develop their own interpretations in written form. Hyland (2007) explains that a form of thinking is needed in tertiary literacy where the learners' ability to sustain arguments and synthesise ideas in order to write in English for academic purposes is crucial for their success. However, Malaysian university learners' ability to write in English has been reported as being "not at the most satisfactory level" (Shamsudin & Mahady, 2010, p. 1) and "low proficiency learners are still struggling to write" (Puteh et al., 2010, p. 580). In addition, Rohayah and Naginder (2004, p. 6) found that "the critical skills of argumentation and rhetorical convention, prerequisites of university curricula are absent in the ESL classes". According to Nambiar (2007), Malaysian students who enter HEIs are not prepared for the demands placed upon them. In addition, as Lee (2003, p. 140) points out, English as a colonial language makes "identity issues far more complex and multi-layered", and this will possibly permeate learners' perception and treatment of the language.

Writing teachers in Malaysian ESL classrooms face a number of challenges with regards to choosing an approach. Hassan and Akhand (2010, p. 77) found that "in most of the ESL classes, we can have mixed ability groups that vary so widely that one approach cannot be adopted". The approaches to the teaching of writing such as product, process and genre have distinctive features (Boo & Umar, 2013). The structure and methodology of these prominent approaches are further discussed in 3.3. The product approach emphasizes mimicry and memorization of a model text (Parveen et al., 2018). Chow (2007) states that most ESL teachers in Malaysia resort to the traditional product approach, focusing more on linguistic features rather than on the language skills which is key to effective writing. Chow (ibid) adds that the main reason why the product approach dominates classrooms is because of attitudes and beliefs. Malaysian teachers are familiar with the product approach from their initial teacher training and schooling. Although writing is categorized as a productive skill, the teaching of writing must follow not only a productive approach but must be integrated with process and genre approaches (Parveen, Iqbal & Javaid, ibid). However, Bhajan (1995), Chow (ibid), Heng and Chan (1996), Mahaletchumy (1994), Mohammadi et al. (2012) and Palpanadan et al., (2015) as advocates of the process approach, state that this has yet to be implemented by many ESL teachers in the classroom.

Research on writing processes has led to viewing writing not as a linear process but as recursive and complex. For some scholars such as Mohammadi et al., (ibid) and Palpanadan et al., (ibid), there are other basic issues of English language proficiency that need to be addressed. Improving students' grasp of grammar and/or vocabulary is more of a priority than the "best" writing approach. Stapa and Majid (2012), on the other hand, see the adoption of a process approach as offering solutions to proficiency in general and writing in particular. Students in Malaysia HEIs tend to perceive writing as a product consisting of arbitrary grammar rules rather than a process based on the flow of ideas and thoughts (Nordin, et, al., 2010). Aside from approaching writing using product and process approaches, Hassan and Akhand (ibid) and Osman (2004) have proposed a genre approach for Malaysian HE classrooms to be integrated for the effective teaching and learning of writing. Badger and White (2000) note that there are similarities between the product and genre approach and that the latter can be seen as an extension of the product approach. In the genre approach, writing is seen as a social and cultural practice (Hassan & Akhand, 2010). Additionally, Osman (2004, p. 27) asserts that the "genre approach is

not a rigid, formulaic way of constructing texts" whereby students can learn through the process of writing by knowing what the end product should look like. In order to have more focused use of texts as models, Nordin (2017, p. 79) suggest the adoption of an "eclectic approach to the teaching of writing, by synthesising the strength of the process and genre approaches for implementation in the classroom".

2.4 THE TEACHING OF UNIVERSITY ENGLISH COURSES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NUSANTARA (UON)

Since the University of Nusantara (UoN) was established in 1956, English has been treated as a compulsory subject in their study plan. English is the medium of instruction in science and technological courses and all reference books are in English except for the Islamic State and Societies subjects (Chin et al., 2016). Within the university, faculties require their students to take different English courses depending on the specific language needs required by their disciplines. Diploma students in the UoN are required to pass three English proficiency courses (worth 2 credits each) while Degree students are only required to pass two in order to graduate (Academic Regulations Handbook, 2017). The general aim of these courses is to provide the "necessary language skills in order for students to cope and succeed in their academic disciplines" (Ainol Madziah, 2001, p. 1).

2.4.1 The Role of the Academy of Modern Languages

Since 1972, the Academy of Modern Languages (pseudonym) has been the language centre for University of Nusantara (UoN). The Academy assists students across the disciplines, not only through co-ordinating the learning and teaching of ESL, but also that of other Asian and European languages. A generic language curriculum (UoN Official Website, 2017) was formulated to cater for the ever-growing number of students and, because of its role of meeting students' language needs across faculties in the university, the teachers from the Academy take up a *servicing* role – catering for all English language needs from Pre-Diploma and Foundation, to Diploma and Degree levels. The Academy website states that teaching of ESL is decentralised so that the needs of the different disciplines from different faculties are catered for separately. For example, Pre-Diploma and Diploma students in Semester 1, 2, and 3, are enrolled in six credits of three General English courses (ELP), while Degree students are required to take four credits of two English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or English

for Occupational Purposes (EOP) courses in order to expose students to a diversity of English language skills. In order to meet the expectations of the faculties' programme outcomes and also to ensure that the academic standards are maintained, among its other functions, the Academy's Curriculum Development Committee annually revise and, if needed, revamp less effective courses in its curriculum.

At the time of my data collection there were 13 different English Language courses offered by the Department of English within the Academy (see examples in Appendix B). These are offered on an a la carte and as-needed basis to the other faculties (UoN Official Website, 2017). Each year the Department of English of the Academy sends out representatives, (i.e. academic writing teachers from the department who also hold management and administrative posts in the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC), to provide presentations, describe and explain what the courses intend to achieve and how the students could benefit by completion of them. Based on this input, members of the other faculties then decide what to choose as part of their program's study plan; faculties will choose between two and three courses and usually include at least one writing course.

2.4.2 Group Writing as One of the Characteristics to Students' Assessments

Group writing is a common characteristic in all the English courses in UoN. All the course syllabi prescribe group or pair work as part of the course requirement in meeting the objectives of the course. UoN advocates the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) syllabus which integrates all four language skills. One of the ways of embedding CLT in the classrooms in UoN is by encouraging students to write in groups. In 2006, the National Education Philosophy emphasised a holistic approach to learning, incorporating seven[10] soft skills formation into the curricula (Nikitina & Furuoka, 2012). Since team work is one of these soft skills that are required of students in HE, it is evident that it has been incorporated through group writing in UoN. Louth et al. (1993) define group writing as collaborative writing in which people work and interact during the writing process and the group is responsible for the final product. Where collaborative writing is regarded as

[10] The seven soft skills comprise communication skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, team work, lifelong learning and information management skills, entrepreneurship skills, ethics, and professional moral and leadership skills.

a method of group writing (Bremner, 2010), I further discuss this in 3.1.2 in my attempt to conceptualise the practice of academic writing.

2.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have positioned my study within Malaysia's HE context. This chapter has described the current status of English language within Malaysian education and how its role has shifted from colonial language to official language/second language/lingua franca to the medium of instruction in HE. In terms of the academic practices that the UoN promote in order to help students improve their English academic writing, group work is the single most visible.

CHAPTER 3: WRITING IN THE UNIVERSITY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

As also indicated in Chapter 1, my overarching question is: *What are students' experiences of academic writing in a second language (L2), with specific attention to higher education (HE) context in Malaysia?* My aim is to understand how undergraduate students develop their writing in higher education and to examine the processes underlying successful teaching and learning writing, encompassing both cognitive and sociocultural perspectives. This chapter consists of four sections. In the first section, I describe the theoretical framework I developed through reading the literature to help describe, explain, understand and interpret students' writing practices. In sections 2, 3 and 4, I discuss three bodies of writing-related literatures: research on L2 writing; pedagogical approaches to teaching L2 writing; and ESL writing in Malaysia.

The framework I have applied for the purposes of this investigation is grounded in sociocultural theory and the conceptual debates and insights from academic literacies. In order to understand the academic writing practices in L2 university writing classrooms, this study draws on Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory by discussing it in relation to teaching and learning. In the context of students' interactions when writing in groups, the concept of ZPD is particularly relevant in relation to the idea of scaffolding learning, and its development focuses on process learning with the more knowledgeable others, showing how students learn to write with their peers and internalise writing experiences across different settings. The transition from ESL writing in schools to academic writing in the university is discussed through the academic literacies lens, which situates writing as a social practice. This approach helps to understand the multi-layered and complex practices of teaching and developing academic writing in the university writing classrooms in Malaysia. Underlying these theoretical models is the assumption that appropriate teaching and learning approaches will help students to meet teachers' expectations and become successful L2 writers in HEIs.

According to Lillis and Turner (2001), student writing is at the centre of teaching and learning in HEIs, it being seen as the way in which students consolidate their understanding of subject areas, as well as the means by which the instructors can learn

about the extent and nature of individual students' understanding (p. 20). Success in writing within this practice has a very real impact on the nature of students' participation and success in HE and hence potentially, of their life chances (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2008). What is involved for students as they engage in writing is of considerable importance, particularly in relation to those students who are least familiar with the academic practices of HEIs. Therefore, since a body of research has recently emerged in the United Kingdom (UK) adopting the 'academic literacies' stance towards student writing, I shall contextualise the concept into exploring how students in Malaysia university classrooms write.

Lillis and Turner (2001) points out that this teasing out is particularly important at the current time when students writing is increasingly represented in 'deficit' terms. The idea that students cannot write is central to official, public and pedagogic discourse in many parts of the world (Horner, 1999; Hull & Rose, 1989). The problem is explicitly signalled in some research (Lamb, 1994; Winch & Wells, 1995). Graft (1987 cited in Lillis, 2001, p. 21) argues that such crises are often indications of wider social and economic problem within the society. The response to this problem in a number of parts of the world has been to focus on additional support for students' writing in various forms. In the US, the main provision comes in the form of 'composition' classes aimed at teaching 'general writing skills'. This is provided via 'basic writing' courses based on the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing in the Disciplines (WiD) movements. Both movements were aimed specifically to encourage students and engage them in the processes of writing (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2011) and to also "understand what writing actually occurs in the different disciplinary context" (Bazerman, 2005, p. 9). The other dominant approach to academic writing instruction in HEIs internationally is English for Academic Purposes (EAP). According to Wingate and Tribble (2012), EAP pedagogy applied mainly in HEIs has been largely used in the teaching of English to non-native speakers. EAP recognises that proficiency in English is an important determinant of academic success in an English-medium environment (Evans & Green, 2007). As might be expected in a non-native speaking classroom, the need for language instruction varies according to proficiency level, discipline and the year. EAP is designed so it enables to drill second language speakers to have a higher proficiency level on their four language skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing.

I begin by discussing sociocultural theory in relation to teaching and learning, particularly Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, to understand university writing, both from teaching and learning perspectives. I discuss how the approach and focus of writing shifts from traditional to constructivist practices as students move from secondary schools to the university. In the context of students' interaction when writing in groups, the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), is particularly relevant when used in scaffolding learning and its development focusing on process learning with the more knowledgeable others, helps to show how students construct learning to write with their peers and internalise writing experiences in different settings. In addition, teaching writing approaches, such as cooperative learning and peer learning models, are also explored to explain my empirical findings.

The transition from ESL writing in schools to EMI is also discussed through an Academic Literacies lens, which situates writing as a social practice. This approach helps understand the multi-layered and complex practices of teaching and developing Academic Writing in the university writing classrooms in Malaysia. Lea and Street's (1998) notion of Academic Literacies helped me to investigate the difficulties faced by students in university by conceptualising writing in the academic context.

3.1 SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES OF LEARNING

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory describes learning as a social process in which social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. This theory of learning looks at the important contributions that society makes to individual development, and conceptualises learning as largely a social process. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning happens at two levels. The first level is interaction with others and at the second level, these interactions are integrated into the individual's mental structure. Vygotsky theorizes that learning generally occurs through the learner's participation from their embedded experience and also one's development as the results of his or her social, historical and cultural experiences. Walsh (2006) contributes to this understanding of learning when he states that "learners collectively and actively construct their own knowledge and understanding by making connections, building mental schemata and concepts through collaborative meaning making" (p. 32). Taking this view, learning does not happen in isolation but is fundamentally social in nature (Vygotsky,

ibid). Learners learn by interacting with others in their social circle by taking different roles in literacy practices.

Donato (1994) has critiqued this theory, pointing out that, when there are so many learning activities happening at once, decisions can be difficult to make. But since the sociocultural theory emphasizes learning is "by discovery, inquiry, active problem solving and critical thinking" and that the concept of scaffolding is fostered through collaboration with experts and peers in communities of learners, "learner's efforts are supported to accomplish complex tasks and providing opportunities for authentic and dynamic assessments" (Polly et al., 2017, p. 3).

A second aspect of Vygotsky's theory is the idea that the potential for cognitive development is limited to what he calls the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This 'zone' is the area of exploration for which the student is cognitively prepared, but requires help and social interaction to fully develop (Briner, 1999). A teacher or more experienced peer is able to provide the learner with 'scaffolding' to support the student's evolving understanding of knowledge domains or development of complex skills.

Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding and the role of more knowledgeable others has a bearing on language learning and the ways in which learners think and interpret situations through social interaction in this regard. Thus, the communication that occurs between those who have "mastered the skills and knowledge and those in the process of acquiring them", could be conceptualised in terms of the ZPD (Briner, 1999, p. 33), to support learners as they attempt learning just above their current skills and language level to excel beyond what they have already achieved. Ahmed (1994, p. 158) added that it is important to note Vygotsky's use of theory on language learning as a way of "engaging in social and cognitive activity" and highlights that "learning does not focus solely on individual's cognitive process"[11] in contrast with the individualistic theories in understanding learning, like behaviourism and cognitive psychology (Flower & Hayes, 1980).

Many subsequent theorists adopt the epistemological stance of sociocultural theory that defines learning as a dynamic social activity that is situated in physical and social

[11] Flower and Hayes 's (1980) cognitive process theory of writing – writing is viewed as a complex system of inter-working cognitive processes involved in composing to lay groundwork for more detailed study of thinking processes in writing.

contexts, and distributed across persons, tools, and activities (e.g. Rogoff, 2003; Salomon, 1993; Wertsch, 1991). Lave and Wenger (1991) have taken the notion that social activities are regulated by 'normative ways of reasoning and using tasks and other resources in collective activity', and termed this as a community of practice (CoP). The knowledge of the individual is constructed through the knowledge of the communities of practice within which the individual participates. Sociocultural theory argues that the way in which human consciousness develops depends on the specific social activities in which people engage. Central to this theory is the role that language plays in social practices (Fairclough, 1989; Gee, 1996), in particular, how language plays roles in the ways social class, race, sexuality, ethnicity, and linguistic identity are constructed and reconstructed through human relationships. This is especially in terms of how power and inequality are portrayed in both social arrangements and the ideological discourses that support them (Pennycook, 1989, 2001). In fact, Wenger (1998) asserts that there is a strong link between learning and identity. As learners learn a 'proper' way of doing things in the particular classroom community, they will develop their identities generating 'membership' through different forms of engagement, in this case, with the available resources in English. To illustrate, in an ESL Malaysian classroom, learners could form their own identity to either accept the standard practice to learn aspects of the target language such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and others or might not be able to conform to the various forms. In addition, what Wenger (ibid) is trying to do is to highlight this idea of non-participation that we form our identities "not only by what we are but also by what we are not" (p.164) where all types of learning are assumed to occur.

Lave and Wenger (1991) also advocate that learning is a sociocultural practice. The logical extension of this view is that students learn differently depending on their social environment and influenced by social interactions. Although Freeman and Johnson (2005), Hill, Rowan, and Ball (2005) noted that teaching does not necessarily cause student learning, there is clearly a relationship of influence between how teachers organize their classroom activities and what students learn from engaging in those activities. Johnson (2006, p. 245) commented on the complexities of this relationship by understanding learning is shaped by the social contexts as a new community of practice could provide different sorts of opportunities.

3.1.1 Vygotsky, Constructivism and Second Language Learning

Though historically, according to Lantolf (2000), Vygostsky's theory was conceptualised in the first language (L1) context to understand the development of mother tongue, it is also relevant to the acquisition of second language (L2) based on the three key principles to second language acquisition, namely the social nature of knowledge, learning and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and learning and scaffolding. Viewing language learning from this lens, the theory has also helped to reshape the understanding of second language learning, including L2 writing. With the significance of sociocultural theory on the idea of collaborative construction through the concepts of scaffolding and more knowledgeable others (MKO) for learning, writing, according to Wigglesworth and Storch (2012, p. 364), is a "solitary activity". From the sociocultural lens, writing is viewed as a "collaborative, social activity in which novice writers can learn from more experienced writers" in constructing learning to write. It is important to understand that sociocultural theory argues for viewing writing as a mode of social action, not simply a means of communication (Prior, 2006) as it emphasizes more on writing components, such as inspiration, influence and social impacts (Forest & Davis, 2016). Storch (2002) adds that scaffolding also occurs when learners interact with each other, either in pairs or groups, in a collaborative effort to resolve a language related problems when writing. In addition, Street (2005), asserts that writing development and learning processes are co-constructed within contexts through their interaction with wider social forces. Swain and Lapkin (1998) also feel that through a gradual process of internalization from learning together with other people, students come to be able to use the language to write.

In addition, Cooper (1993) feels it is important to explore the paradigm shift in designed instruction whereby the focus has moved from behaviourism to cognitivism and now to constructivism. James, Applefield and Mahnaz (2001) also report that constructivist perspectives on learning have become increasingly influential in the past twenty years and can be said to represent a paradigm shift in the epistemology of knowledge and theory of learning. Moving from traditional writing classroom instruction, in the constructivist classroom, students' learning is emphasized rather than teachers. The term constructivism according to James et al. (ibid) derives from Piaget's reference to his views as 'constructivist' (Gruber & Vonèche, 1977), where he proposes that learner conceptions

of knowledge are derived from a meaning making search in which learners engage in a process of constructing individual interpretations of their experiences.

With regards to a definition of what is *good writing*, from this perspective according to Casanave (2014, p. 67) it is difficult to characterize in a clear and ambiguous way that "there are no universal standards for good writing" suggesting the construction of definition that criteria by which student writing is actually judged should not only be grammar, but also how viably writers address a theme, give a sound and efficient conversation, jargon, maturity and flair, as well as style and grace (Williams & Williams, 1997). However, in many of these contexts, especially in L2 writing, writing is seen as a 'a problem' in need of fixing and seen as a deficit to writing practices. Thus, to what makes *good writing*, perhaps the most consuming issue for the teachers in the writing classroom, is how they handle their L2 students scaffolding learning primarily in groups and is one of the practices in a constructivism classroom. Through an interactive process via group work, the social milieu of learning takes place so that learners could both refine their own meanings and help others by being the MKOs to find meaning. James et al. (ibid) reviewed that this perspective of learning is a direct reflection of Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of L2 learning.

Following the work of Emig (1971), Flower and Hayes (1980) and L2 theorists such as Zamel (1983), the attention has shifted from a "focus on the properties of texts in favor of a focus on the internal cognitive processes of meaning construction in the minds of writer/ readers" (ibid, p. 278) to broader social practices. However, the issue with teaching writing in L2 context is that it tends to carry a "narrow definition of writing based on notions of correct grammar and usage" as *good writing* (Hyland, 2000, p. 19). Stemming from a structuralist approach to language, Simpson (2017, p. 45) asserts that "the problem with writing is that it frequently becomes grammar practice" and found out that many teachers' responses to student writing focus "almost always on form not on content". Here again it is understood that L2 students' linguistic limitations have always been a characteristic of "poor writing". According to Gebhard and Oprandy (1999), there seems to be a pedagogical shift to viewing teaching L2 writing as "completing sentence drills and other grammar-based exercises" and structural in character (p. 277). These different conceptualisations of L2 writing as product, cognitive process and practice have

methodological implications for how researchers have investigated L2 writers and writing.

3.1.2 Conceptualising Academic Writing and Writing Development

L2 writing research "has become progressively better informed, theoretically and methodologically" and "understanding of literacy itself [have] become considerably more sophisticated" (Leki et al., 2008, p. 3). To further explore academic writing in L2 HE, it is useful to understand what writing constitutes. For instance, here writing is a skill that is "grounded in the cognitive domain" that it "involves learning comprehension, application and synthesis of new knowledge encompasses creative inspiration, problem-solving, reflection and revision" (Defazio et al., 2010, p. 34). Ransdell and Barbier (2002, p. 3) add that L2 writing also requires "a sufficient level of lexical, syntactic knowledge in the target language in order to express ideas in correct linguistic form". For that reason, writing in L2 does not only depend on students having cognitively oriented skills but also on their ability to successfully communicate their thoughts and opinions in L2. Understanding this from the academic literacies lens, writing becomes a complex, socially situated set of meaning-making practices (Russell et al., 2009). What I find useful about academic literacies as part of my framework, is that it helps to explain how learning is defined by its academic context. As my student writers experience the transition from school to the university context, this approach helps explain the complexity of the writing norms and conventions that students need to negotiate in order to become accomplished members of the academic discourse community.

Writing in the university involves writing in an academic style and is regarded as "hard" by Irvin (2010) and Friedrich (2008). Canagarajah (1999) notes that academic writing in the university requires a production of a text within the accepted conventions. However, it is also far more than that. Students new to the university "may not feel at ease writing with academic writing conventions or with staking claims for knowledge" (Coffin et al., 2005, p. 4) that could create issues and challenges when taking up writing tasks. In terms of academic writing in a university context, researchers in the field tend to discuss the features, characteristics and functions compared to other writing genres (e.g. Hyland, 2002; MacDonald, 1987), notions of self-representation such as that of identity (e.g. Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Hyland, ibid; Ivanič, 1998), hedging (e.g. Swales & Feak,

2004), nominalisations (Biber & Gray, 2010), and voice (Matsuda & Tardy, 2007). Academic writing in L2 is argued to require high-level cognitive functions (Sheldon, 2009) and also grammatical complexity (Santos, 1988; Leki, Cumming & Silva, 2008).

Ivanič (1998), whose work has focused on the link between writing and identity, explains how academic writing intersects with identity by defining writing as "an act of identity which people align themselves with socio-culturally shaped possibilities for self-hood" (p. 32). Student writers might have to redefine their sense of self as writing in L2 assumes they will "shift in identity as their goals, needs and contexts have changed". In order to perform successfully in the academic community, student writers need to adopt the appropriate identity (ibid). In addition, Zhu (2004, p. 30) sees academic writing as also discipline-specific where "different courses require learners to assume different social roles, and that communicative conventions are intricately intertwined with the content for, the aims of and student roles in writing". All these perspectives have emerged in my study.

Lea and Stierer (2000, p. 6) point out that teachers and students seemed to perceive writing as "both homogeneous and transferable and that it was not unreasonable to expect students to be able to write before entering the academy". In the university, there is a need to understand that students write between academic disciplines as this gives different implications in terms of their writing genres (Baynham, 2000). In order to understand what is involved in writing within and across the university, Lea and Street (2000) promote the 'academic literacies' model of student writing that represents an advance on both a generic 'study skills' model and a discipline-based 'academic socialization' model of student writing. Since my study draws on academic literacies model as one of the ways to understand how student respondents write in their university classroom, I discuss this further in 3.1.3.

Drawing on such different conceptualisations of academic writing, in terms of supporting students' writing development, different approaches are discussed in the literature. such as collaborative discipline-based writing classes, peer work and teacher conferencing (Connor, 1996; Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Leki & Carson, 1997; Swales, 1990; Storch, 2013). For instance, Storch (2013) promotes the use of collaborative writing for L2 writers to help develop their writing. The body of research on the outcomes of

collaborative L2 writing views that when composing texts collaboratively, L2 writers engage in important cognitive processes such as proposing and evaluating alternative ideas which take place during the writing process in searching for an identity as L2 writers.

Feedback is also seen as central to writing development. Researchers such as Elbow (1998), Ferris (2003), Goldstein (2006), Hyland and Hyland (2006) have attempted to understand issues on how teachers should give feedback specifically in the L2 context. A great deal of research has questioned the effectiveness of teacher feedback as a way of improving students' writing. Hyland (2003) points out that providing feedback to the learners has become the teacher's most important task. It aims at encouraging the development of students writing and is regarded as critical in improving and consolidating ESL learning. According to Hyland (ibid) feedback emphasizes a process of writing and rewriting where the text is not seen as self-contained but points forward to other texts that the students will write. Feedback helps student writers to work out the texts' potential and to comprehend the writing context, providing a sense of audience and an understanding of the expectations of the communities they are writing for (Hyland, ibid, p. 177).

3.1.3 Academic Literacies Approach to Writing in HE

Lea and Street (1998, p. 33) state that "academic literacies" came out of the "new literacy studies", originating from the work of Barton et al. (1994), Baynham (2000), Gee (1996), Heath and Heath (1983), Street and Street (1984) among others, as an attempt to understand the challenges students grapple with in higher education. According to Lillis and Tuck (2016, p. 30), the pluralisation of 'literacies' here signifies that situated learning for academic reading and writing are "ideologically shaped" to reflect the "institutional specific and relations of power". From this perspective, rather than there being a singular literacy practice in university, students encounter and engage with many practices when writing in the university context. Students are exposed to a variety of practices due to institutional complexities and disciplinary requirements and these may be in conflict with students' identities and previous experiences. Therefore, writing in university involves shaping ones ideology to learning (Lillis & Tuck, 2016). This perspective has challenged the assumption that "literacy is a set of itemised skills which students have to learn and

which are then transferable to other contexts" (Lea, 1999 in Murray & Nallaya, 2016, p. 1299).

The academic literacies framework has laid a basis for theorising about student writing development that many writing teachers and scholars in the UK and elsewhere continue to explore (Ganosbcsik-Williams, 2011). Lea and Street (1998) posited that academic writing could be conceptualised into three approaches: study skills, socialisation and academic literacies, the argument being that it is the skills approach that has dominated writing development, particularly in higher education. Drawing from this framework, I illustrate in Figure 3.1 (see page 32) the relationship between the three approaches to students' experience to writing in the university as outlined by Lea and Street (1998) to show how it applies to my study.

In my visual representation, I signal the hierarchical relationship between the three different elements (study skills, socialisation and academic literacies). In order for students to write in university context, I position 'academically literate' being built on the foundation of study skills and academic socialization but also informed by students' previous experiences which Ivanič (1998, p. 24) considers as the "autobiographical self" aspect of identity. The layered pyramid represents the ways in which students' experiences of learning to make meaning through the filter of their own identities and in different contexts, influence their writing development. The 'previous experiences' in Figure 3.1 form the basis for students' academic writing experiences in the university. The placement of 'student writer' at the pinnacle of the pyramid shows how the three levelled model privileges the students in terms of how they situate learning to write in the university as part of achieving success.

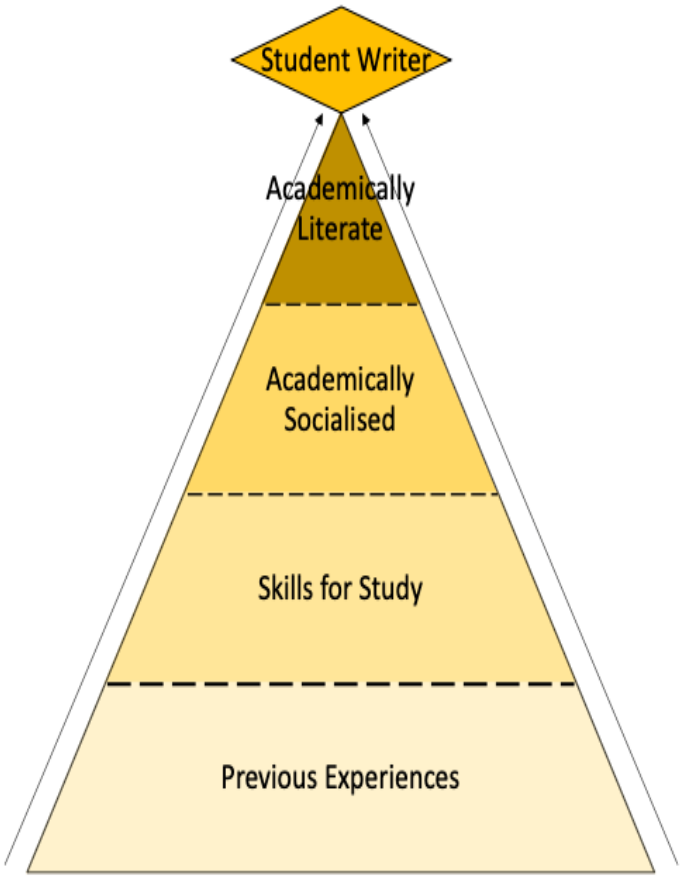


Figure 3.1:The relationship between the three levelled model theorising approaches to student writing in the university

Clarence and McKenna (2017) support that teaching writing focuses on students' deficient writing, using methods to teach writing as a formula[12] (for example, if on essay structure: introduction, three to five paragraphs for body, conclusion and references), while Mann's (2008) surface definition of 'study skills' includes practices such as reading, note taking and essay writing required. From this perspective, writing teachers teach technical and generic aspects of writing and focus on learner's grammatical and lexical deficiencies to develop students' writing. Hyland and Hyland (2006) and Lillis (2003) critique the approach, stating that it simply involves manipulating a model for the

[12] The so called first year 'formula' way of writing has been the tradition since 1970s fronting to a large body of research in the United States (Wingate, 2006) that leads to the birth of the two movements: Writing across the Discipline (WAC) and Writing within the Disciplines, emphasizing the relationship between writing and learning in specific disciplines and the link to study support (Russell et al., 2009), contrast to the focus of study support in the UK which is separated from the academic work. Opposing the idea of WID and WAC, Wingate (2012) contested that Academic Literacy represents clearer range of abilities that students have to acquire when starting out in a new academic discipline.

learners to produce academic texts. The second approach, academic socialisation, builds on the previous approach, study skills. The perspective assumes that learners are 'accultured' into disciplinary discourses and genres to write (Lea & Street, 1998). However, academic socialisation has been criticised for assuming that institutional practices and genres are stable and that learners only have to reproduce the disciplinary forms and conventions (Hyland, 2002). The third approach, termed academic literacies, builds from study skills and academic socialisation and is presented as an ideal to work towards, where "literacies in the disciplines are viewed as multiple, contested and socially constructed according to different, often tacit agendas" (Clarence & McKenna, 2017, p. 40).

Lea and Street (1998) note that these approaches are not mutually exclusive but they each expand upon the previous approach so that the academic socialisation perspective takes account of study skills and includes them in the broader context of the acculturation processes. Likewise the academic literacies approach encapsulates academic socialisation, by building on its insights as well as drawing on study skills (Lea & Street, 2000).

3.1.4 Transitioning L2 Writing Practices

In terms of the theoretical framework, the notion of transition has been central to this exploration of students' experiences of student writing. Tinto (1988) describes student transition as a process of moving from one community to another and this transitional change is needed for students when entering academic life in HEIs. In the case of student writers transitioning from school to HEIs, the change of context could certainly restrain them on what, and how, they can write. When writing is seen as a social act in HEIs (Ivanič, 2004), new writers are made aware of the context in which they are writing. The issue has caught many researchers today discussing how, for L2 writers and native writers alike, there is a "mismatch between secondary and college writing" (Aull, 2015, p. 1) as this stage is difficult for some students. To address the challenges that new student writers face, Hyland and Guinda (2012, p. 6) use the term "bridging the gap" where Macaro and Wingate (2004, p. 467) use "transition" to explain how students survive the "gap" from writing in school to writing in HEIs and to discuss how the shift of context affects how students write.

Aull (2015), in her book entitled *First Year University Writing*, briefly reviewed assisting students transitioning with their essay writing from school. To help students develop academic writing skills once they enter HEIs, approaches such as first-year college writing courses[13], writing across the curriculum[14] and English for Academic Purposes[15] have been introduced to prepare them to demonstrate their command of written, academic English. Since the medium for assessment is usually written (Lea, 1999), there is an expectation for the students to 'write well' to succeed at university (Baker, 2011). However, Bartholomae (2005) reiterates that students face challenges in writing in order to meet or satisfy a particular 'standard' and that many are 'unprepared' for that challenge. According to Lea and Street (1998), the change of writing context from school to university caused a mismatch of expectations between the students and the institutions, and this also poses a challenge to the students to continue writing in their HE context.

3.1.4.1 Supporting L2 Writers in HE

Transition from school will involve adapting to a writing culture that is different from the culture of school but students may not be aware of these differences. Though students are admonished for not producing good writing at HE levels, relatively little empirical research has focused on the significance of this transition and the implications for students' writing (Baker, 2011). Baker (ibid) found that published research into transition has tended to focus on single subjects, for example, English Literature (Ballinger, 2003), Music and Music Technology (Winterson & Russ, 2009), or on a broader discussion of transition-related issues (for example, Smith, 2004). However, there have been some investigations into students' writing across a range of disciplines and approaches to teaching writing in school such as Burhans (1983), Chandrasegaran (1991), Hausfather (1996) and Chow (2007).

To show how crucial it is to focus on students' transition experience, Krause and Coates (2008), as well as Lea and Street (1998) refer to the general separation between student's expectations and institutional expectations. The overall learning experience, according to Lowe and Cook (2003), could affect students' preparedness in the university. Along the

[13] designed to offer students practice on general academic writing before their field specific writing and focusing on academic essays, critical thinking and genre awareness
[14] more discipline specific academic writing
[15] overlaps with the other two but is designed specifically to support non-native students

same vein, McEwan (2015) argues that it is important "to understand and manage student expectations in HE in order to enable a more successful transition to tertiary study" (p. 511).

In learning to write in HEIs, there are certain conventions that will influence the expectations that teachers have towards students' writing, expectations that are not always met. For example, Aull (2015), did a corpus-based study comparing 19,000 incoming college students' writing with expert academic writing. She found that the specific discourse features of first year writings did not match the expectations in terms of more advanced academic argumentation. Aull (ibid) concludes that such findings could be used to heighten students' writing awareness and to make clearer connections between writing and language expectations in pedagogy and assessment. Another example is the expectation to use proper language when writing, but as Aull (ibid, p. 3) points out, "the U.S. National Educational Assessment of Progress (NEAP)" specifications of what "proper language" meant was not given. Similarly, it is difficult for students to understand what constitutes "successful academic writing" as students are expected to engage with the processes of meaning making rather than learning to write as a straight forward study skill (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 158). Above all, it is important to note that the lack of preparation in academic English from school creates difficulties, especially for students in the first year of the university (Mary, 2002).

In Malaysia, students' use of inappropriate language in writing can be seen as originating in language problems in school, where the focus is on using the correct grammatical forms of English (Maros et al., 2007). From an EAP perspective, according to Bacha (2010) academic writing is seen as an area in which learners struggle. Razianna (2000), Tan and Miller (2007), Osman and Bakar (2009) investigated problems faced by L2 learners in Malaysia when it comes to academic writing. Tan and Miller (ibid) discovered that learners focused on what was acceptable when writing in the examination. Thus students were not encouraged to develop their writing skills beyond these narrow requirements, adopting instead "a range of pragmatic and expedient tactics" (p. 124). This suggests that there may be a mismatch between knowledge about writing as taught in school and what is expected at the university level.

In supporting students to learn to write in university, alongside the linguistics challenges in relation to L2 writing practices in HEIs, feedback has been argued to play a central role in writing development (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Yang, Badger & Yu, 2006), as does understanding writing approaches in HEIs (Biggs, 1989; Ellis & Yuan, 2004; Lavelle & Zeurcher, 2001; Leki & Carson, 1997; Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis, 2002) and group writing to facilitate learning (Dobao & Blum, 2013; Matthews et al., 1995; Storch, 2013). All of these can offer guidance and support that L2 writers can adopt in a continuous development process (Norton et al., 2009). Moreover, when students are provided with "adequate descriptions" of what writing is in HEIs, they are less likely to struggle to comprehend the discursive expectations and practices of academic communities (Hyland & Guinda, 2012, p. 7). This is discussed in detail in the next sections.

3.1.4.2 Teacher's Expectations and Practices

Bailey (2009, p. 114) found that teachers expect students to write in "formal register and avoid styles similar to everyday speech like colloquialism and non-standard forms" and to use "impersonal constructions in their writing and maintain a degree of objectivity or distance". It is also reported that the academy expects students to be 'literate' in the use of complex forms which are assumed to have been 'acquired' as part of their socialisation process for, and in the initial stages of, HE (ibid). Bailey (ibid) discovered what Hyland and Hyland (2006) term a 'narrow definition' of writing: when referring to 'poor student writing' teachers often emphasized 'poor grammar' which was associated with 'poor thinking'. Further, Bailey (ibid) also reported that teachers believe *good writers* could "apply logic and use evidence", be able to "demonstrate a capacity for abstract thought", "grasp the underlying epistemological nature of writing, and using knowledge in the discipline" putting emphasis on the students to "figure out things" (p. 120). This normative way of thinking about students' writing raises other concerns for teachers associated with the amount of support they are expected or willing to give students on an individual basis, if L2 writing addresses fluency and accuracy in language production.

If teachers' beliefs on *good writing* actually depend on intangible internal factors such as ones' ability to construct ideas using thinking capacity to demonstrate thoughts, these assumptions impact choices made in the classrooms (Casanave, 2014). However, this leaves much unspecified as it could also be conceptualised from the outside in; in other

words that external influence on teachers' beliefs include; methods of reasoning, learning from course readings, lesson gained and conveyed ideas about ways to deal with teaching from books in various manners (Casanave, 2014). Beliefs on teaching L2 writing in general and students' learning in particular, can lead to different definitions. Thus, in understanding L2 writing it is necessary to probe the nature of learning to write in order to support the teacher's efforts based on what they believe.

3.2 RESEARCHING L2 WRITING

Historically, research in the field of L2 writing first focused on the teaching of writing to international ESL writers at a higher education institution in North America, where the need for advanced writing instruction became notable in the late 1950s and the early 1960s (Matsuda & De Pew, 2002). In the 1980s, research in L2 developed from the study of writing products to the study of processes of writing (Raimes, 1983). Matsuda and De Pew (ibid) added that in the 1990s, L2 writing gained recognition as a field of inquiry but researchers such as Carson (2001), Matsuda (2003), Santos (1992), Leki, Cumming and Silva (2008) state that there is no single underlining L2 writing theory in itself. Since then, when researchers have investigated the processes involved in L2 writing, pedagogical, linguistic and psycholinguistic aspects have been applied. Researchers such as Matsuda and Silva (2001) concentrated their studies on pedagogical issues in learning to write in L2 while Genesee (1994) focused on linguistic features of written texts in L2 within the educational setting and De Groot and Kroll (1997) looked into psycholinguistic approaches to the cognitive processes. In addition, as more attention is paid to devising ways to promote progress in L2 writing, researchers from pedagogical and linguistic perspectives devote less attention to what goes on cognitively (ibid). Nevertheless, it is essential to consider these factors relatively, as studies in psycholinguistics are within the broader L2 writing context. In addition, it is also important to know the kind of specific skills required for L2 writing and the role of background knowledge transfer from L1 and L2 writing processes. According to Ransdell and Barbier (2002),

> the original psycholinguistic studies were inspired essentially from writing models elaborated within L1 studies (Flower & Hayes, 1980; Ransdell & Levy, 1996; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1991) whose purpose was to identify the factors determining monolingual learners' writing performances (p. 3).

Several attempts have been made to explore writing practices among L2 writers often resulting in opposing views. The teaching of writing in ESL has drawn on L1 writing as there has been an "implicit assumption that L1 and L2 writing are practically identical or at least very similar" (Silva, 1993, p. 657). However, Silva (ibid) remarks that this false notion led writing teachers to ignore the unique needs of L2 writers. In a review of 72 empirical studies, he clearly sets out the salient important differences between L1 and L2 writing with regard to composing processes (planning, transcribing, and reviewing). Silva (ibid, p. 668) summarizes that "in the eyes of L1 readers", though general composing processes are similar between L1 and L2, "L2 is more constrained, more difficult and less effective". In addition, transcribing in L2 is "more laborious, less fluent and less productive" reflecting lack of "lexical resources". When it comes to doing revision, L2 writers "reviewed, reread and reflected on their written texts" but are "less able to revise intuitively". Silva (ibid) also finds contrasts with certain features of written texts (fluency, accuracy, quality and structure) in L1 and L2, in that "L2 writers' texts were less fluent (fewer words), less accurate (more errors) and less effective (lower holistic scores)". In terms of linguistic concerns, "L2 writers' texts were stylistically distinct and simpler in structure", using "fewer but longer clauses, more coordination, less subordinate, less noun modification and less passivization" (p. 668).

Nonetheless, in his systematic review on the history of ESL composition, Silva highlights that writers seem to employ the same recursive composing process (involving planning, writing and revising) across L1 and L2 writing. This is later echoed by Matsumoto (1995), where he suggests that L1 and L2 writing strategies are similar,

> There must exist something fundamentally common to any act of writing regardless of the language that is something non-linguistic but cognitive strategies that helps writers to meet the goal of producing effective and cohesive writing.
>
> (Matsumoto, ibid, p. 25)

However, Silva (1992) also argues that when the L2 writing task was more difficult, the result was distinctly less effective at the global and local levels than L1 writing.

In an earlier research, Raimes (1985) found that skilled writers used the cyclical process to move back and forth, discovering ideas and meeting goals. By contrast, using the same

composing process, unskilled writers from both L1 and L2 took less time to plan (Pianko, 1979 in Raimes, 1985) and their plans were found to be less flexible (Rose, 1980).

Berman (1994) makes the distinction between skills and grammatical proficiency, arguing that though "many learners transfer their writing skills between languages, their success in doing so is assisted by the grammatical proficiency in the target language" (p. 29). Notably, what sets apart the writers, is that the unskilled ones revisit their writing for the purpose of correcting surface-level errors rather than the plan and product (Raimes, ibid) and for this reason, Zamel (1984) acknowledges the role of language proficiency in determining skill. Berman (1994) believes that writers can transfer their writing strategies from L1 to L2, provided they possess second language grammatical proficiency, and cautions that findings cannot be generalised from the L2 context expecting that the transfer of academic skills will occur. However, in regards to L1 and L2 writing, Kim (2013) note that there is still no consensus that relates the degree of L1 use and its various writing strategies to L2 writing student proficiency and writing tasks (p. 33).

The major concern among those researching writing is with the measurement of teaching approaches to L2 writing in response to students' needs because "writing is a fluid process" (Gardner & Johnson, 1997, p. 36) and "fueled by changes in the writer and changes in the context within which the writer operates" (Graham, Gillespie & McKeown, 2013, p. 4). However, since there is no "coherent and comprehensive theory of L2 writing" (Silva, 1993, p. 668), in order to understand ESL writers' specific needs, researchers such as Swales (1990) conceptualize L2 writing in relation to genre and discourse community. Johns (2003) discusses L2 writing from a social constructionist perspective, towards developing a view of L2 writing as a socially situated activity. In the same vein, my stance is to understand L2 writing specifically among students in the university from these epistemological beliefs.

3.3 PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES TO TEACHING L2 WRITING

The product and process approaches have dominated L2 writing classrooms for the last 20 years. However, over the last ten years there has been an increasing interest in genre-based approaches among L2 writing teachers in order to assist students with decision-making in their writing (Hassan & Akhand, 2010, p. 78).

3.3.1 Product Approach

Product approach is commonly viewed as the 'traditional' approach to teaching L2 writing, which Nunan (1991, 1999) describes as a "bottom up" approach. Students' writing skills get improved through the combination of sentence and grammar exercises, beginning with isolated sentences, to joining in paragraphs with the focus on creating coherent, error free text as the finished product. Proponents of the product approach, such as Badger and White (2000, p. 156), explain that this approach, which is underpinned by behavioural and cognitive theory, is the result of "imitation of input in the form of text". As it is concerned with knowledge about the structure of language, the practice is seen as enhancing students' writing proficiency. Pincas (1982) suggests that a typical 'product class' approach to writing will involve four stages: familiarization (to be aware of text features); controlled writing (to practice language skills); guided writing (to increase freedom until they are ready for free writing); and free writing (students should feel as if they create something of their own). Pincas (ibid) asserts the importance of this approach by concluding that a product approach is concerned about the result of the writing process, the written product but not the processes that create product. Modelling is at the center of this approach - before students arrive at the free writing stage. Saeidi and Sahebkhaier (2011) believe that if modelling is appropriately integrated into the context of writing process, it can be an effective teaching tool.

On the other hand, Yang (2016) sees it as a mechanical process of input and output, emphasizing that students learning to write using the product approach typically use sample texts and are expected to follow this standard sample in order to construct a new piece of writing. Yang (ibid) in his study investigated how teachers used model essays to teach students writing. According to Yang, after the students used the model essay to write, the teachers corrected the composition and gave remarks on the content, organization structure, wording and syntax. The findings show that students used less cognitive processes, and had less agency, as the teachers seemed to be dominating the whole writing process, in what Brakus (2003) identified as essentially a teacher centered approach to writing. Above all, the drawback of students writing using this "bottom up" teaching approach to writing tends to frustrate teachers who then blame the students if they do not meet the demands of the "finished writing" (Murray, 1972, p. 3). Murray (ibid) criticized English teachers who were trained to use the product approach to writing when they reproached their students on their written work when the "product doesn't

improve", and reiterated that since "writing is a demanding, intellectual process", then "correct or incorrect" is not important. Rather, the focus should be on the "evolving process" that writers experience when they need to move backwards and forwards in developing writing skills, and that it is not a linear process.

3.3.2 Process Approach

The process approach is a theoretical shift from the product approach, underpinned by new theories about written communication. Badger and White (2000) explain that writing in the process-oriented approach places less emphasis on linguistic knowledge and pays more attention to planning and drafting. The process approach writing class operates on the principles that L2 writers develop writing skills unconsciously rather than learning the skills formally (ibid). The teacher's role should be student-centred by facilitating students to draw out their potential rather than to feed them input. This is in contrast to the traditional approach of the teacher-centred product approach.

Research on students' composing strategies have become a major area of concern since Emig's (1971) work in this area. Buston (1971, p. v) describes an investigation of the writing process as an "expedition into new territory". A series of studies by Flower and Hayes (1980, 1986) helped to establish the theoretical foundations and since then the approach has influenced classroom teaching and has influenced the adoption and revision of L2 writing curricula in order to accommodate this 'new' approach. Since then, the process approach has had widespread influence on the teaching of writing (e.g. Zamel, 1983 & Raimes, 1985). The notion of a writing process was introduced to L2 studies by Zamel in 1976, who described writing as "a process of developing organization as well as meaning" (Zamel, 1976 in Matsuda, 2003, p. 21). Here, writing is a process through which students are able to explore their thoughts, constructing meaning and assessing at the same time, paying attention initially to the content and meaning and then to form. "Process writing shifts the focus from finished product to the process which pupils need to go through as writers" (Maybin, 2014, p. 186). Since writing itself is a demanding cognitive process, Murray (1972) urges teachers to use the process approach instead of product when teaching L2 writing in order to help students meet the intellectual demands as "process can be put to work to produce a product which may be worth reading".

Process, according to Flower and Hayes (1980), is an approach in which writers have to make a series of decisions and choices. Through their most influential model of the cognitive processes in writing, both of them identified the components of long-term memory, organisation of planning, translating, revising and reviewing thought into the text, in an attempt to represent the significant thinking and reasoning processes and constraints where each writing element contributes to the overall recursive process. Although Berninger et al. (1996) contested whether the model could also help to explain the way novice writers develop their writing as much as skilled writers, Flower and Hayes (1980) explained that this could be viewed as the writer's tool kit where the stages of writing are not constrained to be used in a fixed order. Modifications to the cognitive process model, proposed by Berninger et al. (1996, p. 193), enabled not only "skilled adult" writers to understand that the writing development process is cyclical but also to help "non-skilled children" to conceptualize their own writing development from the process perspective.

Other researchers in the field believe that the focus of process approach is as simple as *how* a text is written instead of the final outcome. Badger and White (2000) assert that writing using the process approach is "predominantly to do with linguistic skills such as planning and drafting and there is less emphasis on linguistic knowledge about grammar and text texture" (p. 154). Whereas the primary goal of product writing is error free coherent text, process writing on the other hand allows for the fact that no text can be perfect, and that this recursive process of writing is important (Hyland, 2003). L2 writers will get closer to perfection as revision serves to reshape both thinking and product. As it is called a top down approach by Nunan (1999), the teacher primarily facilitates students' writing and provision of input is considered less important, implying that the writer is the center of attraction (Silva, 1993). The process approach pays attention to students' writing and their writing abilities which in turn helps them to understand the writing process and fully develop their thinking ability. To better understand the process approach, Kroll (2001, p. 220-221) added that students "are not expected to produce and submit complete and polished responses to their writing assignments without going through stages of drafting and receiving feedback on their drafts, be it from peers or from teacher followed by revision of their evolving text". This concludes that, in a way, the process approach tends to focus more on varied classroom activities that could promote the development

of language brainstorming, rewriting and group discussion -feedback seems to be an important element in this disorderly fashioned approach.

3.3.3 Genre-Based Approach

Another outcome of the sociocultural approach to language is the emergence of genre studies which draws heavily on Halliday's (1978) theory of Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL). This model focuses on the specific ways of using language in relation to how certain things are "acclimatized within our culture and that different contexts and language purposes are associated with different registers or genres of language" (Maybin, 2014, p. 186). The approach considers writing as a social and cultural practice (Hassan & Akhand, 2010) in which learners write for a discourse community. In the creation of coherent and cohesive texts, genre writing seems to be beneficial as generic structure is emphasized in the writing instruction (Jarrell, 2000). Proponents of the genre approach argue that making the genres explicit, and showing how to write, will enable learners to more fully understand how knowledge is constructed in different academic disciplines. Furthermore, Fulkerson (2005) suggests that the emergence of composition as genre reflects the concern for the social aspect of writing.

Unlike the process approach to writing that places the emphasis on the learner's cognition and expects them to discover the appropriate forms in the process of writing itself, Cope and Kalantzis's (1993) idea of the genre-based approach places the emphasis on how L2 learners can produce academic writing that adheres to the sociocultural norms of a particular academic genre. With respect to the application of a genre-based approach in the classroom, learners do not just write but they write to accomplish different purposes in different contexts and even the way that language used is also different (Hyland, 2003). Although Johns (2003) applauds genre-based instruction to writing, she also warns that genre-based instruction might confuse L2 writing teachers about which decisions to adopt in the classroom. Feez and Joyce (2002) proposed their teaching and learning cycle which involves five stages of teaching, namely: building the context; modelling and deconstructing the text; joint construction of the text; independent construction of the text; and linking related text, which could be implemented in the classroom. Underpinning this is the notion of scaffolding that relies on social constructivist language acquisition theory (Feez & Joyce, 2002; Hammond, 1992) where learners are exposed to

the purpose, generic structure and language features of texts. Hyland (2003) agrees that this helps teachers to explore ways to scaffold students' learning towards a conscious understanding of target genres. However, according to Hinkel (2006), the appropriateness of the genre-based approach in the academic context is debatable as many experts believe that genres and their linguistic features may be "subjective, vaguely defined, unstable or even irrelevant to diverse types of ESL/EFL learners" (Widdowson, 2003 in Hinkel, ibid, p. 124).

The process writing and genre-based approaches derive from different focal points. The first treats language as a personal resource which is more learner centred and the second treats language as a social construct (Maybin, 1994, p. 193). However, both claim to 'empower' students by firstly giving them ownership of their writing and secondly through equipping them with important linguistic skills. Both approaches are seen as complementary rather than oppositional, building motivation and learning opportunities into the process of writing but also ensuring that learners understand and can work with the linguistic structures needed for specific genres.

3.3.4 Peer Learning as an Instructional Approach

I consider peer learning as a model in its own right in terms of approaches to developing writing in university classrooms. According to Boud and Cohen (2014), peer learning is an abstract term suggesting a two-way reciprocal learning with the emphasis that the learner simultaneously learns and contributes to the learning of others, primarily in group work. Jagues (1997) agrees that group work should involve peers learning from each other but also finds that peer learning need not be just about learning to work in groups. Taking the perspective of social constructivism in which learning is a social activity (Vygotsky, 1978), I analyse the idea of peer learning, the extent to which it scaffolds learning and its role in successful group work.

In peer learning, learners are expected to develop knowledge through social interaction with others. One of the ways to promote social interaction during learning is by promoting face-to-face contact by writing tasks in groups in the university classrooms. Storch (2002, p. 121) reiterates that "the basic premise of this theory is that knowledge is social, knowledge is constructed by interactions of individuals within society and learning is the

internationalization of the social interaction". However, for that interaction to take place, a "more able member" needs to assist the learning of the other (Storch, 2013). According to Dale (1994), the notion of group writing allows learners to think and they can learn from their peers' thinking strategies and writing styles. The most prominent feature of group writing is the social interactions between the group members and how, during the interaction, they will both initiate ideas and oppose them, thereby allowing reflective and generative thinking (Daiute & Dalton, 1993). In agreeing not only *what* to say but also *how to say* in their co-authored work, learners need to negotiate the co-construction of knowledge and the choice of linguistic features used in the text. Banbrook (1999) asserts that during these face-to-face interactions, learners do not only negotiate the topic but also their relationships. Saunders (1989) argues that a classroom with mixed ability learners may affect the role relationships play and learning might not always take place. When learners work together, the deliberations made with regards to grammatical form, lexical choices, the meaning of words and phrases, the mechanics and cohesion at both sentence and discourse level can be made by the learners and 'corrected by others' (Storch, 2013). Learning between learners, whether in groups or pairs, is demonstrated from their interactions where collaboration and negotiation happen. The notion of negotiating here is to respond to the feedback in order to reach agreement on what and how to express ideas in the jointly produced text. Camps et al. (2000) infer that when learners write in pairs, they are actually engaging themselves in collaborative dialogue. This approach to L2 writing enables learners not only to co-author a text but also enables them to articulate their disagreements and this collaborative dialogue creates new knowledge and new understanding about the production of the text. In this process, ideas which are vocalised will be available for further deliberation. Later, in learners' deliberations, important cognitive processes will be engaged until they can express their intended meaning accurately and appropriately (Camps et al., ibid).

Composing in a group is a challenge especially as there might be linguistic and knowledge gaps between learners. Gass (1997) and Pica (1994) cited in Storch (2013) argue that during pair interaction, a learner will benefit most from negotiation with a competent peer of similar L2 proficiency. Writing is a problem-solving task, and it allows learners to exchange ideas and information and will likely generate further negotiations. Long (1983) proposes that the more negotiations learners engage in, the better learning takes place. In addition, Takahashi (1989), Varonis and Gass (1985), Polio and Gass (1998) as cited in

Storch (2013) hypothesize that if learners share the same L1, or are at a similar level of L2 proficiency, they are likely to engage in fewer negotiations than if they come from different L1 backgrounds or have different levels of L2 proficiency. Long's (1996) interaction hypothesis puts forward that, receiving responses and interactional peer feedback while taking turns and roles negotiating for meaning in the process of composing, facilitates L2 learning.

3.4 ESL WRITING IN MALAYSIA

Researchers and teachers on and of ESL in Malaysia ESL have a range of views regarding the effectiveness of product and process approaches. Chow's (2007) research reveals that ESL teachers in Malaysian schools generally resort to the traditional product approach focusing more on linguistic features which are seen as key to effective writing. Chow (ibid) adds that the main reason why the product approach remains in classrooms is because of the "teachers' attitudes and their beliefs; teachers who are taught and trained in the product writing practices naturally conduct the teaching according to the way they write in school".

Stapa and Majid (2012) feel that the process approach could offer solutions to writing problems given the limitations of the product approach. Hassan and Akhand (2010, p. 77) take a different view, arguing that "in most of the ESL classes, we can have mixed ability group that vary so widely that one approach cannot be adopted". Rahmah (1999) agrees, stating that no single approach is sufficient for how writing is learned and developed. Nonetheless, Bhajan (1995), Chow (ibid), Heng and Chan (1996), Mahaletchumy (1994), Mohammadi et al. (2012) and Palpanadan et al. (2015) put forward their concern that the process writing practice, which promotes learners to draw on their development of language use, is yet to be implemented in the L2 Malaysia writing classroom. Thus, it seems the writing pedagogy in Malaysia's ESL classrooms places emphasis on linguistic accuracy and writing mechanics so that students produce work showing good use of language with error free structures (Palpanadan et al., ibid).

Still primarily focusing on linguistic features, Hong et al. (2011) analysed 130 essays submitted to Malaysia's learner corpus, EMAS (The English of Malaysian School Students) and found that students made seven types of collocational errors, the most

frequent of which is preposition-related. This corpus-based study was seen to be important, as the appropriate use of collocations enables students to use accurate vocabulary to express their ideas effectively and convincingly when writing. The findings seemed to recommend the product approach to writing, emphasizing accuracy and proficiency. In this regard, Hong et al. (2011) suggest that some linguistic categories need to be taught as the ineffective use of vocabulary and structural errors hamper the writing among L2 learners in Malaysia.

Palpanadan et al. (2015) on the other hand, points out that teachers focusing on the end product by encouraging students to produce an essay identical to a model, rather than focusing on the writing process, will not help foster effective writers. Research studies show that while models are helpful for learners when writing essays, it can also hinder them from developing further writing abilities (e.g. Nazim & Ahmad, 2012). While the debate over the most effective approach to the teaching of writing continues, learners are seen as struggling more and more with language. Due to students' inadequate grasp of grammar or vocabulary, or both, there is more pressure to address the problem of how to help L2 writers in HEIs to improve their English language proficiency (Mohammadi et al., 2012; Palpadanan et al., 2015) than on integrating different writing approaches in the classroom.

Chow (2007) asserts that teachers who grew up learning to write in traditional ESL product oriented classrooms bring into their teaching practice the notion of *good English* as the key to successful writing. Beach and Bridwell (1984, p. 312) agree that "the attitude that teachers have toward writing strongly influences their own teaching", and Murray (1984, p. 7) confirmed that "teachers naturally want students to study what we want to study and to learn from it what we or our teachers learned". Another reason given by Zamel (1985, p. 86) is that ESL teachers "overwhelmingly view themselves as language teachers rather than writing teachers" and in the end, the teaching of writing in Malaysia classrooms remains excessively structured and teacher centered (Chow, ibid).

In order to understand learners' relation to their teacher's approach in the university classroom, Ming and Alias (2007) approached 756 undergraduates from three Malaysian public universities to investigate their readiness for autonomy. The findings revealed that a majority of the students from all three universities preferred a teacher-centred approach

to learning as they preferred their teachers to inform them of their mistakes, guide and motivate them. The authors hypothesize that this could be the washback effect of the 'spoon-fed' system operating in most Malaysian schools. However, Ming and Alias do not conclude that the students therefore do not have the capacity for autonomy just because they prefer this teacher-centred learning mode as there could be socio-cultural influences.

When rote learning takes place in the classroom, students display high respect and acceptance of the knowledge (Siti Zuraina et al., 1999). ESL writing in school is only seen as products written based on what their teachers want them to write for the purpose of *good grades* and *good writing* rather than understanding for themselves the processes of writing. Osman (2004, p. 27) asserts that from the sociocultural perspective, "genre approach is not a rigid, formulaic way of constructing texts" whereby, learners can learn through the process of writing by knowing what the end product could look like and proposed in his studies to practice genre-based as the integration of the two approaches to writing. Similarly, Reid (1994, p. 151) suggested that 'inexperienced' L2 writers needed to "develop their understanding of academic prose" first before allowing them to write in a student-centred classroom environment. Horowitz (1986) argued that the process approach over emphasizes the writer's mental processes than with teaching the equally important aspects of writing requirements such as conventions and task types. What is striking in this debate, is the fact that scholars from product, process and genre approaches to teaching writing seem to claim that one approach 'empowers' learners but uphold the idea that the three approaches complemented each other within students' L2 writing development (Badger & White, 2000). However, this implies that it is understood that the matter raises the question of finding an approach to connect the fundamental contrasts between product and process as approaches to writing (Durako et al., 1997).

3.4.1 Writing in Universities

There are few studies investigating different writing approaches in Malaysian university classrooms. However, from the studies that have been carried, it is clear that the writing approach in Malaysian ESL classrooms is still predominantly form focused (e.g. teachers focusing on structure and content with emphasis on surface level errors and mechanics of the language (Mahaletchumy, 1994). Teachers may claim to use the process oriented

approach but respond only to the mechanics on drafts (Morra & Asis, 2009), something that I observed in the university writing classrooms. Underlying traditional product-oriented writing classrooms is the assumption that to be successful at writing is to focus on *good* English, alluding to linguistics features and seldom to rhetoric concerns. L2 students then get the message that it is *what* they have to say (process) on paper that is more important than *how* they say it (product), and this appeared challenging as they started writing in the university. Chow (2007) puts forward his concern that at tertiary level, students are required to realise how to communicate viably through their writing, particularly when given writing tasks. In any case, huge numbers of our students end up at a misfortune.

Recent research has looked more closely at Malaysian students' perceptions pertaining to their own experiences and writing practices. For example, Osman and Bakar (2009) found in their study, that, although most students tended to perceive problems in writing to be about grammar and vocabulary, their mixed method investigation through questionnaire and interview revealed that students were also having problems with aspects of writing. 27 medical students in a public university reported that in a writing module, they had problems with background, text citation and paraphrasing. Another study by Hiew (2012) investigated ESL students' challenges when using their dialogue journals. The findings showed that 32 out of 46 respondents from public and private universities in Malaysia required a longer period of time to write an essay, as they found it difficult to plan the outline in the pre-writing stage. The reasons were that, especially for low and average students, they had to mentally construct sentences in their first language before translating them into English. Since respondents were also not familiar with writing skills such as synthesizing, paraphrasing and citing resources, they experienced writing in the university as extremely difficult. Raoofi (2014), in a qualitative investigation into L2 writing strategies of Malaysian university students, found that the highly proficient student writers used more metacognitive strategies, such as organizing ideas and revising content, than the less skilled ones did.

The literature review has revealed that although there are some studies on different teaching approaches and learning strategies regarding ESL writing in the university classrooms, few focus on the students' predicaments and challenges from the perspectives of the students themselves. They also fail to shed light on how product-process and genre

approaches to writing might influence their academic practices. I believe that sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and Lea and Street's academic literacies as the framework, provide a theoretical perspective through which to analyse and understand the learning process and development of academic writing among L2 writers. Sociocultural theory also supports the analysis of peer learning and interaction in the writing groups I observed in the university context.

In this chapter I have referred to literacy theorists such as Barton and Ivanič (1991), Gee (1996), Lea and Street (1998), Street and Street (1984), who argue that the New Literacies is the approach to understanding student writing and literacy in academic contexts challenges the deficit model. From this perspective, students writing could be conceptualised through the use of three overlapping models: study skills, academic socialisation and academic literacies. Lea and Street (1998) have argued that "student writing and learning as issues at the level of epistemology and identities rather than skill or socialisation" (p. 159). I believe that this is an appropriate framework by which to gain a deeper understanding of university students' writing experiences in L2, with specific attention to group writing, rather than to focus on *good writing*.

The literature shows that in Malaysian university classrooms there is a clear emphasis on product and process approaches which both lead to a focus on composing skills rather than on meaning. It is apparent that the use of model texts leads to the product-oriented goal of producing a parallel text, using the language of the 'target product'. In addition, when teachers respond to students writing, the focus tends to be on form and not content.

The genre-based approach can also be seen as being used to help students understand their specific text according to the demands of particular contexts. This thesis does not use the approaches discussed thus far in order to establish which is more or less effective. Rather they are used as lenses that can illuminate what students need to learn and what teachers need to provide for effective teaching instruction. In a similar vein to Wingate (2012, p. 33), the reason why I draw on product, process and genre-based approaches is to gain "insights into the feasibility of some approaches" and "not to find a one-size-fit-all approach" when it comes to understanding students "journey" to the way they learn to write in Malaysia's university classrooms. Since Wingate (2012, p. 27) claims that there is "no writing pedagogy developed by proponents of Academic Literacies, and the

model's impact on higher education policy has remained limited as a result", it is also my hope to contribute to the field of study of what constitute writing in my context.

3.5 CONCLUSION

My study addresses the gap identified by Barkhuizen (1998) in terms of studies that investigate students' learning overtly and systematically. Through the students' own voices, I seek not reality but rather students' abstract reality, their fact (Riley, 1997). In order to develop academic writing, it is important for students' beliefs to be heard, in particular their view on the relationship between their beliefs and academic writing practices.

In keeping with the sociocultural perspective, I asked student writers questions about their previous writing experience in school, given that culture, academic and socio-economic background and prior educational experiences are all factors that can affect students' successful transition into HE (Fisher et al., 2011). Since most of the writing tasks in the classrooms I observed required students to write in groups, I use the concepts of scaffolding, MKO and ZPD to explore how students write with their peers and how they respond to the pedagogical approaches of their teachers and their feedback.

From the academic literacies perspective, academic writing is not simply an issue of learning a set of practices, creating a grammatically correct text and claiming about good or bad writing but it is about "conceptualizing writing in academic context" (Lea & Street, 2006). In reference to this, to enable students to write effectively is to "treat reading and writing as social practices that vary with context, culture and genre (Barton & Hamilton, 2012; Lea & Street, 2000, p. 368; Street & Street, 1984). Pahl and Rowsell (2012) suggest that combining an understanding of literacy as a set of skills with an understanding of how learners use literacy in everyday life can help to encourage their writing and reading development in classroom settings. Using insights from academic literacies about writing in HEIs, has helped me to focus on and explore writing practices, helping me to go beyond the dominant tendency of viewing as a set of skills. My research is based on the belief that writing is socially constructed within relations of power, and that this has consequences for the identity of the writer who is represented in the writing (Ivanič, 1998).

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The chapter discusses the research methodology I employed for this study. As noted in Chapter 1, the aim of this study was to explore students' experiences of academic writing in second language (L2), with specific attention to the higher education (HE) context in Malaysia. This chapter begins with the justification for the selection of a social constructivist paradigm, followed by the rationale for utilising ethnography as an approach and how I constructed case study to complement my ethnographic approach. The reasons for selecting a single case study are also discussed. Next, access to participants and ethical considerations for this research are outlined. A combination of research methods, which includes classroom observations, semi-structured interviews and document review, are employed to gain insight into students' understanding of their academic writing experience. The data are analysed thematically on an iterative basis. In order to enhance data richness and research credibility, the chapter ends with a presentation of a reflexive evaluation of my dual role as teacher-researcher which impacted the research.

4.1 MAPPING OUT MY RESEARCH ORIENTATIONS

Reviewing the literature not only enabled me, as the researcher, to problematise my own assumption[16] and to situate the theories I wanted to use within a larger framework of ideas but it also gave me the opportunity to examine my claims and my methodological justification while investigating the data (Ravitch & Riggan, 2016), thereby informing my own methodological orientation. The focus of this research is on interpretation, based on a qualitative approach, using data that allows me to examine and understand teaching writing approaches in university writing classrooms in order to understand how undergraduate students write alongside other people.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), there are four elements of a research paradigm to be understood when researchers undertake a qualitative study. The philosophical assumptions behind qualitative research are based on (1) the epistemology that relates to

[16]My dual role as teacher-researcher took me to having an implicit assumption that students will be able to transfer the language skills learnt in schools to the HE context. (mentioned in Chapter 1).

what counts as knowledge and how knowledge claims are justified; (2) the ontology that refers to the nature of reality; (3) the axiological that centres on the roles of values shaping the research; and (4) the methodology that discusses the process of doing research in obtaining the knowledge of reality (Creswell, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

I decided that the social constructivist paradigm best suited my study. Epistemologically, the students' writing practices and their perceptions are shaped by the "interdependence of social and individual processes in the co-construction of knowledge" (Palincsar, 1998, p. 345). Social construction is interested in how utterances *work* and Potter (1996) believes that "the world […] is constituted in one way or another as people talk it, write it and argue it" (Potter, 1996 in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 98). Ontologically, my study leans towards constructivism, taking the stance that humans construct knowledge and meaning from their experience and ideas (Schwandt, 1994). I agree with Creswell (2014, p. 22) that "individuals seek understanding in which they live and work. They develop subjective meaning of their experiences – meanings directed toward certain objects or things". I found both of these positions useful in helping me to understand how students learn writing in the university setting based on their past shared writing experiences as well as how their teachers applied their teaching. Axiologically, I had to be aware of the potential conflicts and ethical problems as greater familiarity can lead to a loss of subjectivity during the construction of knowledge (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In my dual role as teacher and researcher, I was faced with the dilemma of deciding what constituted research and what constituted normal practice in the classroom setting that could potentially shape my research process. As an insider-researcher, I could also make wrong assumptions about how students write, based on my prior knowledge as a teacher, that could be considered as bias (Taylor, 2002). Therefore, it was crucial for me to critically reflect on my own research process and roles in producing a study on how students write, as reflexivity is seen as part of "quality control in a qualitative research" (Braun & Clarke, ibid, p. 37). Methodologically, my qualitative study employed an ethnographic case study method during data collection. This method allowed me to describe and interpret the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviours, beliefs and language of a culture-sharing group (Harris, 1968 in Creswell, 2014, p. 90).

4.2 WHY ETHNOGRAPHY AS AN APPROACH?

As stated earlier, the aim of my research was to understand the academic writing practices of students pursuing HE in Malaysia. With reference to students' writing, I found it was necessary to be aware of challenges arising when writing, from their perspective. During my research into academic writing, I read an article which adopted an ethnographic approach (Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995) and which described the contrasting cultural norms of academic writing and academic writing instruction at a large U.S. university. My research approach was strongly influenced by the New Literacy Studies where researchers took an ethnographic perspective on literacy to yield "detailed, in-depth accounts of actual practice in different cultural settings" (Street, 1993, p. 1). In a more recent study, Street (2015), suggests that an ethnographic perspective enables researchers to listen, hear, and see what people are doing with literacy and thereby engage with their real meaning. In this case, whilst trying to understand students' university writing practices from the Academic Literacies lens, drawing data from student voices, as one of the ethnographic methodologies, allowed "the researcher to become more familiar with the students" contexts' and their "writing practices and experiences" (Paxton, 2012, p. 382-383). Street (2015), citing Hymes, emphasizes the importance of an "emic" rather than an "etic" perspective, focusing on the research participants rather than imposing our own perspectives from the outside.

Using ethnography as an approach to my study, *rich description* was the main feature of qualitative research that I wished to exploit (Wolcott, 2008). This helped me to build a systematic understanding of the writing cultures that informed my student writers (from their perspectives) which I observed during my fieldwork when investigating this phenomenon within its real-life context.

4.3 CONSTRUCTING A CASE STUDY

The term *case study* is often used in conjunction with ethnography (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). For Creswell (1998), a case study is an important element of ethnography, although it can differ in several important ways. Stake (1995) draws a thin line between case studies in their 'unique context', focusing on an event that describes and interprets individuals rather than as a group. The emphasis of uniqueness is not just on how different the event is from the norm, it also focuses on the collections of features

and the sequence of happenings which are unprecedented (Stake, 1995). Creswell (1998), however, bases case studies on shared patterns developed as a group by focusing on an in-depth exploration of a 'bounded system' based on extensive data collection involving multiple sources of information. Stake (ibid) also agrees that a case study is "a choice of what to be studied", and the word 'what' here refers to the 'bounded system' (p. 443). As a researcher, I might not be able to draw a line that marks where the case begins and ends, but I found that the uniqueness and "boundedness, contexts and experience are useful concepts for specifying the case" (Stake, ibid, p. 3).

The uniqueness and boundary that defined the case in my study were the experiences of ten university students from three different disciplines and three academic writing teachers who participated in the mandatory academic writing courses. I selected a single case study design (Stake, ibid) from an institution of higher learning in Malaysia, based on the broader context of writing practice in a second language. The observing and interviewing of three groups of students and three academic writing teachers within one institution provided an appropriate and substantial sample for the objectives of the study. My study, compiled from multiple sources of information (classroom observations, individual and group interviews, audio material and documents) examined multiple case-based themes which helped me to develop my four analysis chapters.

Creswell (1998) argues that ethnography and case studies can be researched together as the inclusion of a case study could narrow the focus into a more in-depth study of a particular context. I found that case study was useful "to explore a program, a process, an activity, one or more individuals in depth bounded by time and activity within its real-life context" (Creswell, 2003, p. 273), and helped me to better understand students' approaches to group writing. As my research questions seek to explain present circumstances using *how* social phenomenon works, the more, I believe, that my case study research will be relevant (Yin, 2014). In this regard, a single case study helped me to develop a deeper understanding of the experiences and perceptions of students and their academic writing teachers in relation to their approaches to writing practices in HEIs. Stake (ibid) asserted that the purpose of a case study is "to optimise understanding of the case study rather than to generalise beyond it" (p. 443). These complementary purposes were aligned with the aims of the study, and helped to implement the use of case study methodology.

To complement my case study, an ethnographic approach allowed me, as a novice researcher, to access social meanings, observe behaviour and work closely with my participants by listening to their voices. This enabled me to report their university writing experiences by "telling it like it is from the inside" (Brewer, 2000, p. 11). In-depth interviewing, classroom observations, personal documents, and discourse analyses of natural language helped me to gain clarification of their challenges as novice writers. This ethnographic approach allowed me to "understand people's actions and their experiences of the world, and the ways in which their motivated actions arise from and reflect back on these experiences" (Brewer, ibid, p. 11). The construction of a case study using an ethnographic approach therefore enabled me to explore and provide the lens through which the data was interpreted (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), and to develop in-depth insights into understanding L2 writing practices among students in HEIs in Malaysia.

4.4 IN SEARCH OF RESEARCH SITE AND ACCESS TO PARTICIPANTS

Whilst looking for my research site, I optimistically proposed my home university which could offer convenience sampling through its accessibility and familiarity, in order to "save time, money, and effort, but at the expense of information and credibility" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 28). There are two other types[17] of higher institutions in Malaysia, however, I opted to return to the university where I had taught as an academic writing teacher before beginning my PhD study, in search of a quest as an insider-researcher. This comprehensive-type public university is located in the state of Selangor on the West Coast of Malaysia and has a Language Centre. I would like to highlight that this study only seeks to understand the different perspectives of writing culture among undergraduate students, and is not setting out to compare best practice across other higher learning institutions in Malaysia.

[17] Public universities in Malaysia are categorized into three: i) 'Research Universities' (focus on research activities and teaching based on research and development), ii) 'Focused Universities' (focus on specific fields such as technical, education, management and defence) and iii) 'Comprehensive Universities' (offer courses in various fields of studies for all levels of education including pre-undergraduate, undergraduate, and postgraduate degrees) from www.mohe.gov.my

Before the site visit

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p. 81), the "principle of informed consent becomes apparent at the initial stage of the research". This is to highlight that it is crucial to gain access to the location where research will be conducted and to acknowledge that the potential participants have agreed to take part in the research. In my case, approval was first sought and obtained from the ethics committee of the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, the University of East Anglia (UEA), for access to the participants (see Appendix E). Next, official permission was also obtained from the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) of Malaysia to conduct my study in one of the public universities in Malaysia (see Appendix F). Since I intended to conduct the interview sessions and observe the teaching and learning in the writing classrooms throughout the entire 14 academic weeks, I communicated this intention via an email to Dr Pauziah (pseudonym), the (then) Dean of the Academy of Modern Languages, University of Nusantara, a month before I returned to my home country for fieldwork. My initial contact with Dr Pauziah to seek approval for my research followed what Simons (2009, p. 39) regards as an "in principle agreement". This 'in principle agreement' was arranged in advance to "establish the personal relationship that is so essential to good field relations" (Simon, ibid, p. 39) to ensure that the data collection process would not be affected. An official letter from Dr Pauziah which granted approval of my request was received by me upon my arrival in Malaysia (see Appendix G). As "it is wise not to take access granted by a key gatekeeper to mean that it covers all in the organization" (Simon, ibid, p. 40), I, as an insider-researcher, then established my own relationship and negotiated access with each teacher participant for interview sessions and classroom observations.

First visit

When I received the ethics approval from the UEA, it was already the first week of teaching and learning for semester March-June 2016 session at the Academy in Malaysia. On my first site visit, I met with Dr Pauziah to receive a formal letter that gave me permission to access the field. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, although I was an insider-researcher and was part of the Academy, I still had to obtain official permission for access to the participants for my data collection in order "to be sensitive to the organization's structure and processes" (Simons, 2009, p. 40). Prior to conducting

interview sessions and classroom observations, I obtained consent from the various academic writing teachers who were involved in the teaching of selected writing classes. I began my data collection phase by sending out invitation emails to only 20 academic writing teachers. The potential participants were selected using purposive sampling strategy as this allowed me to seek information-rich participants who held relevant knowledge (David & Sutton, 2011; Patton, 2002) which, in this case, was based on their involvement in university writing classrooms as the only criteria. Since I envisaged my participants to comprise only between two and four groups of students writing together, and two or three academic writing teachers, I decided to observe and interview, on a first-come basis, those who had agreed to participate in the research. However, I used convenience sampling to select students based on the availability of their academic writing teachers. Once the teachers had agreed, their students were automatically involved in the classroom observations but interviews were carried out on a voluntary basis.

Persuasion to participate

Following the email I sent out to the 20 identified academic writing teachers, seven of them replied stating their agreement to be participants in my study. For my data collection procedure, I had proposed to conduct five classroom observations and five pre- or post-interview sessions. However, after my preliminary meeting with them to obtain their signed consent forms, four of the teachers withdrew their agreement to participate. It appeared that their concern was the time that the interviews would take up and were afraid that they could not commit to that. The other three teachers were also reluctant to make the commitment, but after much negotiation during the preliminary meeting, we agreed that interviews did not have to take place just before or right after classroom observations and that the sessions could be done at the teachers' convenience. In respect of the students, I was prepared to be open to all possibilities regarding how classroom observations and group interviews could be conducted. After the students had signed their consent forms, I found out the majority of them did not give their consent for classroom observation to be audio recorded. Therefore my only way of recording events in the classroom was to handwrite observational notes. Since I planned to interview only three groups of students, I decided to select the first group from each writing class who approached me as student-participants. I ended up with three academic writing teachers

and ten students writing together in three different groups of three different writing classes. Table 4.1 presents the list of teacher-participants and their students who volunteered for the group interview. To ensure anonymity, pseudonyms were used for all of them.

Teachers	Mr Eilyas	Dr Dalia	Ms Raisha
Writing Class	English for Report Writing	English for Academic Writing	English for Summary Writing
Students who volunteered to be interviewed	Eleena, Ema & Siti (Electrical Engineering. 3rd year degree)	Naja, Wan, Farah, Siti and Farhan (Applied Science/ 1st year degree)	Adila & Syuhada (Law/ 1st year degree)

Table 4.1: List of teacher-participants and their students who volunteered for the group interview

4.4.1 Navigating Myself as an Insider-Researcher – My Dilemmas

Jenkins (2000) defines the term *insider-researcher*, as an in-group with access to its past and present. Griffith (1998) suggests it is one who has lived with familiarity but cannot be identified merely by common race, gender or ethnic history. In this study, my insider status was linked to commonalities with my teacher-participants in terms of profession, work roles and responsibilities. Indeed, the student-participants even seemed to mirror my own experience of learning ESL in school and the challenges I encountered in writing during my varsity years (and my continued struggle to master academic writing in my doctoral journey).

Drawing upon my novice research experience, I asked myself, '*how difficult could it be when I am only returning to my 'intimately-known community' – familiar milieu with familiar faces?'* Since having a dual role is a "common feature of ethnographic and social research and integral to an academic literacies approach" (Bailey, 2009, p. 67), I naively assumed that this could help in answering my over-arching research question. I was, perhaps, also led into a false sense of security when I read that, as an insider, I could *reduce the red tape* when making contact with potential participants. I could never have imagined the kind of difficulties that I actually experienced in the field. Minichiello and

Kottler (2010, p. 11) warn qualitative researchers that they will face "surprise, twists and turns in the road and unforeseen obstacles". This really hit home for the first time when one of my own colleagues rejected my request to observe her writing class.

> *Today I approached Raisha and requested her to become one of my participants. She seemed interested but did not want me to observe her teaching. Frankly, the rejection made me feel like I am an outsider. I was confused that my positionality as an insider-researcher led me into difficulties that I had to wait and negotiate access to get consent and gain trust from my own colleagues? We have worked for at least 4 years in the department. I just could not believe this.*
>
> *(Fieldnotes, 4/3/2016)*

During the negotiation stage, perhaps out of frustration and reflection upon my required actions, I logged my activities (see Appendix B), outlining my plan of action and the outcomes I wanted to achieve. This log explains how I went about securing my teacher-participants and requested consent for classroom observations. On 24th March 2016, after almost a month of *chasing* my colleagues, I found three teachers who agreed to be interviewed, and also gave consent for me to enter their classrooms for observations.

> *As an insider-researcher, I felt that my presence was seen as a threat […] that was my hunch. Although they sounded interested at first, but after much discussions, many did not agree for observations and I even realised that some even ran away from me! What was wrong? Well I tried to make them understand that everything will be kept anonymous, but I guess I was just unlucky. Only after a month at the field scavenging for volunteers, I was finally invited by a senior academic writing teacher to observe teaching and learning in his classroom. And from there on, it kind of snow balled that two other senior academic writing teachers whom I approached earlier (who were very reluctant) agreed to volunteer as my research participants. As the number met to what I proposed, I settled in with having three academic writing teachers for my individual interviews with three different writing classes to observe to gather data.*
>
> *(Fieldnotes, 28/03/2016)*

The challenges that I experienced as an insider-researcher during my data collection process made me more reflexive when managing my own activities in the field. I spent many hours writing of the issues in my PhD journal and sometimes recorded myself pouring out and reflecting on what to do next and how could I meet the aims for my research (see Fieldnotes above).

4.4.2 Student-Participants and Their Writing Tasks

Prior to embarking on my fieldwork, I envisaged having two to three academic writing teacher-participants with a group of 25 first year student-participants for my classroom observations, of which eight of them specifically worked in pairs and consented to be interviewed. However, changes were made to the module assessments which required that students no longer had to only write in pairs but could write in bigger groups instead. I realised that I needed to be flexible and open my options in order to observe practices within these writing modules. To my surprise, this provided me with the opportunity to get different perspectives, not limited to pair writing only. The ten student-participants were taught by three different teachers during the March-June 2016 session. Though I initially used convenience sampling to find my participants, they were also selected using sampling strategies as I wanted to find information-rich participants who held relevant knowledge (David & Sutton, 2011; Patton, 2002) – in this case, a criterion based on their involvement in L2 group writing as an approach to their academic writing practices.

Initially, I was anxious that I would not have *enough* data from only three teachers and ten students. However, I was comforted by Creswell (2014) who notes that a small number of participants for an ethnography research is deemed to provide an appropriate and substantial sample for a study of this nature. I came to see that having a smaller number of participants could actually help to develop a deeper understanding of the experiences and perceptions of these particular students and teachers in relation to group writing.

The three teacher-participants came with 20 to 30 years of teaching writing experience and the student-participants had all been taught ESL in school for 11 years and some had an extra year or two of attending writing classes in HEIs for their Foundation or Diploma years. The students were predominantly undergraduates in their first and second year doing their first degree, aged between 20 and 24 years old, were of mixed ability and aptitude. Their university writing modules were assessed as part of the completion of their degree. During my preliminary interviews with the students, I learned from their overall score on MUET (IELTS like in Malaysia – see Chapter 1), that they had fairly intermediate levels of English proficiency and exhibited a wide range writing ability levels, with an average band score between 3 – 5 (see MUET band in Appendix A). The

students were from three different faculties – Faculty of Applied Science (5 doing a Degree in Textile Design), Faculty of Engineering (3 doing a Degree in Electrical Engineering) and Faculty of Law (2 doing a Degree in Law) (see Table 4.2).

Discipline Area	Number of Students in the Classroom	Number of Students Who Took Part in the Interviews	Number of Interview Sessions
Bachelor Degree in Textile Design (English for Academic Writing)	25	5	2
Bachelor Degree in Electrical Engineering (English for Report Writing)	20	3	5
Bachelor Degree in Law (English for Executive Summary Writing)	25	2	1
Total	65	10	8

Table 4.2: L2 student writers as research participants by field of study

Students from English for Academic Writing module

Hana, Wan, Ika, Farahin and Naja were first year students undertaking a Bachelor degree course in Textile Design. After my third classroom observation, they volunteered to be interviewed, however only two of them were writing together as a pair. The other three students were close friends and particularly wanted to participate with the group interviews in order to gain further understanding of their own practices. When I questioned them on where their writing partners were, their collective response was – *'others are not here due to time constraint for the interview sessions'.* I had two fruitful interview sessions with these five students, asking questions and listening to their writing experiences.

In this English for Academic Writing module, students had to complete three writing assessments:

1. Write an analysis outline based on 3 – 4 articles, working in groups of 3 to 4

2. Write an annotated bibliography of about 300 words using paraphrasing and summarising strategies and responding critically to a text (450-500 words), working individually
3. Write an essay of 300 – 350 words on a given topic by synthesising information from four excerpts (100 – 150 words each) of the same theme, working individually

Students from English for Report Writing module

Ema, Siti and Eleena were second year students undergoing a Bachelor degree course in Electrical Engineering and they worked together in a group. These three students approached me immediately after I had my first meeting with their class and returned their consent forms agreeing to become my participants. I had five fruitful interview sessions with these three students, asking questions and listening to their writing experiences.

In this English for Report Writing module, students had to complete two writing assessments, namely:

1. Write a proposal presenting a brief introduction, objectives and procedure of the intended study, working within a group of 3 to 4
2. Write a complete schematic report, and edit the language used, working within a group of 3 to 4

Students from English for Executive Summary module

Adila and Shuhada agreed to be interviewed during my final week in the field. They were both first year students undergoing a Bachelor degree course in Law. During my data collection both of them were working with a different partner writing their Executive Summary. Shuhada approached me in the classroom on my last day of observation. She agreed to be interviewed as she wanted '*to share stories writing with my pair*'. She turned up for our meeting with Adila, and they both shared insights into their individual writing experiences. We only managed to meet once but it was a fruitful two hour long session.

In this English for Executive Summary module, students had to complete two writing assessments, namely:

1. Write a summary, working individually
2. Write an executive summary of about 800 -1000 words based on 3 articles or reports on a same theme, working in pairs

Although the number of interview sessions with the ten students varied from one group to the other, their responses provided data which split itself into four themes. I present these themes individually within my four empirical chapters. This data enabled me to answer my over-arching research question.

4.5 RESEARCH METHODS

In order to gather rich data to answer the research questions, my ethnographic case study included classroom observations, followed by a number of semi-structured and unstructured interviews with the student and teacher participants, and also document review. Fieldnotes were made on any significant moments I witnessed, including arguments and utterances between students. Data was collected within a 4 month university term time period (February-June 2016). Fetterman (1998, p. 35) suggests a period of six months to one year as an appropriate time for an ethnographic research as it allows the researcher to "internalize the basic beliefs, fears, hopes and expectation" of the people under study. However, due to time constraints, I could only be there for 4 months, although I hoped that this would provide me with sufficient data. During the first meetings with the three module classes I decided to do a general exploratory observation. After explaining the rationale of my study to the teachers and students, individual and group interviews, classroom observations were set up and documents were reviewed. The data collected helped me to build a systematic understanding of writing cultures while investigating the phenomenon within its real-life context. Table 4.3 provides an illustration of data collection process, followed by further explanation of how these instruments were utilised.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Classroom Observation
A minimum of five classroom observations by three writing classrooms out of 14 weeks</td></tr>
<tr><td>Individual Interview
A minimum of five pre/ post interview sessions for each observed lesson by three academic writing teachers</td><td>Group Interview
A minimum of one group interview session by three groups of students writing together; a group from each writing classroom</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Document Review
Course syllabus
Weekly teaching schedule
Students' writing</td></tr>
</table>

Table 4.3: Process of data collection

4.5.1 Classroom and Participant Observations

Creswell (2014) stresses that observation is one of the key tools used for collecting qualitative research data that could provide first-hand and real life experience of the participants. These real-life situations provided multiple versions of reality which are influenced by social and physical settings such as classroom climate, interactions, and opportunities to participate (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). A review of literature related to tertiary level education (Kirkgoz, 2009; Kovacic et al., 2009; Sert, 2008) indicates limited use of classroom observation in studies focusing on students' perspectives on academic writing practice. These studies, mostly in questionnaire form, limit the ability to capture the social and physical settings in which students negotiate their written tasks.

My study followed the unstructured observation approach which enabled me to gather rich descriptions of a situation and in a flexible manner (Cohen et al., 2011). Although unstructured, I used my research questions to guide my classroom observations. I did not restrict my observations to predefined categories. Stake (2010) adds that "fixed instrument is sometimes constraining, although usually better at maintaining focus" but allowing an observer to write independently would help the reader to see the uniqueness and similarities of the story (p. 91). The use of classroom observations in my study was aimed at understanding how students' learn academic writing based on the roles the teachers had, the kind of support and feedback the teachers gave and the strategies that

the teachers used in the university classroom. Although the unstructured observation format was used, I designed my own observation schedule (see Appendix K) for the purpose of documenting the events and actions in the classroom in order to systematically record my evidence as I progressed from one observation to another.

I found that my role as observer-participant produced a large variety of situations in which to collect data (Yin, 2014). This approach allowed me to undertake the roles of friend and neutral researcher (Angrosino, 2007), building up relationships, observing, and taking fieldnotes on writing practices in and out of the university setting. This approach allowed me to record data without direct involvement and distraction to the activity of the participants. Indeed, observations in the field proved to be a valuable part of the research process within an ethnographic study (Palmer, 2010).

In order to support classroom observations, fieldnotes were utilised. It became apparent that it was important to have a plan for organising my observation fieldnotes as they bore witness to conflicts and utterances that could be important to the research. I therefore completed my fieldnotes while the experiences were fresh in my mind (ibid). I designed an observation sheet, consisting of various segments of fieldnotes gathered during the observation processes, primarily based on the different approaches to writing activities and interactions between the academic writing teacher and student writers, and student writer(s) and group member(s). The student writers were briefed about my planned observations of them and their teachers. Sitting at the back of the classroom, I observed 120-minute sessions and wrote on my observation sheets. Shortly after the class I wrote reflective notes in the right hand column, including each of the analytical issues identified in the protocol (see Figure 4.1). The extended fieldnotes were developed to allow "thick descriptions" to be generated, which closely resemble the "descriptions of incidents in everyday life" (Geertz, 1973 in Simons, 2009, p. 3).

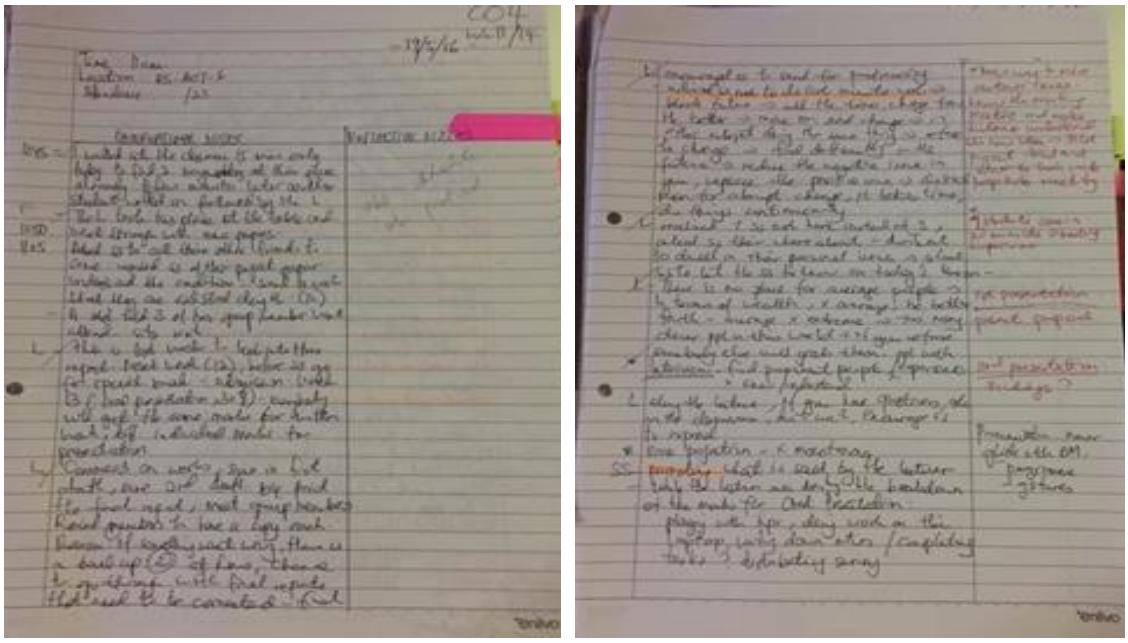


Figure 4.1: Classroom Observation Sheet

Before I met the students, I approached the teacher-participants in order to familiarise ourselves with the procedure and to explain the details of my intended research and the methods of data collection. We talked about how I would conduct the classroom observations and the interviews with the student writers and themselves. Although I had 12 weeks to observe them, I planned to conduct only five classroom observations as I did not want to put pressure on the teachers. Each classroom observation was a two-hour long session. During the data collection period, the schedule for five classroom observations each was determined by my teacher-participants: Mr Eilyas, Dr Dalia and Ms Raisha at a time and date to their convenience. I let the teachers decide on the days they were to be observed because each observation was supposed to be followed by an interview. However, due to their commitments, there were occasions when I had to wait for days before I could conduct the next interview session. On the first day of class, I explained my research to the student writers, explaining my intentions and reassuring them so they could participate wholeheartedly without any feelings of doubt. I thanked them in advance for their willingness to take part in the research and they appeared very supportive and cooperative. I scheduled and sometimes had to reschedule observation sessions based on the timetable for all participating teachers and their students.

4.5.2 Individual and Group Interviews

Yin (2014) suggests that interviews are one of the most important sources of case study evidence. Interviewing allows the researcher to capture the relative perspectives of participants by offering "in depth, open ended inquiry into people's perspectives and experiences" (Patton, 2002, p. 203). Clarification of issues emerging during classroom observations and document study (ibid) can also be gained. My primary reason for interviewing was to collect data on what students felt about L2 writing, specifically when writing in pairs or groups. By observing the events and then interviewing the teacher and student participants after the observations, I found that I was able to fill out an interpretation of what was happening in the classroom that would not have been apparent by mere observation alone. I carried out my interviews with the teacher and student participants for a period of two months, recording, and later transcribing them, for further analysis and interpretation. The interviews revealed some unreported and perhaps uncomfortable aspects of writing in a university setting that were hard for students to discuss with their pair/group members or even with their teachers.

The interview sessions with the three academic writing teachers were conducted individually. The individual interviews provided opportunities for intensive exploration of each teacher's perspectives on the different approaches to teaching writing in the classrooms. On the other hand, as students worked in groups for their writing tasks, it was useful for me to conduct group interviews to listen to their opinions about writing in the university classrooms. A group interview provides views of a larger group of persons and deliberately tries to surface the views of each person in the group (Krueger & Casey, 2009).

Given that the range of language proficiency of the participants varied, I did consider whether some of them might want to be interviewed in *Bahasa Malaysia* rather than in English. However, many opted for English to be used, saying:

> *I am not that fluent so the interview sessions could be a place for me to practice my English.*
>
> *I am used to speaking in English at home and with friends, so I think it should not be a problem. But if I cannot recall a word in English, I will use Malay. Hope that is ok.*
>
> *I want to learn how to express myself in English.*

I adopted an open, less structured, approach to interviewing, paying little attention to linguistic abilities, (particularly when English was spoken), in order to capture the personal aspects of the participants' practices and perceptions in relation to the context under investigation. I used the shorter case study interview approach, mostly focusing for about one hour or so, with the option of it being open-ended (Yin, 2014). I gathered information relevant to my second sub-research question – '*to know what factors enhance or inhibit L2 writing in groups among students in higher education'*. I tried to apply a sensitive approach in order to understand the depth and breadth of their academic writing problems.

I used semi-structured, open-ended questions to search for their views, values, concepts, experiences and challenges when trying to achieve expectations. The three academic teachers were interviewed individually whereas the students were mostly interviewed in groups. It is hoped that this qualitative data on linguistic ability, background knowledge, experiences, beliefs, expectations, and mutual group cooperation could be useful to other student writers and teachers in helping to achieve a better understanding of writing practices in the HE context.

I interviewed students in pairs and groups, deliberately trying to capture the views of each group member. This helped to answer my third sub-research question – '*to learn about students' perceptions, beliefs, and their attitudes towards group writing as a vehicle to writing in the university'*. The respondents (10 student writers) were not selected, as this was based on a voluntary basis, but everybody was briefed on how the interview sessions would be conducted. The interview questions were open ended and interviews ranged from 45 minutes to one and a half hours. All were audio recorded. Based on an analysis of first round interviews (collected in April 2016), a second round of data collection was initiated. I also audio recorded interviews with the three teachers after each classroom observation. It was important to have a schedule so that student and teachers participants knew when their interview sessions would be. Even though all the conversations were recorded, I also wrote additional comments on my Interview Protocol Sheet (see Figure 4.2).

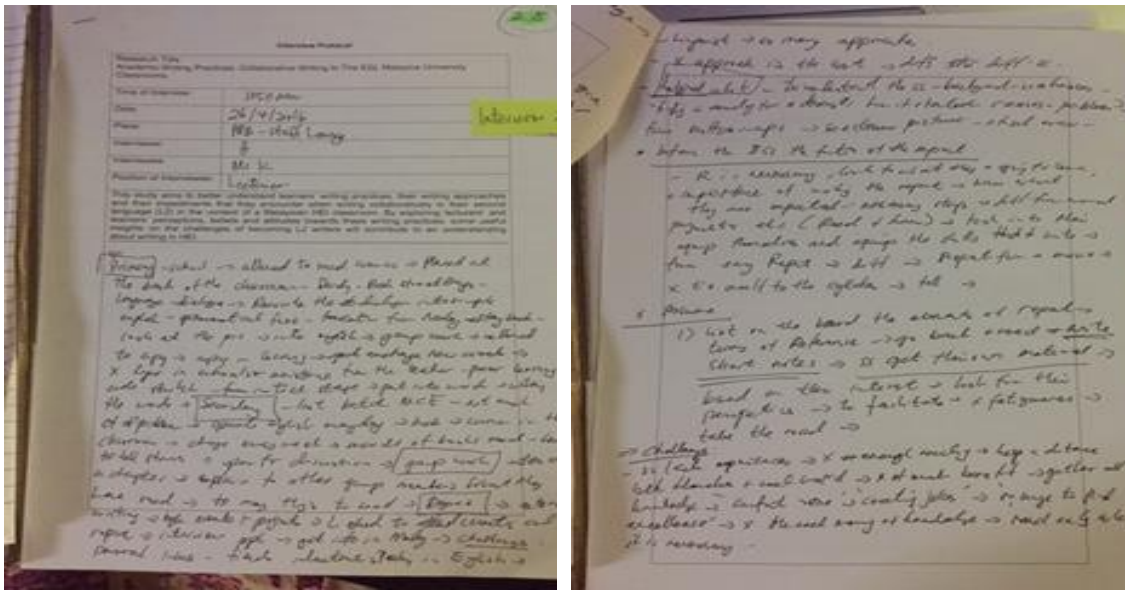


Figure 4.2: Interview Protocol

The qualitative data obtained during observation was typed out and collated into the various elements/themes. Interviews were transcribed and the data was analysed and interpreted (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4).

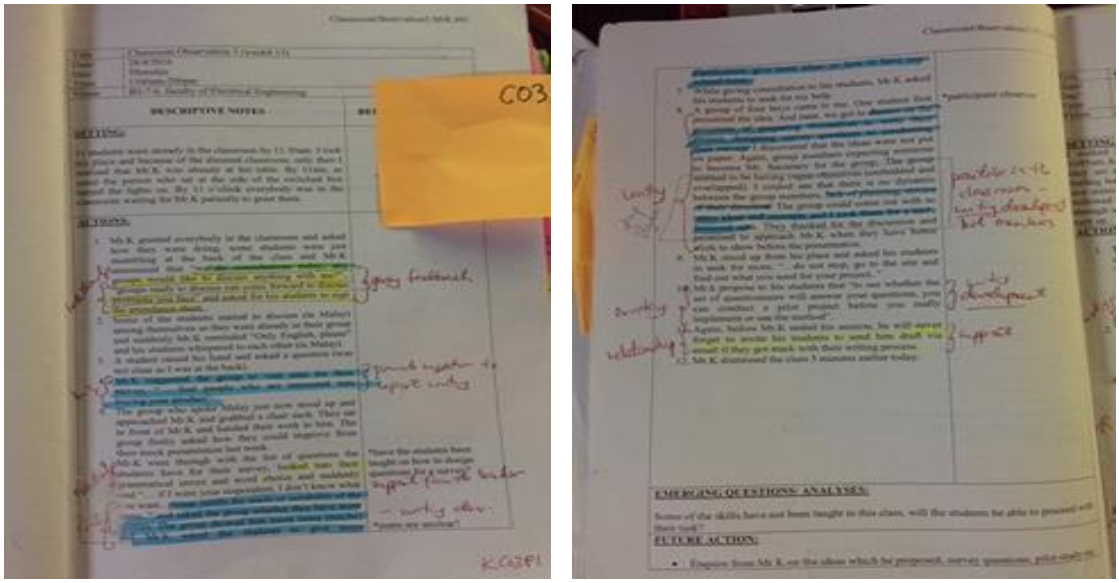


Figure 4.3: Typed observation notes

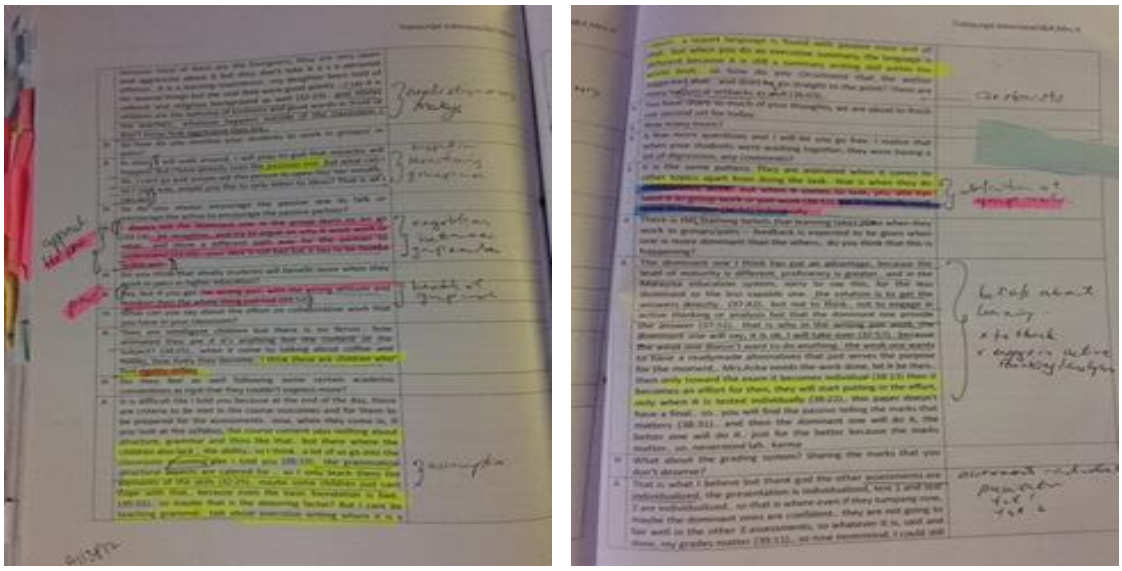


Figure 4.4: Sample of transcribed interview

The interview guide for the teachers and student participants was designed to ensure that I collected comparable data across the three writing modules. This guide included questions about demographic information, writing practices around student academic literacy development, views, values, concepts, experiences, challenges, beliefs, perceptions, expectations, achievements, preferences and commitments. The questions were open-ended in order to enhance the opportunity for truthfulness, reflection and exploration (Bailey, 2009, p. 73). See Appendix C for the list of teachers' questions and students' questions used in the interview sessions.

4.5.3 Document Review

Creswell (2003) asserted that identifying purposefully selected documents will best help the researcher understand the case. In addition, Bowen (2009) specifies that document analysis is often used with other qualitative research methods as a means of triangulation to seek "convergence and corroboration" during the data analysis stage. On the other hand, Simons (2009, p. 63) suggests that if documents are not analysed, they can be used to search "for clues understanding [sic] the culture of organizations, the values underlying policies and the beliefs and attitudes". In this sense, document review refers to the act of gathering anything written that can add depth to the context under study. In my study,

documents were collected both before and during the data collection. To better understand what were taught in the three writing classes that I observed, I collected and reviewed documents related to curriculum and teaching. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, these documents were not part of the main analysis. Before entering the field for data collection, reviewing the documents helped me to explore the significant features of the writing courses. Documents such as Course Information (see Appendix I for a sample) were used to identify the types of writing that the students were taught and to identify the kind of assessments they had to complete. This was important as it enabled me to understand the flow of teaching and learning during my classroom observations. The other document that I collected was the Weekly Schedule of the course (see Appendix J for a sample). The aim of reviewing this type of document was to understand the weekly learning objectives and writing tasks. At the initial stage of data collection, it was crucial to refer to the weekly schedule of the course as it helped me to plan suitable dates to propose for classroom observations. After reviewing such documents, I found that it was impossible to have classroom observations in Weeks 6 and 7 as students had to give oral presentations. It was also impossible to have classroom observations in Weeks 5, 9 and 13 as students had non-face-to-face learning. During these weeks, the students worked in groups out of the classroom on their writing tasks, without the presence of their teacher. I also collected students' writings. The use of students' writing was to facilitate group interviews, to further understand what they felt and how they managed writing in the university classrooms (see Figure 4.5).

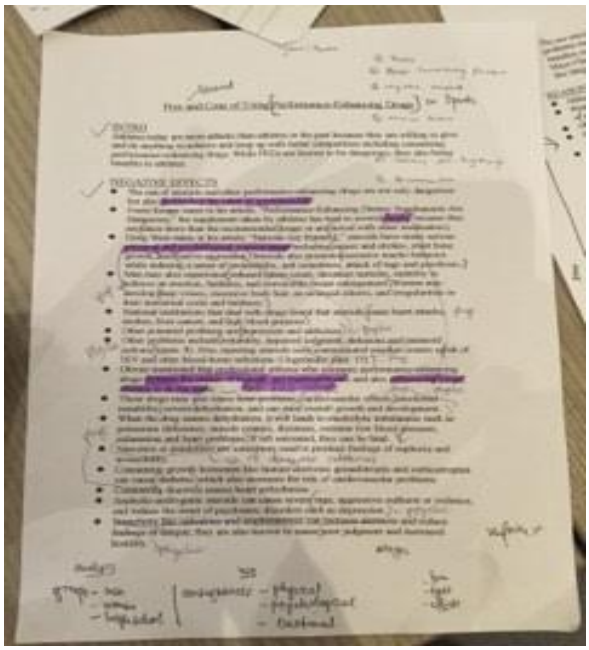


Figure 4.5: A sample of student's writing

In one of the group interviews, one student used her writing (see Figure 4.5) to raise issues regarding the challenges she faced when writing with another person. In this sense, the use of student's sample writing stipulated her own predicaments on academic writing practices. Although Simons (2009, p. 63) says that using documents as a method for some case studies "may seem less relevant", I discovered that it provided "a unique understanding of the culture"; in my case, writing in the university classrooms. Some examples of students' writing and discussion on students' writing experience are given in Chapter 6.

The three modules required different genres of writing to be produced, either in pairs or in groups, throughout the ten academic weeks. The written work was then graded against a holistic rating scale relating mainly to quality of language (e.g. grammatical complexity, errors in lexis and grammar), organisation of writing (e.g. coherence and cohesion) and quality and depth of content (e.g. argument and ideas). Typically, two or three writing tasks were assigned as part of the assessments using the genres of Report, Executive Summary and annotated Bibliography Writing. Students were given a submission date and wrote in pairs or groups.

4.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When a research involves human participants, it requires ethical approval to protect participants and the researcher, an aspect which needs to be attended to before commencing the research (Trafford & Leshem, 2008). In this respect, prior to embarking on data collection for this study, there were several procedural ethics that I had to follow. To obtain ethical consent, I applied to the research ethics committee of the University of East Anglia (UEA), School of Education and Lifelong Learning. This ethical consideration complied with the guidelines of the British Educational Association (BERA) along with the Research Ethics Policy (2018) approved by Senate and Research Ethics Handbook composed by the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, UEA. For the sake of formality, I also obtained ethical consent from the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) of the Malaysian Ministry of Education. Since my return to the university was as an insider-researcher, I did not seek permission from the gatekeepers at the university to enter classrooms and to liaise with the teacher and student-participants for the semester. As explained in 4.4.1, I personally gained approval from the Dean of the Academy involved by detailing the aims and procedures in the study and approached the participants thereafter. Doing an ethnographic research in the education context meant that I had to be cautious in the way I positioned myself as a researcher and also be sensitive of ethical codes of practice. Trafford and Leshem's (2008) summary of key ethical principles include informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality.

Diener and Crandall (1978) in Cohen et al. (2011, p. 78) defines informed consent as "the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions". In my study, the research participants were informed that it was their choice whether or not to take part in the study. After the participants' initial verbal consent was obtained during my first meeting with them, each of them was given a consent form to sign (see Appendix F). The participants were well informed that their participation was on a voluntary basis and they had absolute rights to withdraw at any time that they felt uncomfortable with the process (Cohen et. al, 2011).

I also explained my research aims and assured them of their right to anonymity. To ensure anonymity, the use of pseudonyms was crucial for all the participants, the department and

even the university, in order to protect their true identities (Cohen et al., 2011). In addition, to protect them against harm and unwanted data disclosure, I informed my participants that the information they provided would be kept confidential. I also held full responsibility for safeguarding the confidentiality of the participants' details and input by transcribing all of their responses from the interviews myself. The data gathered from the students and the teachers were kept in strict confidence and I constantly reminded myself not to discuss the information with any third parties. In particular, the data gathered from the students were not discussed with their teachers or with any other relevant authorities.

In addition, the recorded events in my observational notes, participants' audio recordings from the interview sessions and documentation were securely kept and I was the only person who had access to the files; the only other people who read the raw data were my supervisors. I also gained permission from the participants to use the gathered data not only for my PhD dissertation for the University of East Anglia but also for conference presentation and publication purposes. Cohen et al. (ibid) also suggested that ethical issues should be continuously addressed throughout the study. Several times throughout the data collection process, I personally reminded my participants of the importance of maintaining confidentiality and anonymity.

4.7 TRANSCRIPTION, TRANSLATION AND DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis was carried out in order to obtain answers to the various research questions. This process was guided by the ethnographic analysis as proposed by Creswell (2014) using three aspects of data analysis advanced by Wolcott (1994): description, analysis and interpretation of the culture-sharing group. Creswell's method was straightforward: once fieldnotes have been gathered from the observations and transcriptions from the interviews have been analysed (guided by the theoretical framework) the research questions could be answered. However, my research process also involved a lot of decision making.

> *As an academician, this is my first transcribing task. I have never done any transcribing job before and with 15 individual interviews with nine group interview (with the duration of I hour and 30 minutes each) this seems time consuming. As I was contemplating between transcribing the interviews verbatimly would preparing summaries be sufficient for my analysis? Initially thinking that since I am not doing linguistic/ conversation analysis, therefore I do*

> *not need to capture the utterance as detail as possible. However, upon revisiting my data, I just thought that transcribing my interview will be beneficial. By having my transcriptions in hands, I will become more familiar with my data for an easier interpretation for my analysis later on. It will also allow me to see the richness and in-depthness of the data.*
>
> *(Journal entry, 23/9/2016)*

Unlike transcribing for conversation analysis (CA), which requires a very thorough orthographic transcription (capturing all of its spoken words and its linguistic utterances) to understand 'how' it was said (Braun & Clarke, 2013), my study focussed more on 'what' was said. Since Braun and Clarke (ibid, p. 162) suggested that "a transcript is the product of an interaction between the recording and the transcriber", the transcriber is the person who listens and makes choices on what are to be preserved and what are to be presented. Thus, while I manually transcribed, I avoided transcribing every single word and instead decided to correct the grammar used by the respondents and to focus only on the relevant parts. When my respondents code-switched in *Bahasa Malaysia*, I translated their responses into English. What mattered most to me was to capture the meaning rather than to check the 'accuracy' of the recordings since the denaturalism approach allows transcribers to correct the grammar and to remove any interview noise (Oliver et al., 2005). After transcribing the audio recordings, the spoken transcriptions were analysed and manually coded.

According to Thorne (2016, p. 69), an analysis can use an "iterative process in which cultural ideas that arise during active involvement 'in the field' are transformed, translated or represented in a written document where it involves sorting through the data for thematic categorisations and generate conclusions about what is happening and why". Further, in research that is "underpinned by theoretical frameworks such as phenomenology, grounded theory, feminism and ethnography, closeness between researchers and the text is critical to the research design and philosophical tenets of the methodology" (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006, p. 40). My approach to data analysis was similar to what Braun and Clarke (2006) refer to as a thematic analysis, which is "recognised as a distinctive method with a clearly outlined set of procedure for the social sciences". The focus of thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data to address the research question or say something about the issue. Simons (2009) asserts that a good thematic analysis interprets and makes sense of the data. As a novice researcher, the initial stage of my analysis involved constant re-reading

of my observation notes and fieldnotes, interview transcripts and writing analytic memos (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4 for samples where the initial thematic codes and potential questions were handwritten in the margins of the notes). Boyaltzis (1998) also discusses thematic analysis as a process to encode qualitative information and provides principles to code development. However, I personally feel that Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework influenced how I started making decisions and making sense with my data.

Step 1: Become familiar with the data

To become familiar with the data, I repeatedly read my observation notes and fieldnotes and transcripts. At this stage, it was useful for me to make notes and jot down early impressions. Below is an example of my early rough notes from the first group interview with the students:

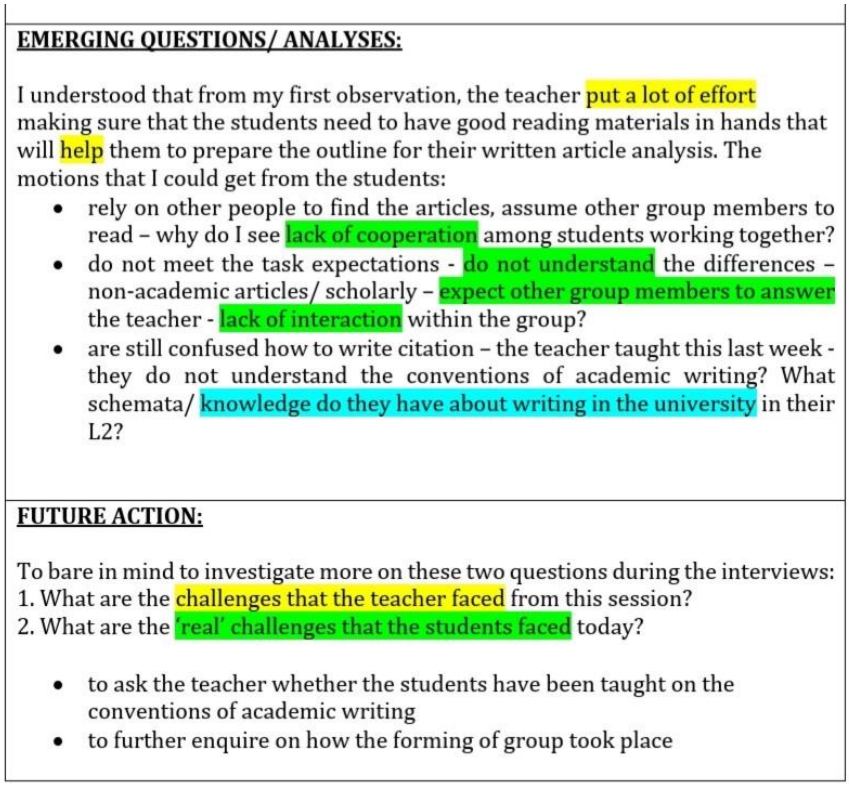
> *The students do seem to think that writing in the university is full of challenges. The emotional impact the students receive from their language teacher and friends is important. There's a sense that the whole idea of writing in the university is to continue writing with the skills they learned from school. The students compare strategies used in school and university classroom.*

From here, I also tried to make sense of the overall understanding of my unstructured approach to observation by asking myself questions. According to Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 15), the three types of questions in qualitative research are "your research questions", "questions you asked participants to generate data" and lastly, "questions you ask of your data in order to answer your research question(s)". I found that to be familiar with the data and to understand what I wrote in my own observation notes and fieldnotes, I had to ask my data some questions. I also used questions as a strategy to generate my initial codes. This is discussed in the next section.

Step 2: Generate initial codes

After familiarising myself with the data, I started organising them in a meaningful way. Critical incidents from the raw data collected from classroom observations formed the basis for developing my initial codes. It was from the questioning strategy that I understood what Wragg (1994) calls 'critical incidents'. According to Wragg (ibid, p. 70), "critical events are not spectacular but are simply things that happen seem to the observer to be of more interest than other events occurring at the same time and therefore

worth documenting in greater details". In addition, Wood et al. (1993, p. 1) describe critical incidents as "highly charged moments and episodes that have enormous consequences for personal change and development".



EMERGING QUESTIONS/ ANALYSES:

I understood that from my first observation, the teacher put a lot of effort making sure that the students need to have good reading materials in hands that will help them to prepare the outline for their written article analysis. The motions that I could get from the students:

- rely on other people to find the articles, assume other group members to read – why do I see lack of cooperation among students working together?
- do not meet the task expectations - do not understand the differences – non-academic articles/ scholarly – expect other group members to answer the teacher - lack of interaction within the group?
- are still confused how to write citation – the teacher taught this last week - they do not understand the conventions of academic writing? What schemata/ knowledge do they have about writing in the university in their L2?

FUTURE ACTION:

To bare in mind to investigate more on these two questions during the interviews:
1. What are the challenges that the teacher faced from this session?
2. What are the 'real' challenges that the students faced today?

- to ask the teacher whether the students have been taught on the conventions of academic writing
- to further enquire on how the forming of group took place

Figure 4.6: The use of questions to derive initial codes

Figure 4.6 is a part of my first classroom observation notes. According to Braun and Clarke (2013), it is common practice to carry out manual coding or "coding on hard-copy data, clearly writing down the code name, and marking the text associated with it in some way" (p. 210). For this study, I manually coded my data set as a matter of preference. I started coding based on the critical incidents which emerged from the questions I asked my data that were relevant to my research questions. With a small[18] data set, I approached my analysis using a complete coding[19], rather than selecting certain corpus of instances. In this study, I read my first data set line by line and categorised them into meaningful analytical units. I coded the data using the same words from the participants and also words that I thought appropriately described the meaning. At this stage, the incidents that

[18] Statistically I have 19 classroom observational notes (between 6-10 pages each), 14 transcripts from interviews from 3 teachers and 10 transcripts from 3 group of students (with the duration of 30 minutes to 1 hour each)

[19] Complete coding aims to "identify anything and everything of interest or relevance to answering your research question within your entire dataset" (Braun & Clarke, p. 206).

happened were analysed in detail using the WH-questions until I understood some units of meaning such as – *teacher puts a lot of effort and helps students – students do not understand writing task – students are not cooperative and have lack of interaction with group members.* To illustrate, a sample of the labels and the created codes is shown in Table 4.4.

Labels	Codes
1. *teacher puts a lot of effort and helps students*	1. Teacher's role
2. *students do not understand writing task*	2. Writing development
3. *students are not cooperative and have lack of interaction with group*	3. Group writing

Table 4.4: Sample of labels and codes

Some of my initial codes were subsumed under other codes, which required me to re-label them, altogether drop some codes, or sometimes to break down the analytic units. I also found that there were repeated codes. According to Saldana (2009), this is natural as there are bound to be repetitions, patterns of action and inconsistencies in human interactions. These initial codes helped me to accurately understand the events and to increase my theoretical sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) in order to identify implicit meanings within the data. In my study, the codes were developed both inductively – they were derived from the data set based on open coding – and deductively, which means that they were driven by key concepts in the literature review and Academic Literacies Framework.

Step 3: Search for themes

I found making meaning from data to be a rewarding process. During the data collection, I concentrated my observation notes and fieldnotes on personal descriptive strategies that meant something to my research questions, interpreted through the lens of my research framework. All interview data and classroom observations were typewritten and manually coded. Categories 1 to 5 (1- teacher's beliefs, 2- student attitudes, 3- challenges among students, 4- approaches to writing and 5- meeting expectations) were used to code the first-round interviews. After my first online meeting with my main supervisor, I re-analysed my interview data because, as a novice researcher, I had overlooked issues

which I had considered unimportant. My analysis involved multiple stages of open coding and re-coding and organising data into core categorise and sub categories focusing on student's feelings about L2 writing and group writing. In order to get the interpretation correct, and to be confident that the evidence is solid, Stake (2010) emphasises that qualitative researchers need to triangulate their work. Although I identified several initial themes during my fieldwork (see Table 4.5), I constantly re-read my observation notes, fieldnotes and transcripts to see if other themes became apparent. Table 4.5 shows all the preliminary themes that I identified from my data set along with the codes that are associated with them. Most codes are associated with one theme although some are associated with more than one.

Theme: Teachers' roles in the university writing classrooms **Codes** Teaching does not end in the classroom Taking the roles of facilitator and mentor Negotiating learning Classroom interaction is key Mismatch of expectations Give students independence Feedback Use of code switching Make sure students work in mixed abilities group	**Theme: Students' experience writing in groups** **Codes** Platform for learning (or not) Knowledge sharing (or not) Receive immediate feedback from peers Learning from peers could happen Group formation of mixed abilities Cannot deal with peer's attitude problems Opportunities to lead others Trust issue Previous experience writing together An obstacle to mental processes, Group discussion is a waste of time, Peers' lack of commitment, Distribution of sub-tasks, Inactive group member, Competitive, Want better partner to write with	**Theme: Language Issues** **Codes** English as the medium of instruction in the university Code switching in the writing classrooms Poor language hampers writing
Theme: Students' L2 writing experience in school	**Theme: Students' attitudes towards writing in the university**	**Theme: Students' preferences on feedback**

Codes	**Codes**	**Code**
Criticised by teachers Memorised list of words & short essays Lack feedback Drilling on grammar Journal writing Dictation Reading to writing Writing individually Learn English language in mother tongue Free writing	Want to write individually Expect written feedback Unconsciously transfer experience from school to continue writing in the university Need to improve writing Need samples to write Work in group for pre writing Work individually at writing stage Lack of interest on the topics Submit last minute work Revisit first draft	Prefer corrective & written feedback from teachers Do not trust feedback from peers
Theme: Change of writing practice **Codes** Teacher's roles Students' roles Learning L2 writing Writing modalities Feedback	**Theme: Challenges writing in the university** **Codes** Language for academic writing Different genres of writing Meeting the academic writing conventions Difficult to understand teaching of writing Confused what to write Writing with other people	

Table 4.5: Preliminary themes

Step 4: Review themes

During this phase, I reviewed, modified and developed the preliminary themes which I identified in Step 3. At this point, I still asked myself, *Am I making any good sense? Do they make sense?* I made sure that the data set was sensibly unpacked so that the codes and themes which I had written on coloured adhesive notes were correctly associated. It was only at this stage when I had identified my themes that I became more selective and colour-coded them. I highlighted and posted purple notes for 'pedagogical issues', blue for 'writing transition', pink for 'group writing' and yellow for 'feedback'. I moved the codes around (the codes were printed out and then cut into strips of paper) and tried to

find patterns in the themes and relationships between the themes. I revisited and reviewed each theme and asked myself, *Do the themes work in the context of the entire data set?*

For example, the items previously listed under *Teachers' roles in the university writing classrooms* were transferred and re-listed under the new and broader theme of *Pedagogical issues in teaching L2 writing* in order to cover all the codes extracted from the interviews regarding academic writing from the teachers' perspectives.

The biggest decision I had to make was how to merge these four preliminary themes into one big theme: *Change of writing practice, Students' L2 writing experience in school, Students' attitudes towards writing in the university, Language Issues* and *Challenges writing in the university*. All of these preliminary themes were related to how students navigated themselves when attempting to make sense of how to write in the university setting. For this, I created a new theme *Making the transition: from writing in schools to writing in the university*, which covered all four preliminary themes and better captured the important issues about what the students said in the interview sessions regarding writing challenges that they faced in the university classrooms.

I also felt that all the codes on feedback in Step 3 interpreted how students used them to facilitate learning. Therefore, instead of using the more nebulous and subjective word 'Preferences', the heading *Using feedback on drafts as a means to facilitate learning* was chosen to show in what way feedback was useful in the university writing classrooms. Covered too broad an area, being too broad with the word Preferences, I identified *Using feedback on drafts as a means to facilitate learning* to show in what way feedback was useful in the university writing classrooms.

Finally, when I reviewed the theme *Students' experience writing in groups*, I discovered that it overlapped the *Making Transition* theme. Therefore, only *Group Writing* was kept as the new theme as I felt it captures all aspects of how students write with other people.

Step 5: Define themes

Braun and Clarke (2006) state that the final refinement of the themes aims to "… identify the 'essence' of what each theme is about (p. 92). In my analysis, *Making the transition: from writing in schools to writing in the university* is an overarching theme that is rooted

in the other themes. Figure 4.7 is a final thematic map that illustrates the unique relationships between themes and I have included the narrative for How students write in the university classrooms. This is further addressed in Chapter 9, which is a discussion chapter.

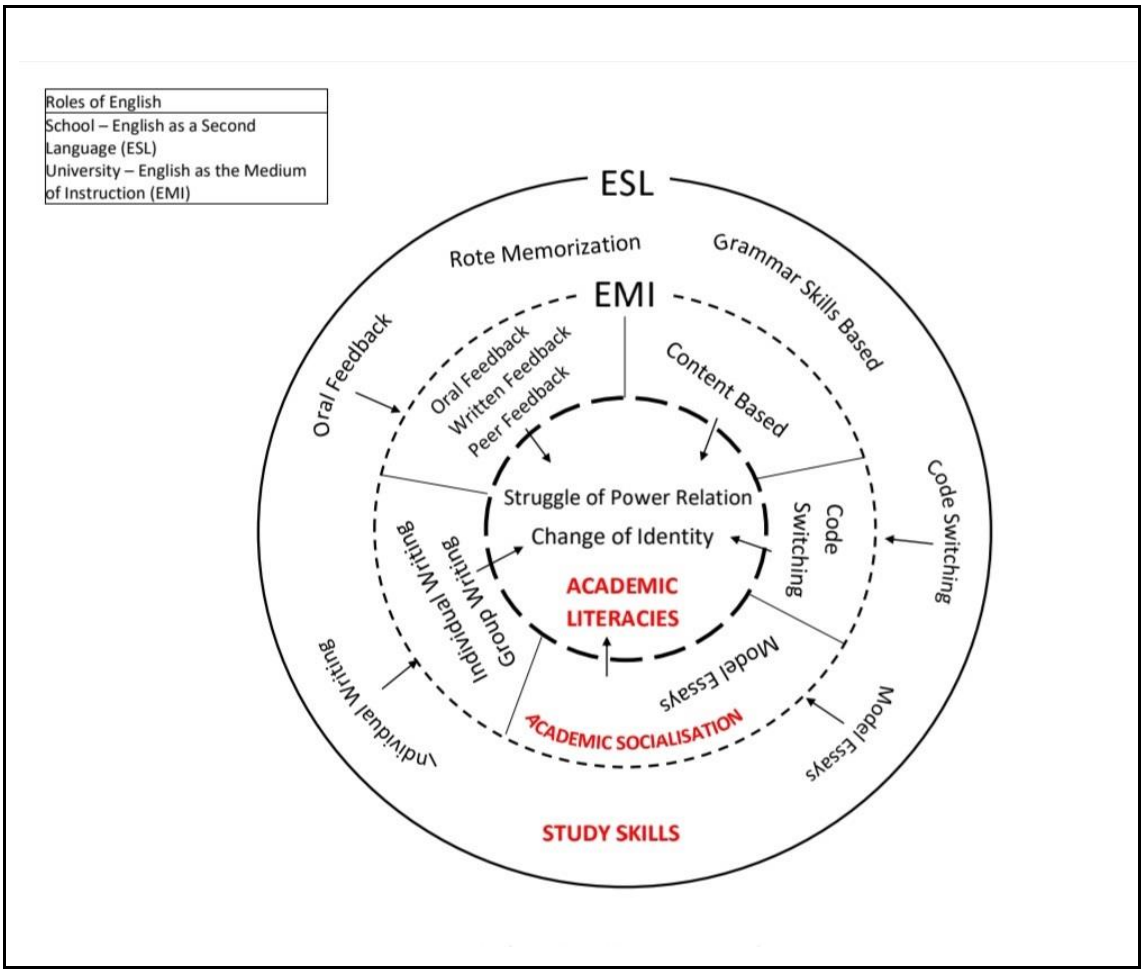


Figure 4.7: Thematic map

Step 6: Writing up

Following the procedure recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006), transcripts from interview sessions, observations and fieldnotes were collected and analysed using an iterative reading process and thematic analysis. My thematic analysis of the transcripts shows four broad themes: pedagogical approaches to teaching writing; students' transition of writing experience from schools to the university; group writing; using feedback on drafts as a means to facilitate students' writing development. As a novice researcher, I am well aware that carrying out strategies such as selecting vivid and compelling extracts for analysis and spot-on interpretation (instead of mere descriptions)

is crucial for producing a well-written report. Such a report should contain robust and well-evidenced arguments which can respond to research questions and also address issues raised by the current literature on the subject. In the writing of my report, I have attempted to arrive at that benchmark and it is hoped that I have at least been somewhat successful.

4.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS

The primary concern of any qualitative research is its trustworthiness (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In the constructivist paradigm, the meaningful and multiple realities are socially constructed from humans' experience and ideas, "in and out of interactive human community" (Crotty, 2005, p. 55). Thus, Shenton (2004) asserts that the concepts of validity and reliability need to be approached differently from those of positivist paradigm that sees reality as single and stable. Hammersley (1993) in Cohen et al. (2011, p. 181) suggests that "validity in qualitative research replaces certainty with confidence in our results, and that, as reality is independent of the claims made for it by the researchers, our accounts will only be representations of that reality rather than reproductions of it". In this study, the following actions were observed in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the data and findings:

Prolonged engagement in the field. In this study, I spent three months in the field. Since my return to the university was as an insider-researcher, I did not take a longer time to get to know the teachers. However, I took two weeks to 'break the ice' with my ten student participants, being aware that building a good rapport with them would help to achieve the objectives of my research. Therefore, during the interview sessions, it was crucial for me to get to know them better as they were the ones who made up the learners' social world. In addition, I tried as much possible not to be a threat to the students in the classroom. Prior to my actual data collection stage, I sat in the classroom during the writing lessons as I wanted them to know of my presence, that I was observing their teacher and their learning. I also needed time to be acquainted with the classroom setting and to get used to my dual role. It was my first experience being there as a researcher, although as a teacher myself, I had a lot of experience being in a classroom. My presence in the field enabled me to learn the social practices of the students and thus helped me to gain in-depth understanding as I attempted to explore the phenomenon under study.

The use of multiple sources. Braun and Clarke (2013) state that some researchers use multiple sources to get "as close to the 'truth' of the object of study as possible" and limiting data collection to one method may lessen the breadth of the results (p. 285). This implies that using a variety of methods to collect data on the same topic will ensure the validity of the research, and this way also involves different types of samples. However, Stake (2010, p. 122) refutes the idea of using multiple sources as "a form of confirmation and validation" because it is akin to 'checking up' various sources in order to arrive at the 'right' truth or at a single reality. Patton (2002) states that triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon. In this study, multiple sources were used but not to triangulate the data to cross-validate data; they were used to capture different dimensions of the same phenomenon. The use of multiple sources in this study – such as classroom observation, semi structured interviews and documents – provided good understanding from different perspectives of an investigated phenomenon.

Interactive questioning. As some of my research participants were my own colleagues and the students knew my return was as an insider-researcher, I was aware of the possibility of them giving responses that were 'tailored' to please me. I was also aware that one might question how reliable (accurate or inaccurate) the students' recollection of memories about their writing experience in school were, for me to consider these to be part of my data. I acknowledged that as humans, we are all fallible but researchers are able to uncover discrepancies in responses by employing iterative questioning (Shenton, 2004) as a strategy. In cases where "contradiction emerge, falsehoods can be detected and the researcher may decide to discard the suspect data" (p. 67). The use of probes and paraphrased questions were among the strategies I used to obtain and elicit detailed data and also to gather possible explanations.

Member checking: The researcher can seek accuracy and new meanings through member checking (Stake, ibid). In this study, I presented my research participants with the interview transcripts and an offer to check the interpretations in my analysis. All of the participants whom I interviewed were given the opportunity to verify their own responses against the transcriptions of the interview that I had with them.

The process of coding and re-coding of data. In this study, I took the effort to code and re-code the data several times and this process helped me to understand the students' struggles and how they navigated themselves when writing in the new context.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state that the purpose of a qualitative research is to develop an in-depth and unique understanding of a certain phenomenon and not to generalise its findings. Therefore, it is also impossible to replicate a study as each study is bound up with the peculiarities of the participants and its context, the circumstances as well as the researcher (Stake, 2010). What makes one research rigorous or trustworthy is the researchers' careful design, strategies and "questions congruent with the philosophical assumptions underlying this perspective" (Merriam & Tisdell, ibid, p. 239).

4.9 CONCLUSION

Early in this chapter I wrote about my difficulties when trying to obtain consent from my own colleagues at the data collection stage. I said to myself, '*could this be because my position of a researcher was seen as an outsider as I was temporarily on study leave and no longer teaching in this HEI for a duration of four years?'* There are certain recognised strengths when the teacher takes the role of the researcher (Hammersley, 1993), but with my limitations, I realised that my presence as an observer could also strain the collaborative researcher-colleague and researcher-student relationship on which success depended. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) commented on the problems that outside researchers are likely to encounter. I attempted to keep the degree of disturbance as low as possible in order to represent the teachers' and students' perspectives as authentically as I could. During my fieldwork, I tried to block the *teacher* in me from making assumptions and the *researcher* in me from trying to prove a favourable bias.

The resultant trust that developed between myself and the teachers and students overcame the slight initial disturbance posed by audio recording interview sessions and classroom talk. Any remaining anxiety was diffused by my continued presence in the classroom as one who routinely audio recorded class activities. I believe that, by appearing unobtrusive, I was able to build rapport with my teacher and student participants and allow for the means by which to capture nuances.

On the down side, at first I did not realise that my insider position would lead to the loss of two of my student participants. Because I had previously been their teacher's colleague, the students appeared to have particular assumptions about what they should tell me during the interviews. For example, when I asked specific questions about their writing preferences in the classroom, they responded, '*will you tell her? […] I don't feel comfortable sharing my experience because I saw you coming out from the same car, are you friends?'* Soon afterwards, both students texted me and opted out as my participants. These questions made me reflect that I *falsely* projected myself as a colleague-researcher and thereby became a threat to their learning experience. I discussed this with my colleague and we agreed that it was better not to be seen together and we created a degree of distance in order to help me to get students' participation for my interview sessions.

In addition, while writing up my analysis, my insider knowledge caused me to struggle as the academic writing teacher in me overshadowed my role as researcher. My familiarity with the teaching writing practices in the university created a bias as to what I felt *should* be taught in the classroom. Later, after multiple drafts of writing the analysis chapters, I held my *teacher* self back and tried to see it from the lens of a researcher. In fact, the struggle between these two roles allowed me to explore my teacher-participants thoroughly and influenced how I managed to reveal mismatched expectations between teachers and students.

I learned that in ethnographic research, reflexivity and the writing-up process cannot be separated; Hertz's (1997) collection examined "reflexivity" and "voice", with reflexivity being described as a concern with how the selves and identities of the researcher and researched affect the research process. The researcher plays an active role in the production of knowledge by constructing the collection, selection and interpretation of data (Koch & Harrington, 1998). Thus, it is crucial for them to be critically conscious of any potential biases (Wood et al., 1993). Reflexivity requires a critical attitude towards data, and the research of factors such as location of setting, sensitivity of topic, power relations in the field and nature of social interaction between researcher and researched, all influence how the data is interpreted and conveyed when writing up the results (Brewer, 2000). Jones and Watt (2011) suggests that "reflexivity is more than mere reflection but rather a theoretical, ethical and political stance whereby ethnographers consider their position within their research, their relationship to their field subjects and

their wider cultural context" (p. 8). The concept of reflexivity informed me of the biases, values and experiences that I might bring to my qualitative research. Since the field for my study is very much related to the nature of my work, my past experiences might have shaped my interpretation of the phenomenon, conclusions and the interpretations drawn in this study.

In Chapter 5, I begin my analysis by looking at the teaching writing approaches used. My approach in the analysis chapters is to present and analyse the data with minimum discussion, as detailed explanation of the findings is provided in the concluding Chapter 9.

CHAPTER 5: PEDAGOGICAL ISSUES IN TEACHING L2 WRITING

This chapter introduces the case study by setting up the voices of the three academic writing teachers through their views on teaching writing in the University of Nusantara (UoN). Teachers' responses in the interview sessions and my observations in the classrooms helped me to understand their different roles and the kinds of decision-making they made in supporting students' L2 writing. Each approach is underpinned by a range of ideas about what L2 writing is and implies different ways of teaching it. These allowed me to interpret these and the kind of support they provide, forming the basis for my analysis of student writers' practices that are discussed in Chapter 6.

5.0 INTRODUCTION

"To understand teaching from teachers' perspectives we have to understand the beliefs with which they define their work"

(Nespor, 1987, p.323)

Teaching has different meanings for individual teachers depending on which "goals, constraints and operations are clearly defined" (ibid) within their own classroom. The core of these three writing teachers' practices is comprised of particular views and principles that have been shaped by their past and present classroom teaching experience, day-to-day interactions with colleagues and their professional development, which in turn interact with the conceptualization of language, learning and teaching in their wider belief system.

The first participant teacher who gave consent for classroom observations and interviews was Mr Eilyas. He started teaching first as a primary school English teacher and after he completed his Master's degree in TESL, minoring in Literature, he then joined UoN. At the time of data collection, he had been teaching for nearly 30 years. Mr Eilyas taught the English for Report Writing module to a group of second year Electrical Engineering undergraduate students. Three of his students volunteered to be interviewed: Ema, Eleena and Siti. The second participant teacher was Ms Raisha. She has a Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and a

Master's degree in TESL. Ms Raisha had 26 years of teaching experience in UoN. She taught the English for Executive Summary Writing module to a group of first year undergraduate Law students. Two of her students volunteered to be interviewed: Adila and Shuhada, in 12th week of the course. The third participant teacher was Dr Dalia. She has a degree from a Social Science Faculty. Her interest in teaching English led her to take up a Masters in Modern Language Studies and later she earned a Doctorate in Language Learning. At the time of data collection, she had 32 years of teaching experience. Dr Dalia taught the English for Academic Writing module to a group of Applied Science students. Five of her students volunteered to be interviewed: Ika, Farahin, Naja, Farah, Farahin and Wan. Though I did not include the teachers' English proficiency levels as that was not part of the study, I saw no significant variation in teachers' proficiency level. Therefore, this was not considered as a possible influencing factor in their pedagogical approaches and practices. For example, their use of code-switching was considered to be a pedagogical choice rather than due to the teacher's language limitations. For comparative purposes and for ease of reference, these details are provided in the table below (Table 5.1)

Teachers' name (pseudonym)	Mr Eilyas	Dr Dalia	Ms Raisha
Teaching experience	30 years	32 years	26 years
Highest academic qualification	Master's degree in TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language)	Doctorate degree in Language Learning	Master's degree in TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language)
Writing course taught	English for Report Writing	English for Academic Writing	English for Executive Summary Writing
Name of students volunteered to be interviewed	Eleena, Ema & Siti (Electrical Engineering. 3rd year degree)	Naja, Wan, Farah, Siti and Farhan (Applied Science/ 1st year degree)	Adila & Syuhada (Law/ 1st year degree)

Table 5.1: Details about each writing teacher

5.1 HOW DO TEACHERS SEE THEIR ROLES IN THEIR WRITING CLASSROOMS?

The individual interview sessions with these three academic writing teachers focused on their classroom practices when teaching L2 academic writing. Combined with classroom observations, these generated insights into the roles that they played.

My general impression was that for these teacher participants, teaching was far more than standing in front of the classroom or even supporting their students academically. All three supported their students' learning beyond the classroom, paying attention to the importance of self-confidence and their role in providing motivation and encouragement. They were also facilitators of learning in the way they "encouraged discussions" to "make learning easier to happen" in order to "overcome obstacles". (Russell, 2017, p. 317). Though the common role that these teachers undertook was as facilitators of learning, each one adopted different approaches in order to cater for the individual needs of their students.

5.1.1 *"I hold and grip their hands"*

The primary role for Ms Raisha was to impart as much knowledge as possible to her students. However, she felt that her role as a teacher did not just end in the classroom:

> *If they are shy to ask questions in the classroom, I asked them to approach me outside because learning goes beyond that.*
>
> *(Ms Raisha)*

Ms Raisha spoke about the kind of responsibilities she had after class when she monitored her students working in groups and attended to their learning problems. She also felt that providing moral support to her students could help their confidence when writing in their L2:

> *I have to give them some level of confidence, find out ways to help to overcome the barrier.*
>
> *(Ms Raisha)*

Ms Raisha further explained that she also met her students virtually on a WhatsApp group (instant messaging service for smartphones) in order to attend to queries they had pertaining to writing their Executive Summary and even to other language related

problems. This channel of communication seemed to provide her with a better understanding of individual learning needs. By integrating the use of technology, she also was responding to the ways that her students liked to communicate when in need of support.

Ms Raisha also talked about her unique relationship with her students, describing herself as being *flexible* – which for her meant juggling her role as teacher with that of a friend:

> *outside the classroom, we are like friends […] that is when the teacher is there but she is more likely flexible now […] share pertinent comments […] simple jokes […] it is self-application using the language.*
>
> *(Ms Raisha)*

Ms Raisha appeared to be able to navigate between formal and informal learning quite fluidly, aided by the teacher-student trust she was able to establish in these different roles. Her students appeared to benefit from these learning experience as they used the new expressions and vocabulary afterwards when in group discussion. Ms Raisha seemed to be very mindful of and focused on, meeting her students' expectations.

I also observed when students commented that writing summaries was *'boring'*, rather than admonishing them, Ms Raisha would try harder to engage them. When students did not seem to be paying much attention, she would make jokes, ask questions or initiate exchanges of ideas on the topical issues of the day in relation to their personal experiences. It seemed that the students were learning, informally, about certain issues that gave meaning, relevance and context to the ideas Ms Raisha had to offer. Such experiences provoked emotional responses and offered moments of revelation.

Ms Raisha appeared to offer her students not only linguistic skills (stages of writing) but also linguistic knowledge (grammar and text structure), moving the students from pre-writing stage to text production. I observed that as student writers' confidence increased and their learning skills and writing of the executive summary, Ms Raisha gradually reduced the support that she provided.

Ms Raisha presented herself as a flexible teacher, putting students' needs first by responding to their different abilities, needs and interest. The positive teacher-student

relationships that Ms Raisha seemed to have established resulted in favorable outcomes for student learning, increasing participation and creating more opportunities for learning.

5.1.2 *"I allow them to see and feel first-hand experience"*

In dealing with the ever-changing needs of his students in the classroom, Mr Eilyas adopted a multi-faceted approach to his role, focusing on promoting active and independent learners. I observed that he developed different kinds of relationship with his students, depending on the kind of attention, help, advice, information, or even encouragement, that they needed.

All of his students were encouraged to independently explore when writing their reports. During the group interviews, his students told me that they had *"no textbook",* and that they had *"to discover and find own the structure writing the report"* as no example was provided. In interview, Mr Eilyas told me that he wanted his students to start writing in his class *"from zero to a hero".* The fact that he encouraged his students to explore their own way of writing and only attended to them when he felt that they needed guidance, support or feedback, suggested that he was assuming the role of mentor. He established a routine for his classroom activities by greeting his students, and leaving them with their group members to work on their report writing. Later they were called for a 10-15-minute meeting to discuss their progress.

> *This is my fourth classroom observation […] every time I entered this classroom, Mr Eilyas mainly worked with small groups of students in front of the classroom or right after class constantly giving feedback on their written group work, providing suggestions for improvement […] he went through with their drafts, gave comments on the organisation of ideas and language use*.
>
> (*Fieldnotes, 19/5/2016)*

Through my observations I could sense that Mr Eilyas was not a traditional teacher who stands in front of the class, but rather, took on the role of guide or mentor in assisting his students with their report writing processes. He was aware that writing the report was challenging for many students, as they had to discover how to write the report themselves. However, he felt that his non-directive approach drove them to become more autonomous, taking responsibility for their own learning:

> *I gave them time… they discussed with their group members, planned what and how to do the task […] when they came back to class, I approached each group and listened to their ideas […] if needed, I then commented how they could improve […] when they already had their draft, I will correct them.*
>
> *(Mr Eilyas)*

Students commented on the initial difficulty in developing the reports without a guideline and having to work from a variety of resources themselves. Even though it was challenging for them, they received good support from Mr Eilyas and felt able to approach him outside the confines of the classroom:

> *My students did not wait for the class […] yesterday they called, and we met here (the faculty)*
>
> *(Mr Eilyas)*

His students showed him their report writing in progress for more feedback indicating that they felt this to be an essential part of effective learning. Putting the onus on his students to become involved in their own learning, Mr Eilyas introduced the subject of discussion, encouraged his students to share their ideas and perspectives during group discussion and helped them to integrate the shared ideas together.

> *This is my fourth classroom observation, I realize that every time I am in this classroom, Mr Eilyas instructs his students to be seated with their group members and write 'together' […] Mr Eilyas even asks his students to sit in their group to proofread and edit the work they have written.*
>
> *(Fieldnotes, 19/05/2016)*

In one of the lessons, Mr Eilyas sang a couple of songs at the beginning of his class

> *Although this is writing class, when I sing, I was actually trying to correct students' pronunciation in the classroom, highlighting the differences between short and long vowels – that is important too.*
>
> *(Mr Eilyas)*

I observed students' facial expressions changed immediately. Mr Eilyas often instilled learning through motivation by sharing his favorite songs and some of his personal successful stories in order to inspire his students. The giggling and smiles upon their faces seemed to suggest that the students enjoyed learning this way.

5.1.3 *"I went round and asked them"*

Dr Dalia seemed to gauge the effectiveness of students' activities by walking around the classroom, stopping long enough to observe students in their groups carrying out tasks such as reading articles, paraphrasing and writing their annotated bibliographies. As she moved round, asking questions, making comments and correcting work, she appeared to be monitoring content understanding and engagement. She paid attention to whether students practiced the *correct way of writing*. If not, she was there to help. She too would meet students after class to answer questions, taking the time to read their work and providing comments: "*I don't mind spending time with them after class to listen to their writing problems so that I could help to improve"*. She explained that her responsibilities were *to observe learning and provide new insights when students were in groups writing…"* and that *"group work needs extra monitoring from the lecturer to engage students into learning.* She added that "*without proper monitoring from the teacher, group work can retard one's learning because the quiet ones will always remain quiet".*

Dr Dalia appeared more sensitive to the constraints of group work when compared to the other two teachers. For example, although she believed that learning could take place during group discussion, she felt that some of the *'quiet'* students needed additional monitoring to get them on task:

> *Might not be able to engage themselves with the written tasks and also the interaction with his/ her group members.*
>
> *(Dr Dalia)*

Most of the students appeared to find writing development and working together in groups challenging. In general, the three teachers encouraged their students to find solutions when disagreement or difficulties arose within the groups. Students were encouraged to stay focused and maintain their ability to work together, while meeting individual needs. Dr Dalia said they were *forced in a way, to make their own choices about the task that they were assigned to*. Although whenever she felt there was a need for her to intervene, she would ask questions. All three teachers seemed to be indirectly teaching their students to pick apart ideas, form their own thoughts and explore materials through self-exploration, thereby creating motivation for their independent learning as well as learning from each other through working with other people.

5.2 HOW DO TEACHERS SUPPORT STUDENTS' L2 WRITING IN THEIR CLASSROOMS?

All three teachers were aware that the general, broadly functional, focus of the writing course did not relate directly to the students' field of study. As they had some authority in deciding on content and how to apply it in the classroom, they seemed to focus on key features and pay more attention to writing development. The teachers paid more attention to strategies for summary writing and feedback was given in order to improve writing generally. Code switching was used to build confidence.

5.2.1 Emphasizing the Relationship between Reading and Writing

In preparing and writing the executive summary, report writing and annotated bibliographies, writing activities revolved around reading source texts, understanding and summarizing the main points. Reading was seen as a preparation to writing, an integrated task that required the students to read through and condense original texts (full articles or short passages) in order to carry out specific writing tasks. The teachers viewed the development of reading strategies as essential before the pre-writing stages began.

5.2.1.1 Reading to write an Executive Summary

Although the course stipulates that the Executive Summary be written in pairs, Ms Raisha asked students to read the source texts individually and later compare their findings: *"... having a good strategy for reading will ease the process of understanding ones reading material in locating the right information for the later use in summary writing".* Regardless of the length of the text, she felt that it was good practice for the students to identify and write out the main ideas presented in order to understand the whole article.

> *It is important to start first by skimming through the entire passage without evaluating and analyzing [...] later you can scan the passage to familiarize yourself with reading [...] look for features that are pertinent or the elements that you do not understand [...] after identifying, write it out.*
>
> *(Ms Raisha)*

She felt that a good strategy was to write down visual notes in order to recognise the links between ideas. She said, *points that are in visual forms could easily be understood.*

She also believed that text could be better understood by underlining, highlighting, note writing and visual maps and felt that it could help with clarity of ideas during group discussion.

> *Ms Raisha went round the classroom to check on students' work. She suddenly stopped at one student who was busy highlighting the lines from the passage. […] Ms Raisha then asked him when was he going to write the points on paper. I heard the student said that he feared he could not finish the task on time (admitted as a slow reader) and therefore identifying ideas and point by highlighting could help him to save time. Ms Raisha suggested that the ideas can be in mind map for him to remember but he said he could remember without writing […] Ms Raisha insisted her students to draw a mind map or any visuals alike detailing their understanding so that they could compare the answers easily with their friends if they have missed out anything.*
>
> *(Fieldnotes, 20/04/2016)*

Some students seemed to feel that reading before summary writing was merely in order to identify *facts* and then to apply the strategies that they had been practicing for their other Law courses.

> *I heard this, could not really tell who made the claim […] something about how the students get to read and understand as Law students – a cumulative voice I heard during one classroom observation […] something about they have trained their brain to memorize*
>
> *(Fieldnotes, 20/04/2016)*

They felt this might work in Ms Raisha's class. However, Ms Raisha said,

> *memorizing does not prove them having a good understanding of the text. A good summary writing will take place when the students are able to understand the content of the article and able to lift out the most highlighted points to be reported back in a shorter paragraph form.*
>
> *(Ms Raisha)*

Ms Raisha felt that her students' understanding of source text for summary writing was limited by their '*limited lexical density',* and that a good understanding of the text could be gained by comprehension of the important vocabulary. She believed that this could be done by checking new and difficult words using a dictionary or contextual clues for their meaning, and by writing out points in visual form. However, one of her students, Shuhada, still found it challenging to write her Executive Summary. She was discouraged by what she called *'difficult words'* which affected her attitude towards writing, concluding that text comprehension was related to effective summary writing.

I know that it is important to understand what you read in the article before writing the summary but when there are so many difficult words […] I just don't feel like reading difficult text and because of this I fail to identify and decide what important points to choose and write for my summary.

(Shuhada)

The issue raised by Ms Raisha seemed to also be of concern to Shuhada and her problem with digesting '*difficult words'* contributed to a negative classroom writing experience.

5.2.1.2 Reading to Write Annotated Bibliographies

In Dr Dalia's classroom, writing an annotated bibliography was one of the writing tasks. The task required students learning to read effectively and acquiring reading strategies during the summary writing of source text. When deciding what to include and exclude in summary writing, students were required to identify its thesis, research questions or hypothesis, and, more importantly, to gauge the author's tone in order to understand its argument and purpose.

How do you know what kind of tone used by the author?

(Dr Dalia)

By understanding writer's expression […] from the choice of word […] the words used in the text will help us to have a certain view, attitude or having certain concern about this issue […] like maybe using contextual clues (cumulative responses from the class)

(Classroom Observation 4, 9/05/2016)

Dr Dalia recommended reading to be done in groups. Group members would discuss an article and she would ask them the meaning of words, for example *sarcastic, neutral, bias, optimistic and disappointment,* directing them to pay attention to how these words might indicate the author's tone.

I saw some students immediately flipped their 2 inches thick dictionary […] I remember Dr Dalia asked them to bring a dictionary each last week. However, some just scrolled their hand phones conveniently and some waited patiently for the other group members to explain the meaning of the words […]one student threw a definition for the word sarcastic but Dr Dalia insisted her to check the exact meaning. She cautioned the student that if not sure, guessing for meanings could mislead them to the understanding of the author's argument from the source text.

(Fieldnotes, 28/03/2016)

Dr Dalia emphasized the importance of understanding the correct meaning of words. When students completed writing their annotated bibliography, she assisted them, when necessary, to help them see the author's purpose and arguments.

> *Dr Dalia did some reading with her students today, trying to highlight what were discussed in the article by extracting the important points in each paragraph and urged her students to put ideas in an outline – a skeleton form according to her so that easy for the students to see and understand.*
>
> *(Fieldnotes, 28/03/2016)*

Dr Dalia directed students towards writing an online, and suggested that brainstorming could help to develop thoughts during group work.

> *The format of the outline is already controlled by the syllabus (referring to the rubrics). They (students) are supposed to have a thesis statement with four supporting details. When the students read, they also have to understand and talk about the possible audience, tone […] even for synthesis (second writing task), students are expected the same to read to prepare an outline too before they could write. But most importantly students need to know what to look for when they read.*
>
> *(Dr Dalia)*

Dr Dalia also gave extensive reading instructions, based on her belief that students needed clear direction when completing their writing tasks. In addition to group working, students had to choose three articles based upon a theme assigned by Dr Dalia. She advised them to read the articles a few times to ensure that they discussed the same theme.

> *For your assignment on annotated bibliography, find three to four articles of the same theme […] please read your articles carefully as main ideas maybe scattered […] you should formulate those three ideas/ aspects and find its supporting details […]extract those ideas […] if there are so many ideas, ignore them or group them together into big headings, remember to only emphasize only on the criteria for marking […] only extract what is related to the ideas.*
>
> *(Fieldnotes, 28/03/2016)*

Dr Dalia's practices ensured that as preparation to writing the outline and the annotated bibliography writing, the reading process involved questioning and clarification.

> *It is not easy to determine the main idea in the article. What you need to do is to look at the whole picture, ask yourself some questions […] and then you will get to understand it.*
>
> *(Dr Dalia)*

Dr Dalia helped her students to '*look at the whole picture'* by asking them questions to clarify their understanding of the texts. Some of these questions were,

> *What is the purpose of the text? […] what is the author's tone? […] who is the article written for? […] what is the thesis for this article? […] What kind of information did the paragraph provide? […] Are there any citations? […] Do you agree with what has been written by the author? […] What do you think about the article?*
>
> *(Dr Dalia)*

Through these questions, she was able to monitor her students' comprehension of the source texts. Indeed, she saw asking questions as a key reading strategy, one that helped her students to distinguish important information and details and thereby enable them to use clues in the text to anticipate what to include in their annotated biography.

5.2.2 Preferences on the Use of Feedback in Their Writing Classrooms

All three teachers appeared to provide constructive feedback "immediate" feedback tailoring to students needs to become "productive, effective and efficient" (Sallang & Ling, 2019, p. 2) L2 writers. However, approaches to providing feedback varied from one teacher to the other.

5.2.2.1 Written Feedback

Ms Raisha mostly provided corrective feedback in written form in that she tended to focus on error correction and problems with language use. She then used examples from work submitted in the previous lesson to share in the subsequent lesson, as a guide to summary writing.

> *I normally corrected the essays my students submitted […] In the next lesson, I would share the comments from everybody's work (keeping it as anonymous work) and had it projected on the screen […] I believe they could learn from other people's mistakes and see how their friends wrote their summary. I don't use samples of writing from references books*
>
> *(Ms Raisha)*

Student's summaries were projected on the screen, edited and corrected with her comments. Ms Raisha used them to illustrate elements that contribute to a good executive

summary. Although the focus was mainly on grammar, Ms Raisha also made suggestions regarding the presentations of ideas too.

> *Ms. Raisha discussed on the summaries her students wrote from the previous lesson. The focuses were more on analyzing common mistakes such as grammar (example: cacti-cactus), tense structure, word choice and parallelism. She also looked into spelling and the format for writing executive summary.*
>
> *(Fieldnotes, 27/04/2016)*

Ms Raisha also made comments in relation to the overall content:

> *I realized that some of the contents were redundant. I suggest, omit points that you don't need. Sentences were too brief […] lack of features or main ideas that you were supposed to cover […] remember not to put any suggestions and recommendations when writing executive summary*
>
> *(Fieldnotes, 27/04/2016)*

Without the use of editing symbols (indirect feedback), the comments seemed to be explicit and straightforward so that the students could edit their own work later. After the lesson, Ms Raisha told her students that she was really impressed with how positively they responded in the classroom and believed that this was evidence that her feedback had been useful. However, I also observed that some students did not respond to the comments they received.

> *While some students were responding towards the comments given by Ms. Raisha, asking how they could improve, I realized some students were not involved in the discussion and could not been bothered to see the comments on their paper […] they seemed to be busy doing some other work.*
>
> *(Fieldnotes, 27/04/2016)*

Ms. Raisha appeared confident that this kind of corrective feedback would help her students to better understand and notice errors and to subsequently know by themselves whether the work was correct or incorrect[20]. However, at the end of the lesson, Ms Raisha confided:

> *Do you know that I had to put extra effort so that my students could really learn from their own mistakes? […] I retyped two summaries they submitted last night […] one which I considered as 'good' […] one*

[20] First level of feedback – on task or product. See Hattie, J. and Timperley, H. (2007). The Power of Feedback.

> *which I considered 'bad' with the comments so that the whole class could see […] did you realise that some said that was useful? […]I really want them to learn […] but of course I realised some did not participate to what we were discussing in the classroom.*
>
> *(Ms Raisha)*

5.2.2.2 Oral Feedback/Teacher-Student Conferencing

Dr Dalia preferred face-to-face feedback because of time constraints:

> *I don't have the privilege of having extra classes because of my tight schedule having to teach between campuses […] Normally my students and I stayed back after class […] They showed me how far they have progressed […] some came in and asked me to read for comments […] I provided feedback from what the students produced […] they explained and asked how they could improve […]*
>
> *(Dr Dalia)*

This approach appeared to promote more interaction with students both during and after lessons. I observed Dr Dalia giving and receiving feedback by asking open-ended questions regarding meeting their expectations of the writing task. In one of the lessons on writing citations, she asked:

> *Do you still remember how to write your citation correctly using APA format?*
>
> *How do you cite Malay authors where surname is not available? What about Chinese and Indian authors where it can be confusing sometimes as which is the given name and family name? Are they the same as citing English names?*
>
> *(Dr Dalia)*

The majority of the students responded to these questions by showing how confident they were at writing citations. Those who found it problematic would let her know and would then get individual input during or after the lesson.

This kind of teacher-student conferencing also allowed Dr Dalia to ask focused questions, thereby requiring her students to take more responsibility when deciding on the task and selecting the right content before writing their annotated bibliography. In another lesson, she asked:

> *How do you know that the articles that you chose are reliable and suitable for academic tasks?*

> *Have you extracted the main ideas from the four articles for your annotated bibliography?*
>
> *(Dr Dalia)*

Working in groups, the students read their articles, received feedback from their group members and discussed what needed to be clarified with Dr Dalia. The clarification appeared to give the students reassurance and further confidence to complete the task. Dr Dalia said that her students seemed to be more problem specific when writing annotated bibliography:

> *I had to point out […]basically the technical part […] most of the comments were on the format for technical part, the language fulfils what academic writing requires […] students were also confused with this alphabetical order between chronological order when writing bibliography […] students were more worried about their technical part of writing but I did pick up language errors in the classroom.*
>
> *(Dr Dalia)*

These discussions suggest that writing in L2 is not simply about language use but also involves technical skills necessary for academic writing. This kind of verbal feedback in the form of questions and answers between the teacher and students seemed to be effective in building confidence, combining the formulation of questions, giving answers and listening to concerns.

Mr. Eilyas too offered this kind of teacher-student conferencing in the classroom. Before he took his seat, he asked:

> *Any groups would like to discuss anything with me? Group that is ready to discuss can come forward to discuss problems you face when writing your project paper.*
>
> *(Mr Eilyas)*

Mr Eilyas saw receiving and providing feedback as particularly important. From discussions with his students, he had learnt that some of them had problems constructing basic sentences and some had dilemmas as to whose ideas would be included when writing in groups.

> *During the discussion, I asked them to reread the sentences with errors and we discussed the grammatical rules […] this is not a grammar class but I feel at some point I have to spare time if the students needed help […] the students edited their work […] it was all verbal consultation, I didn't mark their paper […] I think they learn more this way than receiving a paper full with comments […] we discussed the problems […] sometimes students had problems with writing the ideas […] some students didn't even know what to write […] I didn't know then but I*

> *learned that each student had different problems […] I shall take Obesity as topic for an example […] I asked them WH questions first […] What is it? Why? How do you solve the issue of obesity […] students might have limited amount of information to say or they could be shy, but by discussing, they will be fed with information and later able to decide wisely what to focus. I was just there to facilitate and approve what they thought was right for their written task. The honour was on them.*
>
> *(Mr Eilyas)*

Through this approach, Mr Eilyas provided individual attention to students' different needs. He felt that this was an effective way of providing feedback to his students. He also said that he was able to set aside regular times to discuss his students' writing progress as he had fewer hours of teaching in that particular semester and regularly encouraged them to take advantage of this. He considered the students he met outside of the classroom as '*very responsible of their own learning'*. Every time Mr Eilyas proposed teacher-student conferencing during class, his students seemed to be focused on the advice they required for their particular problem,

> *When I met my students in groups, they already identified their problems […] they presented their problems and they themselves gave suggestions […] Problems could be on grammar, content and also the presentation of their report writing […] I just listened to them discussing and only corrected them if I saw there were mistakes and mismatched of ideas […] told them how they could do it better according to what has been suggested from the books […] whenever there were differences of ideas among the group members, I dissected them […] I dissected the ideas […] I asked them the outcomes of each idea […] I asked them to give more details […] and they decided on what to be included, not me.*
>
> *(Mr Eilyas)*

As more teacher-student interactions took place, more clarification and explanation was provided. Mr Eilyas explained his preference for verbal feedback as follows: "*with verbal feedback, students are able to discuss and will look into their weak areas […] I feel they could explore more".*

5.2.2.3 Peer Feedback

While providing some students with individual attention, fully discussing their problems, Mr Eilyas and Dr Dalia both encouraged peer feedback. Dr Dalia's reason for opting for peer feedback was that providing individual written feedback was challenging due to '*time constraints'*. At the same time, she believes it is an approach that *'could help to*

maximise their learning'. Mr Eilyas did not mention the time constraint, focusing entirely on the benefits of peer feedback as assisting the group writing process.

> *Normally, I will ask them to exchange their work after their first draft […] their peers will see the mistakes […] in groups, they will discuss what they felt went wrong […] they will re-correct themselves […] after they have done the correction and feeling satisfied, lastly they will reach me […] I will look at the mismatched errors […] the most mistakes done, the common mistakes […] I will proofread and correct them before their final revision*
>
> *(Mr Eilyas)*

Both Mr Eilyas and Dr Dalia described writing as a *recursive procedure* of pre-writing, drafting, and evaluating, within which feedback is crucial at all stages. Whereas peer feedback occurred during the pre-writing and drafting stages, teacher feedback came later:

> *I asked my students to work among themselves and they worked until they came out with their first draft […] the group members corrected and edited the work themselves for couple of times before they asked me to have a look*
>
> *(Mr Eilyas)*

> *I asked my students to turn to the next person seating to them to comment. I asked them to look into its main idea, supporting details, grammar, parallelism […] once they have done that, I wrote the answer on the board and explain draft*
>
> *(Dr Dalia)*

However, students did not seem to receive guidance on peer feedback and on giving effective comments. My question was, how did the students know what to say when giving peer feedback? Interestingly, both Mr Eilyas and Dr Dalia seemed to trust that their students would incorporate and make changes in light of their peers' comments in the early stages of writing, leading to students having more ability to learn. I previously quoted Mr Eilyas regarding peer feedback:

> *in groups, they will discuss what they felt went wrong […] they will re-correct themselves […] after they have done the correction and feeling satisfied, lastly they will reach me.*
>
> *(Mr Eilyas)*

Although neither teacher set up any guidelines, the students did appear to be encouraged to take part actively in *re-correcting* during group discussions and identifying their mistakes, thereby contributing to their writing development.

On one occasion, during Dr Dalia's lesson, writing guidelines emerged from the peer feedback:

> *Dr. Dalia had a lesson on writing an outline for annotated bibliography. The previous week, she asked her students to read two articles on Deforestation and asked individually to write an outline. Sitting in pairs, she asked the students to have their work on the table and exchange their work for some feedback. While the students were reading pair's work, Dr Dalia wrote on the board, a tick box sort of check list identifying the elements for annotated bibliography:*
>
> - *Tone of the writer*
> - *Language use*
> - *Type of essay*
> - *Thesis statement*
> - *Supporting details*
>
> *Using the 'checklist', students were seen to have small talk with their pair as if comparing between the two outlines written by two different individuals.*
>
> *(Field notes, 28/3/2016)*

After the students submitted their outline for their annotated bibliography, they read the first draft to their group members. Dr Dalia then requested the students to provide feedback using a different *'checklist'*, which she wrote on the board.

> *Dr Dalia detailed out the criteria for writing annotated bibliography. She asked the students to pay more attention to these criteria when proofreading their own draft:*
>
> - *Provide in text citation, make reference list*
> - *Introduction paragraph – mention type of article, author's name, author's autobiography*
> - *Body paragraphs – the overall summary/ aim/ objective/ purpose of the article/ mention target readership*
> - *Author's tone*
> - *Use of language*
> - *Critical/ logical organisation*
> - *Roles of articles in the bibliography*
> - *Comparison with other sources*
> - *Use objective reasoning*
>
> *(Field notes, 25/4/2016)*

Students looked for the criteria in their own draft and discussed with group members how they could improve. Aside from the above criteria, I heard Dr Dalia reminded them to check on format, grammar (specifically plurality, use of articles), spelling and word choice.

5.2.2.4 The use of code switching in developing feedback dialogue

In UoN, English is used as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) for science and technological course and students are assessed in the target language. However, in L2 writing, I observed that some students faced problems in understanding their reading materials both before the writing process stage and during the composing stage. Students were also observed to have difficulties putting down words on paper. I observed later that there were short bursts of code switching from the three teachers when communicating with the students. The practice of code switching in their classroom appeared to play a significant role in supporting and optimizing students' uptake in the L2 writing process. Ms Raisha, Mr Eilyas and Dr Dalia had different takes on the role of code switching for their students. The possible impact of code switching on students' learning is discussed in Section 6.2.4.

Ms Raisha

Ms Raisha was very proactive and always approached her students for *'verbal bantering',* hoping to initiate talk to express ideas. In the classroom, Ms Raisha appeared '*to break into'* the students' mother tongue, Malay.

> *I code switch to encourage my students to get involved with classroom discussion, I did not prohibit them to code switch […] I code switched whenever I felt that my students were struggling because their vocabulary density was lacking.*
>
> *(Ms Raisha)*

I observed Ms Raisha code switch between English and Malay, while the students were doing their summary writing. I was curious why she did this.

> *Ms Raisha and her students were preparing to write a summary based on two pages article on Camel, Plants and Desert. After scanning and skimming the article, Ms Raisha reminded her students to be more focus at formulating the ideas. She cautioned her students not to misinterpret and switched to Malay* ***'jangan salah tafsir'*** *(do not misinterpret) and* ***'makna jangan terpesong'*** *(do not change the meaning)*
>
> *(Classroom Observation 1 – 20/24/2016)*

> *This time, the students had to read about 8000 words long article on Domestic Violence before writing their executive summary with their pair. Ms Raisha advised her students to skim and scan the article and look at the salient points to be reported in the summary. She suggested her students to keep their focus and aim writing the summary on three points from causes/ effects/ advantages/*

*disadvantages etc and suddenly Ms Raisha switched to Malay **'kalau ada** causes **beribu-ribu'** (even if you have thousands of causes), choose only three predominant points and write a brief summary on it.*

(Classroom Observation 3 – 18/5/2016)

It seemed that Ms Raisha consciously code switched in order to reiterate her instructions alternating the second language use with English in order to aid students' comprehension. On another occasion I heard Ms Raisha and her students using both languages.

1. *The two students code switched with their pair when they were discussing points around reasoning (which points are more important to include in the summary) […] Ms Raisha asked the two students (in English) to double check with the pair if they had any doubt as what points were significant or not as there could be different interpretation.*
2. *When the next pair approached Ms Raisha, they were asked to explain what they understood from reading the article. The two students explained the main point of the article in Malay. Here, when they wrongly interpreted, Ms Raisha explained first in English and again in Malay.*

(Classroom Observation 2 – 27/4/2016)

The students appeared to use code switching as a strategy to gain more understanding of the articles read for their summary writing. It appeared that Ms Raisha was trying to support her students when they realised that their target language knowledge was inadequate to convey their intended message. She was perhaps also trying to maintain her social relation with the students.

<u>Dr Dalia</u>

Code switching in Dr Dalia's classroom was also common, especially when helping students improve their choice of words.

When I went round, students had problems stringing ideas together to formulate one complete thesis statement. Here I allowed code switching to help students to find suitable words to express their views, to encourage them to open up but otherwise I would prefer them to communicate and respond in front of the whole class in English.

(Dr Dalia)

Dr Dalia believed that students were often held back by their restricted vocabulary. As a teacher, she felt that the use of code switching in the classroom could accommodate her students' low language proficiency.

Mr Eilyas

Mr Eilyas had a very different view of codeswitching. He told me that classroom interaction in the target language provided a more valuable experience as it provided a '*natural environment for them'*. One incident illustrates his attitude towards code switching:

> *The students sat with their group members and started to discuss in Malay among themselves and suddenly I heard Mr Eilyas shouted, 'Only English please!' – but his students still continued, in Malay, this time whispering.*
>
> *(Classroom Observation 3 – 28/4/2016)*

When I asked Mr Eilyas what his view on code switching was, he said:

> *I don't encourage students to code switch but to certain extend I do allow because I understand they are all L2 learners […] somehow or rather along the line they do use mother tongue here and there but I embrace that they have to strive using the language*
>
> *(Mr Eilyas)*

I observed that Mr Eilyas never used Malay, but his students used their mother tongue when carrying out tasks within their group. Although code switching appeared as a natural aspect of the bilingual classroom interaction, Mr Eilyas seemed to believe that if he only used the target language it could be more meaningful and effective than code switching.

Mr Eilyas only permitted the use of target language in order to make learning more real and to help his students build their language knowledge whereas Ms Raisha and Dr Dalia actively encouraged the use of code switching when they saw students struggling to express ideas in the target language both in writing and orally. This support seemed to put students at ease as learning moved to a less formal setting. It was apparent that these two teachers resorted to the students' mother tongue as a pedagogical strategy acknowledging that use of the target language was sometimes inefficient and caused problems for the students. In other words, code switching was used as part of scaffolding learning.

5.3 DISCUSSION

In the chapter, I have discussed the pedagogical practices and strategies of Mr Eilyas, Ms Raisha and Dr Dalia in responding to their students' writing development. I observed not

only that these teachers taught but also facilitated students' learning to write. In other studies, the classroom culture in Malaysia has been described as placing emphasis on the teacher as the "expert" and on memorization. Students are described as lacking "any encouragement of self-regulation and self-assessment" (Behroozizad et al., 2014, p. 218) and skills are isolated (James et al., 2001). By contrast, in advocating students to take a dynamic and constructive role to their own learning (Panhwar et al., 2016), Mr Eilyas, Ms Raisha and Dr Dalia, portray teaching practices that appear to be shifting from this traditional approach to a more socio-cultural approach.

In the classrooms I observed, students were given opportunities to talk about their own L2 writing processes and experiences. The pedagogical approach seemed to emphasize interactions both with the teacher and between students. In addition, the spaces that the teachers created for their students broadened their contact with the use of the target language outside of classroom. These positive teacher-student interactions were observed to play a crucial role in effective teaching and learning. Teachers were observed incorporating in-class activities and providing strategies that drew on Vygotsky's scaffolding ideas. Vygotsky defined scaffolding instruction as the "… role of teachers and others in supporting the learners' development and providing support structures to get to that next stage or level" (Raymond, 2000, p. 176 in Van Der Stuyf, 2002). However, in scaffolding their students' learning, the teachers took different positions and strategies, with regards, for example, to the importance of reading, feedback and code switching in support to writing development.

In classroom observations, Ms Raisha and Dr Dalia appeared to put more effort into engaging their students' reading-to-write ability. Arshad and Chen (2009, p. 328) suggest that teacher who "scaffolds for L2 reading and writing", helps students with the difficulties they encountered in both "content knowledge (including vocabulary and structure) and the discourse knowledge of the L2". This was seen crucial for both teachers as the writing that students were learning, (i.e. annotated bibliography and Executive Summary) required them to respond (extract and synthesize main ideas) to the source texts. On the other hand, teaching reading strategies were not seen as important for Mr Eilyas, who generally encouraged students by using learning-by-doing exercises. As students had to complete their report writing, I observed that this learning process involved a lot of independent work for the students. In this respect, Mr Eilyas seemed to

expect his students to "construct their own learning", "dependence of new learning on students' existing understanding" and underlined the "critical role of social interaction" for meaningful learning especially during group discussion (James, Applefield & Mahnaz, 2001, p. 4). Throughout my observations in Mr Eilyas's writing class, students were expected to make sense of their new writing experiences. One of the ways Mr Eilyas gauged his students into doing this was by having a face to face discussion with them about the topic they were working on. Students were then seen to take up an active role in constructing meaning which they built from their own understanding.

I have also discussed that Mr Eilyas, Ms Raisha and Dr Dalia viewed feedback as an important element in scaffolding learning, building the confidence to participate in the target communities (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). In Mr Eilyas's writing class, oral feedback was given after the students presented and reported their progression during teacher-student conferencing. Although Ms Raisha favoured written feedback more, the use of oral feedback during the teacher-student conferencing was also important. All the teachers gave extensive oral feedback on linguistic skills and linguistic knowledge. With regards to code switching and use of L1, in oral feedback, Ms Raisha and Dr Dalia allowed the use of students' mother tongue to be used.

Though all of the teachers were predominantly teacher centred and took up authoritative figure during feedback session, student writers appeared to be given some agency to make decisions. For example, to further understand feedback and to successfully engage with it, student writers had to look at the meaning which was created during the feedback discourse (Bakhtin, 1981) and how it was interpreted by the teacher and the students (Lea & Street, 1998). Such understandings and interpretations were constituted in the linguistic form of the texts and in the social relations that existed around them.

In this chapter, the focus has been on understanding the different academic writing teachers' practices and roles in the journey of approaching their novice student writers. I have explored their views regarding the importance of reading effectively before handling writing tasks, on teachers' feedback and peer feedback in the development of writers and the use of code switching in order to support students' confidence in writing during pre-writing and drafting stages. These perspectives enabled me to understand the challenges and decision making in the classrooms and how these might influence students' writing experience. In the following chapter, I explore students' perspectives, their response to

their teacher's approaches and how they perceived and understood the challenges of academic writing.

CHAPTER 6: MAKING THE TRANSITION: FROM WRITING IN SCHOOLS TO WRITING IN THE UNIVERSITY

6.0 INTRODUCTION

Drawing on Lillis' (2001) student writing as a social practice as a framework, this chapter focuses on students' views and experiences of ESL writing from school to university. The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first part explores student writers' recollections of writing in primary and secondary schools. The focus was on each of the module and I then looked at three overarching themes: the use of model essays, group writing and code-switching. The second one focuses on the skills and strategies they now use as student writers. I have made this distinction in order to separate student writers' experiences of writing within the two contexts. The last part seeks to understand how student writers applied the writing skills and strategies learnt in schools when writing in the university. Students' evidence on skills and strategies were drawn from their interviews.

In this chapter, I was keen to elicit their early writing experiences in order to understand how strategies they learned in school related to their current writing practices in the university. Thus, my account was based on semi-structured interview questions with ten student writers undertaking academic writing modules. During the interview sessions, I also asked the students to show me their essays that were in the process of writing and/or have been written as point of departure for the them to discuss about their writing experience in the university. Drawing also from my classroom observations, findings revealed that upon entering the university, student writers brought with them certain strategies acquired in school that they applied to their academic writing modules.

PART I: STUDENTS' VIEWS OF WRITING IN SCHOOL

6.1 LOOKING BACK AT ESL WRITING STRATEGIES IN SCHOOLS

In primary and secondary schools, ESL students told me that they wanted to master the four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing but that of the four skills, writing was seen as particularly challenging for some students. Their recollections of initial writing experiences showed that they had been taught strategies that they felt were

effective learning tools and ones that they brought with them into the new context of university.

6.1.1 Grammar-Oriented Lessons: How does Drilling Help?

Early ESL learning seemed mainly based around grammar, with an emphasis on the ability to arrange words, clauses and sentences to produce grammatically correct text. Students often mentioned grammar drills. This was felt to be sometimes at the expense of the four skills. Students also had different experiences of developing the four skills; they perceived different skills being prioritised by the teachers and these priorities did not always chime with what they felt to be important.

Ema said '*my English class was dull and complicated […] my English teacher drilled us on grammar in the classroom […] I believe other than grammar exercises, by doing a lot of reading in the classroom, we could learn new words and the grammar rules'.*

Siti said *'primary years were just about learning English grammar and there was nothing fun about that'.* However, when she was in year three, her teacher encouraged her to read English books and she began with a novel by Sidney Sheldon[21]. Siti felt that reading English books and watching English films, with Malay and English subtitles, helped her greatly and said: '*was not sure whether learning grammar rules helps me that much'.*

Eleena described how the use of Malay by her English teachers helped her with writing but not with speaking English:

> *In primary school all of my English teachers taught me English grammar in Malay […] I understand the grammar rules very well but now, I have difficulties when it comes to spoken language […] I come from rural school, maybe easier for them to teach English in Malay […] For me it is not helpful because I could not balance my writing and speaking in English*
>
> *(Eleena)*

Eleena questioned the emphasis placed on writing at the expense of her spoken English, '*I know it is important to have good grasp of English, but not only for writing […] I just wish I could use the language correctly for spoken too'.* The strategy used by her teachers

[21] A notable American writer and producer (February 11, 1917 – January 30, 2007).

seems to be the classical grammar-translation approach. Eleena learned grammatical rules and applied them in translation between English and her native language, Malay. She was disappointed by this approach, which placed the emphasis on reading and writing rather than on speaking and listening. Teacher-centered chalk-and-talk drill and the traditional Grammar Translation Method were the basic learning techniques applied.

6.1.2 Discovering L2 Writing with Dictation, Rote Memorization and Model Essays

In school these students looked for ways to help them to engage with learning to write and appeared to be encouraged by activities such as dictation, memorizing new vocabularies and using model essays (provided by their English teacher) to adopt similar essay structure into their own writing.

Dictation provided Ema with her first experience of writing a complete essay in primary school:

> *In primary school, I learned to write in English mostly from dictation activities in the classroom, for me, it was just not about spelling, but also learning new words, understanding how sentence structure and grammar work and also how ideas were presented. I was also afraid I could not write one, so I memorised some of those essays.*
>
> *(Ema)*

She found duplicating and 120ummarizin essays helpful, thinking that it would develop her initial stage of writing. The idea behind this was to re-duplicate an essay of her own, similar to the models given by her teachers, in order to meet the requirements of the writing tasks.

Naja also referred to memorising the dictated essays, in addition to model essays that were provided:

> *My English teacher would write a sample of an essay on the whiteboard […] she explained what to be written in the introduction paragraph, body paragraphs and conclusion, and she gave us a similar title for us to write. We were asked to follow the structure, the format […] even the storyline and we just changed the details to make it different from the original one. That was how I first learned to write a complete English essay.*
>
> *(Naja)*

This indicates that memory played an important role, not only for learning grammatical rules and forms and learning new vocabulary but also for memorising whole texts,

suggesting that the emphasis was on form over content. The *model* essays were sometimes from other students. Farahin recalled memorising an essay written by her own classmate:

> *As for me, my English teacher chose the best essay from our classroom […] from my Chinese friend because he was good […] my teacher made copies of the essay and distributed to all of us […] we were asked to read and use that as a model […] so the next time we had to write, we had to follow his way of writing for a while […] and when we had more good essays from our friends, we did the same. That was how I learned, it worked for me.*
>
> *(Farahin)*

The use of model essays seems to have been widespread. Ika and Wan said:

> *My teacher gave a title to write a short story. […] she gave a copy of my friend's essay, which she felt a good writing for everybody to follow.*
>
> *(Ika)*

> *Most of my English teachers gave us examples of essays and then we just followed the format […] it was straight forward, we followed the format and changed the necessary details related to our own topics.*
>
> *(Wan)*

The practice of memorising essays as a model for writing seems to have been common practice for these five student writers. Memorising appears to have been an unintended learning strategy as, without teachers asking, this was practiced in school and helped develop their ESL writing strategy. Eleena continued the strategy of essay memorising in secondary school. '*Yes, I found memorising essays helpful for my own writing even in secondary school […] how grammar works in an essay […] the sample essays taught me how to present the ideas whenever I had to write my own'.*

Students seemed aware that limited vocabulary impacted their ESL writing. They shared their experiences of how vocabulary memorising helped their writing in school. While this seemed to be daunting for some students, it appeared to be a positive process.

Ema recalled that, for homework, she had to memorise up to 15 new words and was tested the next day. She said she understood that vocabulary learning was invaluable to developing her writing:

> *I think I enjoy writing now because I had to memorise English words introduced by my English teachers […] we were forced to remember, I remember we were scolded sometimes because we could not remember the long list but we managed. I have better choice of words now.*
>
> *(Ema)*

Siti too experienced 122ummarizin new English words. She mentioned LAWAD[22] (Learn a Word a Day):

> *On a daily basis, my English teacher would give us a word to learn. We were supposed to find the meaning of the word and construct a sentence to show some understanding with the correct usage. As we progressed, with the new words we learned overtime, we were supposed to use the list to write our essays. The experience provided me confidence to write.*
>
> *(Siti)*

The vocabulary learning approach seemed to aid Siti's ESL writing in school. Unlike others, Siti did not recall much emphasis on grammar and felt that improving her vocabulary repertoire gave her confidence to write in English. She added: '*LAWAD helped me to improve my writing but not grammar lessons because I had limited grammar lessons in school'.* Eleena also mentioned LAWAD and was encouraged to use the new words: '*from the list of words I 122ummarizi, my English teacher then asked us to use the words when we write our journal and short stories in the classroom'.* She was taught to link vocabulary expansion to better writing and was expected to recall words not only by sight, but also to use them correctly in specific context. This gives the impression that the ability to write hinges upon having an adequate vocabulary.

To sum up, students' initial experiences suggest that their teachers attached great importance to rote 122ummarizing122 for vocabulary building and the use of model essays. These techniques, though seemingly laborious, made sense to the students and they adopted them into their writing practice.

6.1.3 Finding Meaningful Relationship between Reading and Writing

Students recalled that reading was a helpful learning strategy to the '*acquisition of knowledge and vocabulary'* before writing took place and mentioned the introduction of a reading program in primary and secondary schools – NILAM[23]. The more students read,

[22] LAWAD, an acronym for Learn A Word A Day, is a widespread program promoted by the Malaysia Ministry of Education for the school teachers to introduce one word a day in their language classrooms as an effort to contribute modestly to students' vocabulary building.

[23] NILAM is a Malay acronym for *'Nadi Ilmu Amalan* Membaca' (Reading is the Heartbeat of Knowledge), drawn up as the national agenda in 1998 is an intensive English reading program planned for all pupils in Malaysia schools. This program is being carried out in collaboration with the school library. Among its many objectives, NILAM aims to enhance pupils' mastery of vocabulary and grammar besides gaining new knowledge from the book or articles read. (Ministry of Education Malaysia. 1995). The development of

the easier writing became. Reading enabled them to borrow ideas to express themselves better when writing in ESL.

The program came with an incentive from the school library, normally new books, which encouraged them to read in the target language.

> *I remember my English teacher in primary school took me to the library […] we got to choose our own story book. When I read and I found new words, I memorized […] NILAM helped me to read a lot and each time after reading, I had to write a summary of the story I read […] in secondary school, we still had NILAM.*
>
> *(Shuhuda)*

Naja's reading habit, developed by NILAM, helped her to write, by improving her vocabulary and grammar.

> *By reading more, I could use the ideas and learn to construct sentences from the stories […] sometimes I learned new words and learned from stories how to use the word and the grammar too*
>
> *(Naja)*

Ika said NILAM helped her writing form and also provided ideas and content.

> *Because I read, therefore I learn new words […] I can get new ideas from there to write my essays […] the way I learned to arrange the word […] and also when to use different tenses, present tense, past tense.*
>
> *(Ika)*

NILAM served these novice ESL writers by developing the acquisition of knowledge of the targeted language. In addition, NILAM seemed to make learning more purposeful as teachers encouraged classroom talk around their reading. Since English was taught based on themes, students said that the discussions they had made the lessons '*livelier'* and '*more enjoyable'*. This approach appeared to develop students' communicative competence.

Recollections of how students approached ESL writing in school proved more challenging as many only remembered preparing to sit for English in national examinations.

---

education: national report of Malaysia. International Conference on Education, 47th, Geneva. Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Education)

> *Based from my experience, I remember my English secondary teacher asked my classmates and I to go to the library to find some books and newspapers based on the topic that we had to write. From the reading, we had to understand and find the important points […] we presented the points in a mind map and everybody wrote about it individually using the same points.*
>
> *(Wan)*

Some approaches to writing required the students to collect and share information, as a basis for composing, from their reading. Reading was seen as a way to generate ideas, collect information, focus priorities and structure the organisation of content before writing on their own. Teachers facilitated the acquisition of appropriate content for the topics which helped reduce students' difficulties and organisation of materials. Reading was seen as a platform for student writers giving them a larger vocabulary and an understanding of the nuances of language and grammar.

6.1.4 Journal and Diary as Tools to Support Writing Development

Some students were encouraged to keep a journal promoting continuous writing practices. Hana recalled that in primary school she was encouraged to write a journal entry per day in English. '*My parents bought me a very fancy diary. The journal entries I wrote was to practice how to write in English. I gave my English teacher to read and she corrected my grammar mistakes'*. She used her *diary/ journal* as a tool to improve her language accuracy and voluntarily submitted it to her teacher on a weekly basis for correction. Naja practiced ESL journal writing too, but mixed Malay and English in her entries,

> *I used to write in my journal […] when I wrote, I sometimes used English and Malay, both languages, easier to write […] a form of practice to express myself in writing form […] I wrote about things that happened in a day, my daily life […] Other than writing in the classroom, it provided me spaces to practice writing in English.*
>
> *(Naja)*

She used journal writing as a form of self-expression to record events, presenting her experience in written form as a reflective practice and also associated the repetitive practice with her development of ESL writing.

Students appeared to have more control of their own learning when writing informally, without worrying about grammar and the mechanics of writing. This practice was focused

on form and meaning and they learned to communicate their written ideas in a way their audience could comprehend.

Adila felt that writing in school was just about meeting the requirement of the answer scheme for examinations.

> *Frankly in school, writing was about practicing writing for the exam only […] although writing stories was supposed to be fun for me but I remember when I had to write, there was certain way that I had to write for my Introduction paragraph, the body paragraphs should be like that, the conclusion is like this […] the flow of the essay has been dictated by the teacher.*
>
> *(Adila)*

Up to this point students had been very positive about their writing activities but Adila appeared to say something different. She felt the guidelines were a constraint and just about getting through the exams.

6.1.5 Writing as an Individual Activity and a Linear Process

Students' reflections on their experiences in primary and secondary schools appear to suggest that their approach to writing directly related to task suggestions from teachers and was product driven (see Section 6.1.2) in order to minimize students' difficulties. Working with other students was limited to brainstorming ideas in classroom discussions about introduction, body paragraph and conclusion.

> *In primary and secondary schools, I wrote my essays individually. We discussed in the classroom what points to include but we were asked to write on our own. After writing, my teacher corrected my essay on my grammar.*
>
> *(Naja)*

> *When I was in school, I never had to write with other people. I completed my writing task alone. After we finished our writing, our English teacher corrected the language and grammar. I was always afraid because I did a lot of mistakes.*
>
> *(Wan)*

Naja and Wan were encouraged to produce *'good essays'* with an emphasis on accuracy and grammar.

> *I wish I had more feedback on my writing when I was in school […] my teacher only told me how well or bad I did, they should write the comments.*
> *(Shuhada)*

> *Normally the teacher gave comments orally to explain and I had to answer some questions from her to show that I understood my mistakes*
> *(Wan)*

Shuhada and Wan's feedback in schools did not meet their expectations but appeared to be constructive within Wan's current academic writing study.

Naja, Wan and Farahin experienced an accuracy based approach. Farahin said: '*I think my experience writing alone in school helped me a lot. When I made grammar mistakes, my teacher corrected and explained to me. Now I am much more confident'.* Other students also felt that individual writing provided one to one corrective feedback support helping to meet the task requirements (see Chapter 8).

Naja's teacher set up pre-writing activities to generate ideas about content and structure, encouraging brainstorming and giving feedback: '*those days in school, one of my English teachers asked us to brainstorm with us before she asked us to write. I remember she corrected my writing'.*

> *In school, before writing, I did brainstorming too with my teacher and friends. Sometimes, when we did brainstorming sessions before writing in groups […] my teacher divided the students in the classroom into five groups because we had to write five paragraphs essay. One group will discuss and present what to write in the Introduction paragraph and so on […] we shared the points and we wrote on the same content*
> *(Wan)*

Naja, and Wan saw writing as linear, beginning with a plan to develop the body of the essay, with less emphasis on how they could refine their ideas. To some extent, ESL writing practices appeared to mirror what these students and their teachers expected from the current learning and teaching experience.

PART II: STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY WRITING

This section looks at students' writing experience in the university, focusing on teacher approaches and student responses.

6.2 WRITING IN THE UNIVERSITY IS ALWAYS ABOUT ASKING "IS THIS HOW YOU WRITE IT?" AND "AM I DOING IT RIGHT?'

The experience of writing in university for these students was inevitably influenced by their initial experiences as novice writers in school. In this section, divided the student data into the three writing modules. From here, I examined how students made sense of their own writing practices, based on initial writing experience and writing approaches they encountered in the university.

6.2.1 Co-constructing Process-Oriented Writing Instruction

The general writing approach in school focused more on the final product, with the expectation that students produced a coherent, error-free text from teacher-given memorized models of student essays or textbooks (see Section 6.1.2). This appeared to inhibit the development of a personal approach to writing. ESL in university, on the other hand, while focusing on grammar and accuracy, also focused on writing as a process. Students considered how each stage could help them to understand the nature and meaning of writing. The three teacher participants used process writing in the classroom, with activities such as planning, drafting, revising and editing.

6.2.1.1 Writing in Ms Raisha's classroom

> *Module Description: The module focuses on developing students' ability to write summaries and executive summaries. Students are taught to paraphrase and summarize key information using a variety of texts and discipline-based reports.*
>
> *Excerpt taken from ELC 560 module outline – English for Executive Summary Writing*

The excerpt above details the aim of the writing module and its expectations. Shuhada and Adila, students in Ms Raisha's English for Executive Summary Writing module, were learning how to differentiate between the writing of summaries and executive summaries. During the interview session, Shuhada and Adila showed me their draft of the summary (further discussion in Chapter 7 on group writing). Both student participants from this module followed the systematic instructions given by Ms Raisha when carrying out classroom activities.

Summaries and executive summaries were written based on source texts, with varied themes from social science to science, provided by Ms Raisha. Individual reading was required before writing in pairs.

> *I don't enjoy reading but for this module, I had to[…] writing the summary was preparing the outline first before I could start writing […] writing the outline, this is a good practice.*
>
> *(Shuhada)*

Reading for Shuhada was a *'boring'* task, but she endured the process, especially at the pre-writing stage, and used the outline as a brainstorming tool to develop her ideas and structure. This helped her to stay focused on the actual writing process. Adila had a different take on outline writing:

> *When planning writing the outline, I like discussion […] I feel planning with other people is better […] I have my own opinion, and I think if this one should be inserted here with this one and she would argue and ask why? Why is it like this? And then I would tell her my opinion what it is supposed to be like that and she will tell what she feels is right […] I think that is very helpful […] more constructive.*
>
> *(Adila)*

Adila felt that group brainstorming could stimulate her thoughts better than when she worked alone. Planning to write with her partner allowed her to be more confident of her own decisions through clustering and asking WH-questions. She was concerned about not only sharing ideas of what could be included in the summary but also about getting the '*right'* answer. She felt the drafting stage of writing was important and she paid attention to what was happening in her text as she prepared her draft.

> *I always have to do drafts […] when I write I will always have rough copies before I actually present my final copy because I tend to mmm like when I write, I write everything but when I read it again, I will always have things*

> *to add and scribble and my rough copies are really rough, as you can see here (pointing to her draft she took along during the interview session)*
>
> *(Adila)*

Working closely with her drafts, Adila became more familiar with her writing purpose and her unique ideas, skillfully developing her own confidence through rethinking and reseeding, gaining better understanding of meanings which had previously been vague.

Shuhada was frustrated with the drafting stage due to issues with her partner where last minute work meant their first draft was their final copy. '*I never got the chance to write draft […] it was always first draft is my final draft, it was a terrible work, we got scolded once during the lesson'.* She paired herself *'with someone whom I trust could help to improve my English',* but she still appeared to struggle to complete her writing tasks alone.

Peer editing was a characteristic of the writing practices. Students exchanged their first drafts and pointed out changes that were needed. Shuhada hoped her partner would evaluate her written work, helping her to learn to become a '*better writer'*, but she never did. Her partner eventually wrote the outline to the executive summary alone and then asked Shuhada to continue writing.

> *Our assignment, she prepared the outline alone. She came out with all the headings, the points […] she asked me to continue working from where she left [..] this is not group work*
>
> *(Shuhada)*

Shuhada was unhappy with the work (see Figure 6.1) and felt that points taken out from the source texts needed to be revisited.

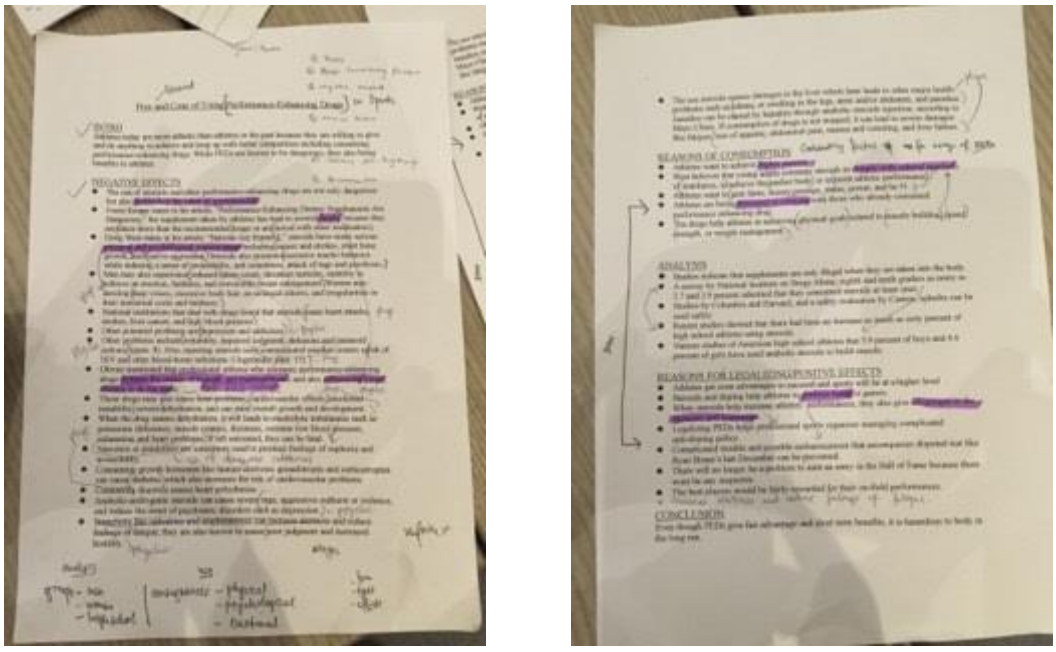


Figure 6.1: Outline prepared by Shuhada's partner

Shuhada felt that she '*could have done better outline and did not have to wait for her pair'.* She had to 130ummarizin the points according to '*how Ms Raisha wanted it to be'.*

Shuhada:	*You see, the outline looks like an essay in bullet points (chuckled). This is not how Ms Raisha wanted it to be. I remember for the outline we have to include the introduction. So I put a tick there. Ok.*
Ms Huslinda:	*What about the next tick? You considered that it is OK to be there too?*
Shuhada:	*The articles mainly discuss the negative effects of Performance Enhancing Drugs, so I would consider that as the most important element of the articles to be highlighted. But there are too many here. Ms Raisha limited to 3 major effects or most evident points. She listed here all from the articles, some are overlapping!*
Ms Huslinda:	*So what do you plan to do now?*
Shuhada:	*I am not going to give this back to my pair. I will have to reorganize the points myself and write out the summary myself. I need to take out examples, the details, group the points and take only 3 most important.*
Ms Huslinda:	*What about the points on the second page?*
Shuhada:	*Two headings here are overlapping. Both are reasons. Reasons why people consume enhancing drugs […] they are the same, look here. I will combine.*

Shuhada re-evaluated the outline, spending time evaluating each point. Despite the weaknesses that she observed, she reacted positively towards improving the written work in order to meet the expectation of the task.

6.2.1.2 Writing in Dr Dalia's classroom

> *Module Description: This module focuses on developing students' ability to write argumentative essays, paraphrase, summarise, and write parenthetical references/citation. The skills acquired will help prepare students for writing their final year project paper that is mandatory to acquiring their respective degrees.*
>
> *Excerpt taken from ELC 550 module outline – English for Academic Writing*

During one of the classroom observations, Dr Dalia taught skills such as paraphrasing, summarizing and referencing in order to develop her students' ability to write argumentatively. It was interesting to note that pair work was also one of the characteristics in this writing class. In one of the interviews sessions, some students brought their outline for one of the writing tasks, and discussed how they managed the task (further discussion in Chapter 7 on group writing).

The planning stage was either done on the board during the lesson or written in groups of 2-3 students. Students worked on writing an annotated bibliography based on four 130 word excerpts. Dr Dalia explained how she planned to conduct writing activity in her lesson.

> *For this writing activity, students need to evaluate excerpts from different articles on the same theme, so that is something new […] I will ask the students to read the excerpts and prepare the outline individually, and when they come to class, we shall do it on the board or I may go round and see what they have done and they will write in pairs.*
>
> *(Dr Dalia)*

Most of the students brought to class the previously assigned outline they had worked on individually, sharing their outline first before they wrote the actual analysis in pairs. Student volunteers shared their answers on a whiteboard (marking in black) and Dr Dalia corrected in red (see Figure 6.2).

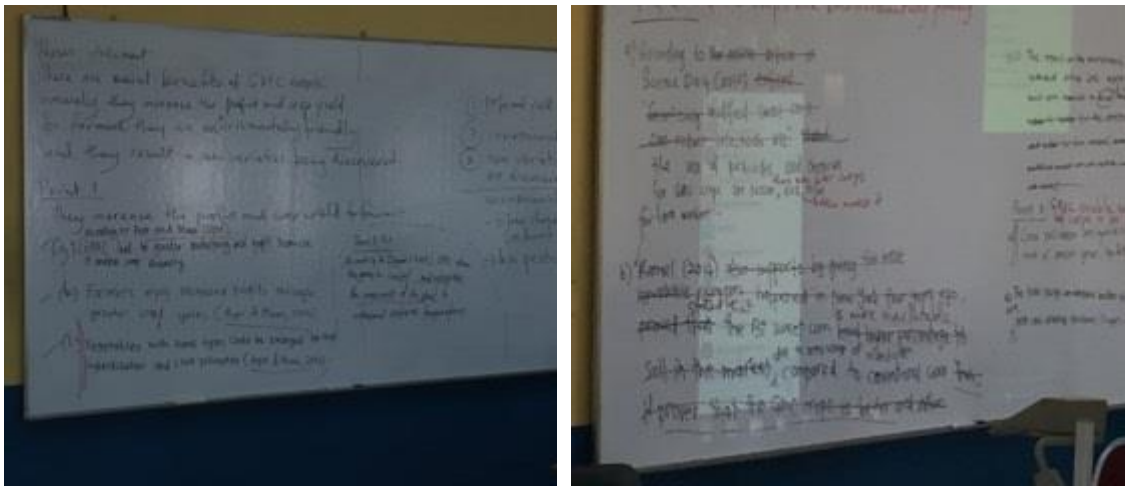


Figure 6.2: Students' collective answers to preparing outline for writing annotated bibliography during classroom observation

In the classroom, Dr Dalia went through every detail, firstly checking their Thesis Statement and discussing the main ideas. The students had a brainstorming session, generating idea and sharing thoughts and understanding of the excerpts. Most of the students seemed to compare this to their own outlines, determining the main idea and construction. An in-class pre-writing outline activity guided students into generating ideas and 132ummarizin main and supporting ideas within the annotated bibliography.

In the second stage, the students drafted their annotated bibliography. Five students I interviewed came without their pair and were reluctant to share their written work (which I later discovered was because they all faced challenges working in groups (see Chapter 7) and meeting each other's expectations).

> *Writing first draft is difficult especially when you are paired with someone who doesn't know what to write or how to start writing. My pair was afraid of making mistakes. She is taking longer time to prepare her part […]*
>
> *(Ika)*

> *When writing with other people, I think it is easier to divide the sections, but when we combine our parts as the whole complete work, the first draft was really bad, it didn't flow […] I think I will rewrite my partner's work*
>
> *(Naja)*

During the actual writing phase, Ika's partner and Naja felt that *'imperfect'* written work was an obstacle to writing, and treated the first draft like a final composition. This suggested that they did not believe that the recursive writing process would give them the opportunity to find and correct the mistakes later. For Ika, the goal of writing was to get something written and be ready for revision.

I feel the most important aspect to look into is whether we use the correct word […] the vocabulary […] we could misinterpret the meaning if we used the wrong words.

(Farahin)

Probably because we have never written annotated bibliography before, I might look at the way we do our referencing

(Naja)

I do agree, writing using references is new to use, we will be extra careful with the format […] and also to double check whether the selected contents/ points from the excerpts are the correct ones

(Wan)

Paraphrasing could be a problem too […] when we paraphrase we might change the structure, the clause too from passive to active […] I might have done it wrongly. We need to check on that

(Ika)

Farahin and Ika seemed to be more focused on product, as accuracy of the language used when writing in ESL was their primary concern. By contrast, Naja and Wan were more interested in 133ummarizin writing conventions such as referencing. Although these students seemed to *know more* language wise, they understood that the role of peer editing was not to demonstrate who was better at writing, but to provide evidence of further improvements and understanding of the criteria of a *good* written work in the university setting.

6.2.1.3 Writing in Mr Eilyas's classroom

Module Description: This module introduces students to the language of report writing. The module enables students to acquire the necessary language skills for report writing. Students are also taught to edit and proofread the different components of a report to ensure the accuracy of the language used. At the end of the course, students will consolidate the skills acquired to produce a short report and deliver an effective oral presentation of the report.

Excerpt taken from ELC 661 module outline – English for Report Writing

Mr Eilyas's students appeared to have a positive attitude towards challenges faced while working on their tasks. Similarly to the other two classes, the syllabus required group outline work before proceeding with actual writing. In two of the interviews sessions, the

students brought their outline and first draft of term paper, and discussed how they managed writing (further discussion in Chapter 7 on group writing).

During the first step of planning, Ema, Eleena and Siti told me they chose their topic and decided on the purpose of their report. When observing in the classroom, I noted students were:

> *busy discussing on their outline, some were giving and proposing ideas, ideas were rejected, more discussion and some notes were jotted down.*
>
> *(Fieldnotes, 31/3/2016)*

Ema, Siti and Eleena discussed their initial plan for their report writing during my first classroom observation, showing me a list of topics (see Figure 6.3) based on group members' *special interests*.

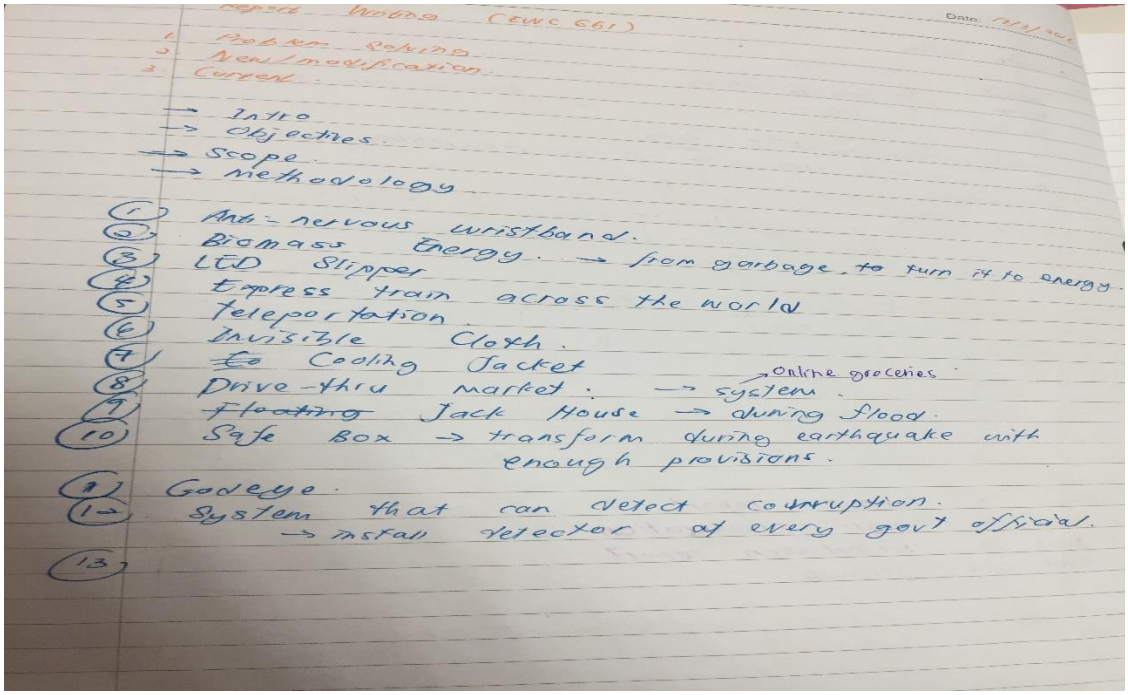


Figure 6.3: List of possible topics for group's report writing

Ema said '*the topics were related to our field, that is electrical engineering where they planned to introduce either new system, a gadget or even a big machine…. From the 12 topics that we listed, all agreed to explore and write on – Drive-thru- Supermarket'.* They explained the idea for the project and how the system could work, and demonstrated their knowledge on the chosen topic (see Figure 6.4). At the time of data collection, they were at the planning stage, 134ummarizing ideas based on group discussion in diagram forms.

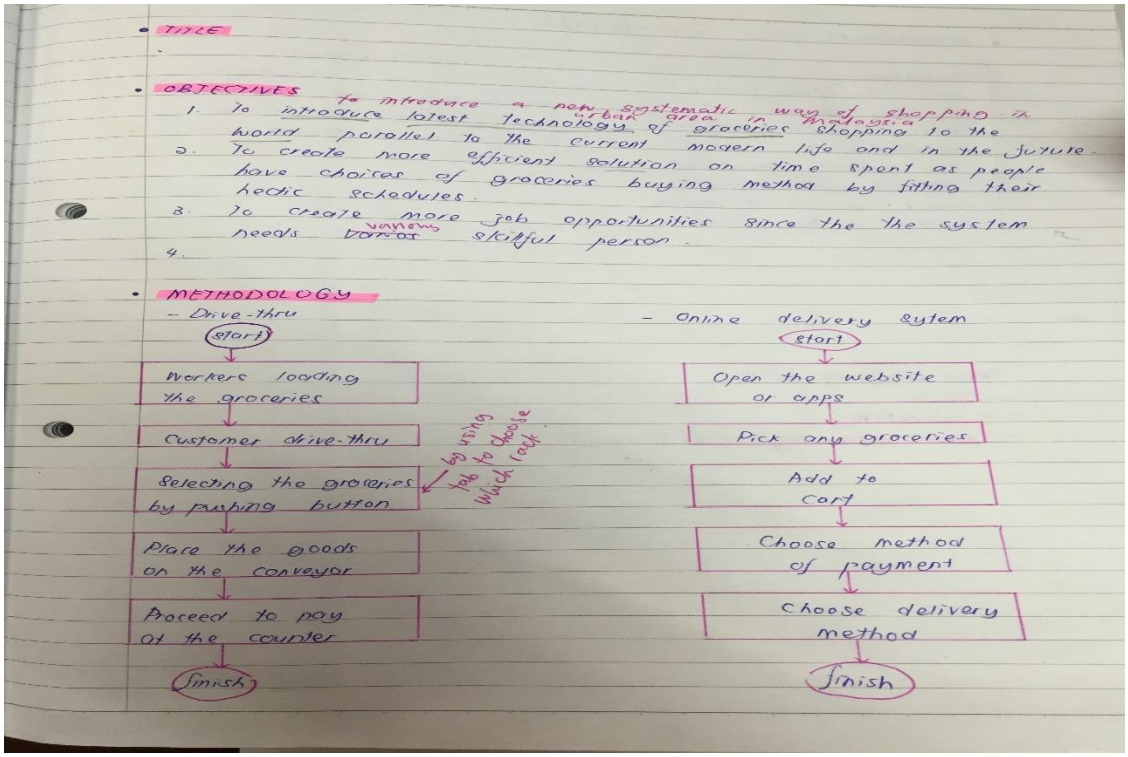


Figure 6.4: The objectives of the report and diagrams proposed the content to show how the system could work

The chosen *Methodology* was able to meet the *Objectives* with arrows showing the steps to be undertaken (see Figure 6.4). Insights during group discussion had helped clarify further investigation on the topic that this stage of writing seemed to lead the students to their specific goals before beginning composing.

After this planning stage, Mr Eilyas asked his students to share their group proposals with the class and receive comments from himself and their course mates. Ema, Siti and Eleena presented theirs:

> *That was a good presentation but you have lack of clarity […] your proposed topic is difficult to understand because you have a lot of objectives to achieve, just focus on one […] it wasn't clear and smooth enough just now […] and please familiarize yourself with oral presentation skills too, you will have to present your report as part of the assessment.*
>
> *(Classroom Observation, 31/3/2016)*

These group members then revisited their initial three objectives (see Figure 4).

Ms Huslinda:	*So tell me how far have you progressed with your outline?*
Ema:	*From the comments Mr Eilyas gave us, we decided to be more focused. We paraphrased if you could see in red ink (referring to the list of objectives from Figure 4)*
MsHuslinda:	*Oh yes, I could see that. How did you decide doing that?*
Eleena:	*When we had a look together, we felt that objectives 2 and 3 are the answers we wanted to answer objective 1. In doing this, we asked ourselves WH questions – What are we trying to achieve here? Why Drive Through Shopping? Who will use this system?*
Siti:	*Yes, we brainstormed at first and we weren't focused before the presentation. We presented the ideas for feedback. And now we know what we are focusing on. We realized that what we wanted was to highlight the advantages of Drive-Thru-Shopping, like what we listed here (see Figure 5).*

In one of the interview sessions, students appeared to understand that feedback allowed the them to reformulate their specific goals at each stage of the writing process. The WH-question strategy helped them to find answers (see Figure 6.5).

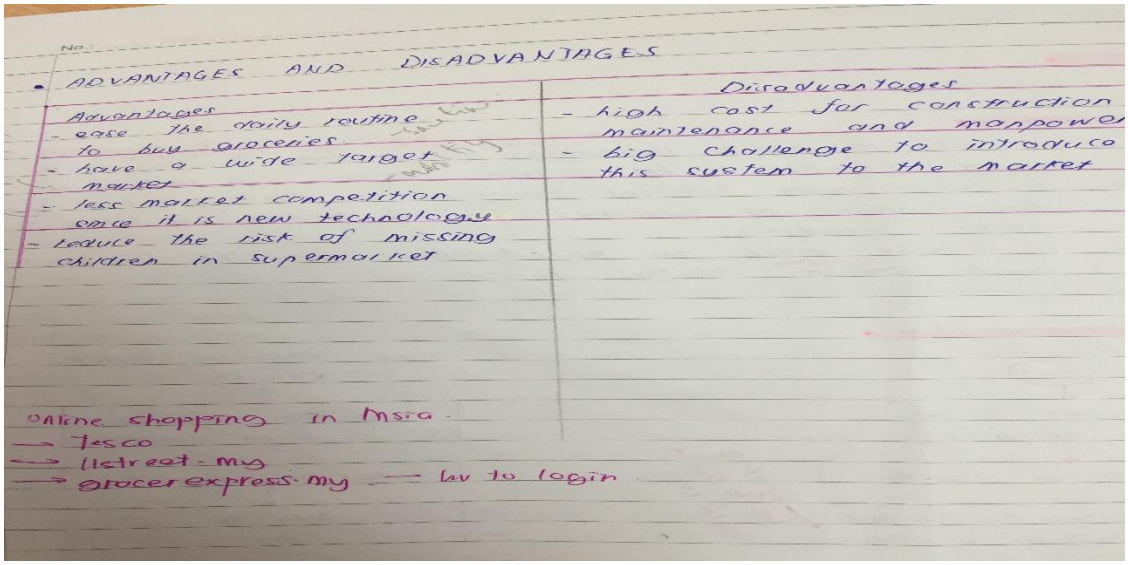


Figure 6.5: Student writers eliciting and brainstorming advantages of Drive-thru-shopping

In one of the interviews, the group felt that the objective of their report was *'to introduce a new systematic way of shopping in urban area in Malaysia'* and *'further investigate what people feel about it'*. The planning stage was interrupted by the given feedback which allowed the students to re-evaluate their work at this initial stage.

The students were required to produce a group text. However, the drafting was done individually. Ema introduced the objective, Eleena explained how they could further investigate the topic and Siti presented the advantages of drive-thru-shopping – this allowed each student to work according to their own strength.

> *Before we start writing our first draft, we divided the task […] after everybody decided how they could contribute best, we took the section which we feel we are good at […] we discuss again what needed to be written, we prepare our individual outline […] new outline, not this one (referring to Figure 4)*
>
> *(Eleena)*

> *Yes, for example, when Ema has to decided that she would write the Introduction, we discussed how she was going to write and what she needed to cover*
>
> *(Siti)*

> *On my part, when I have completed my part, I will give to both so that they can give comments for me to improve. If they feel there is still room for improvement, we will discuss and I will improvise the work*
>
> *(Ema)*

During the drafting stage, revisions and editing happened in a way that suggested that writing is a non-linear experience. Their writing experience in school, where revision took place at the end of the writing process after teachers provided feedback on grammatical errors (see Chapter 7.1.5), was understood to be more linear.

In all three writing courses, teachers intervened in the writing process with emphasis on form. However, students seemed to be more concerned with the correctness of the specific genre and how ideas were explored through writing. Writing was a discovery process where ideas were generated, formulated and refined, not just transcribed as they had experienced in school. However, students had issues when writing with other people during the revision stage. With group work as the main modality in academic writing and revision being a necessary part of that, I wondered how this was preparing students to establish a positive context for effective writing.

6.2.2 The Different Use of Model Essays in the University

As discussed in part I, students' memories of writing in school featured the use of model essays. According to Mr Eilyas, some students appeared to use models in order to help them identify the different genres and writing across the disciplines.

.

> *I asked the students to explore first from zero […] nothing yet from me. They go out and that is when they encounter problems, they will have a lot to ask […] I encourage them to ask each other in their group to cross check what they know […] later when they present their work, I will correct them.*
>
> *(Mr Eilyas)*

Mr Eilyas encouraged his students to find their own strategies in order to produce their own structure to report writing. He responded to ideas produced on paper and facilitated the finished product process but he did not model it. This approach used the students' experiences, opinions and writing strategies, thereby helping with self-discovery. He expected students to become effective at text generating rather than modelling from other sources suggesting they learned from their personal experience, giving them the freedom to explore and reflect.

Ema, Eleena and Siti approached the process of report writing in different ways.

> *We are following a report I borrow from a friend doing the same writing course. We need to know the format.*
>
> *(Ema)*

> *We follow the format from the example that we have […] I will read just to know what is written in each section.*
>
> *(Siti)*

Regarding the usefulness of working closely with a model, Siti said '*We were never exposed to do questionnaire for our technical report. We were to ask to think of an issue and find the answers from our respondents. From the example we have here, we could have a rough idea of how to write our own'.* Eleena said '*will read to get an idea'* but considered guidelines and explanations from the teacher to be more useful.

> *The sample writing is important so we could look at the format, the structure […] but we need to see more on writing guidelines […] what are the expectations for a report writing for this course for example […] we*

> *don't really need an example as a model report, but more explanations on how to go about.*
>
> *(Eleena)*

Mr Eilyas gave more verbal classroom instructions than Eleena expected. In one of the interviews, he said that discussion of the characteristics of *'good'* and *'bad'* writing allowed his students to have their own writing experience without the need of a model, regardless of what some of his students expected. He wanted his students to develop their report writing from first-hand experience.

Ema, Eleena and Siti's expectations about models was partly due to their bad experience when writing lab reports in their engineering courses.

> *I never knew how to write a lab report. I think our tutor has to teach us how to do a technical report […] should give more details, not just with some headings like Introduction, Methodology and Analysis […]*
>
> *(Eleena)*

> *No sample given and we didn't get back our lab report. We received no comments and we didn't know what was wrong what was right with it*
>
> *(Ema)*

Ema said '*we did a lot of reports, on weekly basis'* but without models and feedback the writing practice was difficult. '*We have been writing reports since diploma and never knew what was the correct way of doing it'*. They had expectations that this writing class would extend and sharpen their skills.

Adila and Shuhada were given an executive summary model which they used to compare structure and organization of ideas with their drafts. This helped to hone the essential skills needed to improve their standard of work.

So far, the use of models among these student writers was a widespread practice both in school and university classrooms. The reason that models are used comes from the belief that imitating a model is a valid means to help student writers to write in L2 and also in their *discourse communities.* (Spack, 1988).

6.2.3 Writing in the University is not an Individual Activity

During the first lesson, students learned that it was a course requirement to write in pairs or groups and, although the logistics of this idea were not discussed, ways were found to

negotiate deadlines before submission and set down criteria for pair/group composition (see Chapter 7).

Some group members worked together during the pre-writing stage brainstorming, planning, outlining and negotiating.

> *"... more often, we discuss at the beginning before we write... we discuss and explain what to write... after that everybody will write individually and when we have completed our part, we will meet again for further discussion..."*
>
> *(Wan)*

> *"... my group members and I would prepare our individual outline and we shall ask our lecturer to check. Planning stage is very important... everybody must understand and be clear of the task... we write individually and we shall meet for proofreading and rewrite it together as a group if necessary..."*
>
> *(Naja)*

> *"... as for our group, we plan individually on what to write... we meet when everybody has prepared theirs and we write together... one person will say out loud what to write, we shall discuss and explain and one person will write... and we shall proofread together..."*
>
> *(Ika)*

> *"... yes, I prefer to sit down and think first on my own before I could start writing with my group members... we will sit together and discuss and one person will write and yes we will proofread the work after that..."*
>
> *(Farahin)*

Groups of students used social spaces when beginning their writing. In the classroom, Mr Eilyas asked questions during group discussions.

> *When students are writing in groups, in planning and composing stages, there seemed to be interaction between the group members, answering each other's questions on what to write, how to organize idea, how to manage and compose writing, how to shape writing for a better result*
>
> *(Mr Eilyas)*

During the composing stage, students' preference of writing seemed to be influenced by their school experiences. Most students faced challenges with group writing so they found their own strategies in order to complete the tasks individually, then meeting and collating in a group before submission (see Chapter 7).

6.2.4 Code-Switching

It was common for students to use their mother tongue to communicate within their group when developing their writing tasks (see Section 5.2.2.4), and some teachers had periods of code switching during the lessons. Ms Raisha and Dr Dalia allowed code-switching as this '*was seen helping students to express their views during planning stage but otherwise in class, students had to communicate in English when responding to their teacher'* (*Dr Dalia*).

Ema, Siti and Eleena agreed it was '*important to use as much target language',* as suggested by Mr Eilyas, but during group discussions, code-switching made their thinking process easier.

> *I prefer to use Malay when brainstorming […] easier to pull out our ideas and opinions […] less time is spent thinking what to say if we got stuck with words*
>
> *(Ema)*

> *During discussion we use both Malay and English to explain something, it is easier to understand and like Ema said, discussing using English can take longer time as we have to find suitable words.*
>
> *(Siti)*

Code-switching was identified as a tool to enable them to achieve particular aims. Eleema said *'I'll start my sentence or idea in English first and I shall continue to finish it in Malay'* and Ema added *'sometimes it just word that you are looking for not there'.*

Haja said *'sometimes code-switching helps us to say something more confidently of our ideas*'. Ika said *'when the teacher in the classroom code-switch, it doesn't mean that she is not good or a bad English teacher, but to add our understanding of a specific word and also the instructions that she gave us, like Dr Dalia*'. Shuhada was comfortable with her teacher using code-switch *'I have limited vocabulary to write and when I read the articles I couldn't understand some words […] when Ms Raisha translate and explain using Malay, it helped me to feel confident to complete the task*', believing that this helped to meet her needs as an L2 writer. However, Adila appeared to feel the practice was *'unnecessary […] since my family doesn't use English at home, we must try to use Malay as minimum as possible in the classroom so that we get more exposure to using English'.*

6.3 MAKING THE TRANSITIONS: COMPARING L2 WRITING EXPERIENCES FROM SCHOOL IN MEETING CHALLENGES WRITING IN THE UNIVERSITY

Students' recollections of writing experiences from school helped me to understand how they adapted and developed their ESL writing in a continuous developmental process of writing, forethought and the ability to self-evaluate their written work. It appeared that the whole writing process stimulated reflection on their attitudes towards academic writing and allowed them to explore ESL writing strategies in order to meet expectations. This is crucial to understanding what these students felt about academic writing and the attitudes they formed in university.

6.3.1 Student Writers' Overall Attitude towards Writing in the University

Students' attitudes towards their English learning tended to be influenced by their perception and attitudes towards learning efficiency. Most of them felt it was '*not an enjoyable experience […] could not get the right words, could not express both in written and spoken well enough in English',* some believed that group working supported them to '*build list of words, content'* and even '*confidence'* (see Section 6.1.5). Even though many of them employed the strategies provided by their school teachers (see Section 6.1.4) they still had issues when writing in the university.

While the writing courses seemed to help some with their academic tasks, other students experienced significant problems. Shuhada said she felt '*very low and not good enough'* labelling herself as '*weaker'* when paired with her course mate. She felt that group writing allowed for more discussion but a lack of communication and interaction with her partner discouraged her.

> *This semester, I am working under pressure. I could not find the right time to work with my pair. I think I could write better alone. Like in school, I used to write with essays from my teachers […] I could just do that. I will look at the examples from Ms Raisha, and I could just write my own summary. I feel like it is a competition now writing with other people.*
>
> *(Shuhada)*

She enjoyed writing even though she did not have *'enough vocabulary and good grammar'* and felt she was '*not a good writer*'. However, those without language and

self-related problems tended to regard the writing course '*as a waste of time'* and even *'boring'*.

6.3.1.1 Why do I still have to write summaries in the university?

Students from Ms Raisha's class had to prepare an Executive Summary as part of the assessments. Despite being confused, students adopted 143ummarizing skills learned in school rather than seeking answers from their teacher or course mates. Adila said '*I wrote summary in school, I think it is the same… writing it again in the university was not a new discovery… I actually like doing research […] you get to read articles in the same topic and write about it […] but this summary writing is very boring […] she gave us articles on something that I do not like […] I mean, it is something that is new […] new knowledge, but the topic does not grab my attention'*. However, Ms Raisha said: '*Adila failed to meet the requirements of writing executive summary for the course simply because she did not follow the instruction'*.

Adila's enjoyment of her writing experience in the university related to how '*interesting'* the topic was and seemed to hold her back from exploring other available writing methods.

> *In school we were taught to use a lot of our creativity, and then all of a sudden, we enter the university, it is all very technical.*
>
> *(Adila)*

Adila seems to have lost her interest in writing and felt it was *'tiring because we do more work. […] tried to accommodate to what Ms Raisha wanted. I am also packed with other law assignments'*.

This observation is noteworthy as this particular student is from the Faculty of Law which does not require executive summary writing for content courses. However, students from the Faculties of Engineering and Applied Science felt that the writing classes could help them to improve their L2 writing in other courses while completing their degrees.

6.3.1.2 Just go out and find what it is? Where are the models?

Mr Eilyas's class was experiential in nature and Ema, Siti and Eleena found there was '*tough decision making*'. When a question such as *'is this how you write a report?'* cropped up while planning, drafting and editing it left them speculating on what was considered '*right'*.

Students' initial writing experience in school suggested that they relied heavily on models (see Section 6.1.2). In the preliminary drafting stage Mr Eilyas attended to *content* and not *form*. When students questioned him on the report structure he suggested exploration when writing out their first draft, with an assumption that *'students at this stage like to explore'.* However, as they felt unable to write without a model (see Section 7.2.2) they *'explored'* from '*a report* (borrowed) *from a friend doing the same course'* because *'we are afraid of not meeting the requirements because the format is unclear'*. Eleena commented *'format wise seems unclear to me...what kind of reports do we have to write for this course?'*

Ema, Eleena and Siti found that the purpose of structuring and defining reports in class was '*to make the participants and readers to understand something*', whereas writing a lab report was '*to show their own understanding of the experiment*' with both possibly being in the form of charts. Mr Eilyas said '*students at this age, they would want to explore, they would want to show that they are also capable of doing things on their own […] let they themselves do the correction, use their insight from inside'.* This seems to suggest that writing practices in different contexts are socially constructed activities and that students accomplished certain goals by exploring the relationship between these practices and processes.

Students' relationships between their reasons for writing and their choices of writing strategies seemed to affect the potential outcomes. Some students used both successful and unsuccessful strategies from school to try and improve their academic writing, saying that their school experiences influenced their current decision making.

6.3.2 Student Writers' Expectations Regarding the Role of Feedback in University Writing Classrooms

Providing feedback was seen as one of the most important teaching tasks (see Section 5.2.2) from the perspective of both the students and the university teachers.

Ema felt feedback was important but, because of negative experiences from her school years, she mostly self-corrected her work.

> *I knew feedback from teachers were supposed to help, but not in my case […] whenever I made mistakes in primary school, my English teacher* (in school) *used to criticise me […] it was always bitter when I received back my writing […] so to improve my writing, I asked less, I self-corrected myself using Ms Word […] until now, you know that red and green lines? I made sense of what Ms Word was trying to tell me.*
>
> *(Ema)*

Through her self-correction Ema demonstrated her comprehension and understanding of her own mistakes. Although she knew she would receive feedback for her written tasks, her prior experience in school reduced her self-efficacy and thereby influenced her learning choices, thoughts and emotional reactions. Ema and Siti, who both had a strong sense of confidence, persevered and made a greater effort with their writing.

Generally, students seemed to value feedback more in the university than they had at school.

> *When she corrected our work, she will put a tick when we did it correctly with some words of encouragement and if we did the task wrongly, she provided comments line by line and wrote to explain to us what went wrong with some possible options so that we could understand better […]I don't mind getting a lot of comments but with the way Ms Raisha corrected our work, I don't have to refer to my classmates because sometimes they were unsure themselves.*
>
> *(Shuhada)*

> *With Ms Raisha, I like the fact that she doesn't change our sentences, she sticks with what we have written and she just corrects that sentence […] it is not she totally changes the whole sentence to her own idea, she sticks to our ideas […] other lecturers they don't give it back […] we don't know what we did wrong.*
>
> *(Adila)*

Practices in the university varied from one teacher to the other but it was common to see all three teachers providing feedback while their students were in the writing process (see Sections 5.2.2.1 and 5.2.2.2). Shuhada and Adila clearly welcomed Ms Raisha's feedback believing it could help them to improve and consolidate their learning when writing in their second language.

Other students preferred receiving verbal feedback.

> *We only had verbal feedback with Dr Dalia […] we showed her our work and she would read and gave comments. If she could not understand, she would ask and we explained. That in a way increase our own understanding on our own work.*
>
> *(Wana)*

> *During our discussion with Dr Dalia for feedback, we do not just listen, I do write down her comments and asked her right away if I did not understand her clearly, we don't have to wait until the next time we see her. This saves time.*
>
> *(Naja)*

> *Yes, and when Dr Dalia highlighted our weakness, we could just ask her until we fully understand how to do it better next time.*
>
> *(Farahin)*

There seems to be a comparison made here between the effectiveness of verbal and written feedback. Written feedback appeared to have less space for interaction and negotiation whereas verbal feedback, which could take place either during or after the lesson, provided more space to discuss their writing development and thereby help them gain better understanding.

Eleena said '*we normally work individually on our parts, but when we have done our part the best, we meet up with our friends, doesn't matter you meet them face to face or online, friends will give comments and feedback'.* Siti agreed that *'many things can be improved'* and Ema added that other group members have got *'different opinions regarding our work'.* Aside from getting feedback from their teachers, students also shared their writing and responded to written and verbal feedback with their peers in and out of the classrooms.

Although some students felt that peer feedback was potentially valuable, other students found it to be challenging. Shuhada had anticipated some form of learning from her partner, however, this was not the case.

> *I need someone to help me […] I know she* (the pair) *is good and when I know that I am not good enough, I want her to correct me, how I can do it better […] but she doesn't like to communicate that much.*
>
> *(Shuhada)*

Upon seeing this conflict, their teacher encouraged them to participate in the feedback process.

6.3.3 Change of Focus from 'Form' in School to 'Meaning Making' When Writing in the University

Students revealed that their school ESL learning focused on accuracy and fluency and was *'narrative and descriptive'* in nature. Writing in university, however, was very '*student centered'* and they were encouraged to develop their writing skills by building content and structure.

Shuhada found her writing experience in school influenced the way she approached her current learning.

> *Surprisingly, summary writing is nothing new. We have started writing summary from the story books we read from the library in primary school. In secondary school, summary writing was based on what my English teacher asked us to write […] but writing summary now is difficult and different […] My teacher advised that whenever I needed to write, I had to prepare an outline first […] from the introduction, content for body paragraphs, conclusion […] I use the same steps like now.*
>
> *(Shuhada)*

She recalled an initial planning stage, when learning to write at school, which she was able to apply to her current learning. Her *'difficult'* experience appears to be related to the conventions of summary writing within the university as she did not know about the different conventions for genres within communities.

Mr Eilyas's students appeared more aware of their teacher's expectations and their own writing skills. Ema, Eleena and Siti, (all second year degree students), developed their academic writing skills whilst writing their Diplomas and used these skills when

developing their report writing rather than concentrating on grammer and accuracy as they had in school (see Section 6.1.1).

Ema said '*Mr Eilyas did not teach specific skills to write report writing, we had to find out from friends and the internet'.* Students identified strategies and outsourced models as ways of improving and developing their writing in the university. Feedback from their teachers and group members helped them to focus more on meaning.

> *After the brainstorming session, we discussed the titles and listened what Mr Eilyas had to say, we reflected on our decision*
>
> *(Eleena)*

> *Our title was on current issue […] we were asked to read more to have more information […] Mr Eilyas also asked us to be more descriptive, more accurate about the content […] he also said our title is too general, he wanted to be more specific and asked us to look back at the research question*
>
> *(Siti)*

> *We are more worried about not meeting the requirements than if we are out of topic and format*
>
> *(Ema, Siti and Eleena)*

Ema, Eleena and Siti revised and edited their writing numerous times in order for them to communicate their ideas more effectively, seeming to focus little attention on grammar or vocabulary. This contrasts with their school experience where they mainly focused on grammar accuracy and worked with corrective feedback.

Ms Raisha put great importance on getting her students to understand the general textual and distinct organizational patterns in executive summary writing. She said '*when I correct them, not so much on grammar but choice of words […] I try to correct because options for lexical choices are very limited'.*

> *When Ms Raisha corrected our work, she commented line by line and explained the problems […] when you have these comments, you know what are the mistakes, wrong choice of words*
>
> *(Shuhada)*

Although Shuhada was aware that vocabulary was a concern she was also worried about her grammar '*I am worried if I did a lot of grammar mistakes, I will get less marks'.* In Ms Raisha's class the development of appropriate text organization was more important than accuracy at the sentence level – showing that correct vocabulary use was only one

of the factors influencing the development of academic writing. Shuhada and Adila used this concept to connect form and meaning of words giving them a better comprehension of their writing tasks.

6.3.4 So Writing in the University is not an Individual Activity Anymore?

Writing modules such as English for Academic Writing, English for Executive Summary Writing and English for Report Writing are expected to prepare students for writing in other academic situations and play an important role in helping students learn academic English skills and improve their L2 academic writing. Group work is the norm compared to initial writing practices in school which were seen as an individual activity (see Section 7.1.5). However, students did not just work in groups, but also in different modalities appropriate to their class activities.

> *Ms Raisha gave a copy of model report to her students and asked them to find a pair – Students were asked to read the report individually – understand and do mind map of the ideas from the report – Brainstorm with the pair – compare understanding - the definition, statistical evidence and causes and its effects – In bigger groups compare again.*
>
> *(Fieldnotes, 18/5/2016)*

Three different modalities were employed by Ms Raisha. Students were initially instructed to find a pair. Later, when the students had to read their source texts, she instructed them to do individual reading and, afterwards, to discuss their understanding with their pair. Further comparison was then to be done within a bigger group.

Using different modalities enabled students to balance their writing load and reduce tension. Individual work challenged students' understanding whereas, within a pair or bigger group, they were encouraged into a *decision-making discussion* and *information-exchange task*.

In meeting the requirements of these writing courses, the biggest challenge for most of the students was to change their practice from individual writing to pair and group writing. The responses from the interview sessions showed that students' writing practices in the university were based upon the type of writing they had done in school where they had limited experience working with other people (see Chapter 7).

6.4 DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I have explored students' recollections of writing in school as a framework for then for understanding the meaning they ascribe to the practices they encounter in university. Students were aware of certain differences between writing in school and writing in university, undermining some of the certainties and knowledge acquired in school. For example, Ema and Siti raised the issue of, *is this how you write in the university*? and said that they were constantly thinking *am I doing it right?* . Anxiety about whether they met the requirements of the written tasks undermined their confidence at times, signalling their awareness that writing in the university classroom was not only different as a product but also that there was a shift in context, even if they were unable to define it. The interview questions about the past provided a spring board that the students used to reflect on the challenges of writing as they transitioned from school to the writing practices in the university. But just as the student writers participated in the process of writing, the social context broadens their views of what was involved in the university writing event and in turn shaped their new identity to be part of the membership community to write in particular ways (Ivanič, 1998).

I have discussed that student writers spoke of grammar, rote memorization, dictation and model essays, diary and individual writing in school. In addition, some students also shared their experience of using mother tongue in the classroom, especially when their ESL teachers wanted to eliminate 'errors' in their written texts. It would seem that the deficit model (Lea & Street, 1998) underpinned ESL pedagogy in school not only in terms of the need to fix the language, but also in terms of form. Student writers' initial view was that the approach was to scaffold their conception of learning to write in university classrooms. Aside from being 'fixed' in terms of grammatical rules, the practice of following a model essay in school framed what 'good writing' is. For example, some student writers said that the features of summary and expository writing were mainly taught through selected students' samples considered as *good writing*. As such, writing practices in school seemed to take the product approach where students modelled the texts, controlled the practice on the highlighted features, organized the ideas and used competent structures and vocabulary to produce a 'good' essay as the end product. This traditional prescriptive approach to writing in led student writers to an idea of as linear, with the focus on form aimed at having a *product*.

In answering the question, how to write in the university, student writers demonstrated that they consciously used strategies learned in school to navigate their writing in the university. From Lea and Street's (1998) academic socialization perspective, student writers' shared past experience from school led them to be more reflective about how to navigate writing in the university which appeared to approach writing as a social practice. For instance, using sample writing was still seen as a widespread strategy among student writers at the time of the interview. Ika, Wan, Eleena, Ema and Siti reflected they could only write effectively when they had a model, *just like in school* for writing as this helped them with the organizational characteristics. In addition to model essays, the use of first language seemed to play a role for these student writers. Code-switching is seen as detrimental and inefficient by some (Wei & Martin, 2009). However, Naja and Ika who came from the rural area school, said that they learned ESL through English and Malay, their mother tongue. All of the students found the approach helped them especially to have greater access to learning grammar of the targeted language, thereby challenging the 'monolingual fallacy' that English is best taught monolingually (Phillipson, 1992, p. 185). In the university classroom, code-switching was present too, as I have illustrated from my classroom observations. The students used code-switching extensively in their group work. During students' group discussion, code-switching was used when they wanted to clarify meaning of the words and their work as a whole. Whilst, the writing teacher used code-switching to emphasize instructions in order to ensure students understood the writing tasks in the classroom.

When student writers began talking about writing in school, the reflections were on the lack of feedback. None of the student writers recalled what they did with the written work returned by their ESL teachers. Whether or not feedback was given, it is clear that the students did not retain any significant memory of it beyond the need to *have to be very careful with the tenses.* In other words, approach to written feedback that focused on form was not seen as feedback. According to the student writers, form-focused feedback actually led them to view writing as a text-based form which focuses only on *what is good writing* which they said *no longer worked* in the *university classroom as writing in the university is not just about using correct grammar but also on finding ways on how to write*. Most of the student writers came to understand that the writing process itself is recursive, explanatory and involve a generative process (Schmitt, 2008), unlike ESL writing practices in school. Within this understanding, they implicitly viewed feedback

as having a formative role. To some extent, student writers demonstrated a high level of reflexivity about their own writing processes. For instance, Eleena, Siti and Ema who were working together, said that feedback on effective use of language, the structure of the report and relevance of the content led them to improve subsequent drafts. Though feedback was never in written form, corrective feedback from the teacher provided orally during the teacher-student conference gave space to communicate ideas.

As Hyland has argued (2000, p. 35), while other research has highlighted issues of power and authority between teacher and students when working with feedback but "it may have special potency for ESL students who often lack confidence in their second language and may also be facing induction into a new culture and a new discourse community". I could sense that the interaction during the feedback dialogue was particularly valued, as student writers said that it provided them the chance to think about and understand how to meet the task expectations. However, the issue of power and authority was more prominent for the student writers in peer feedback as they struggled to complete group writing (which will be discussed later in 8.2). Notably, when ideas and understanding were contested and intelligently challenged by others in the group (Street & Street, 1984), the power struggle among student writers was obvious in group writing.

As students writing in their second language, they also struggled initially with the lack of attention to form. Ema, Eleena, Siti, Adila, Shuhada, Hana, Naja, Wan, Ika and Farahin were concerned at not receiving grammar lessons in their university classroom in addition to what has been acquired in school. In terms of student writers' conceptions of academic essay writing in the university, they tried to define the coherence in writing to writing outcomes (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001). As such, for these student writers, the transition phase during which they tried to understand the problems to writing in the university to achieve the 'target identity' on *how to write* (McKenna, 2004) in their new discourse community (university) is about making "sense to their current identity and their preparation for the achievements which will frame their future" (Heath & Heath, 1983, p. 368). In this regard, student writers' approach in school, grounded in a product-based approach (as discussed in 6.1), shifted to more meaning making in the university. They appeared to be aware that, what was important in the writing was not only grammatical accuracy but certain conventions inherent to academic writing. The notion of meaning making by student writers was more on their decision to *choose the correct tense when writing reports, suitable words use as there are jargons in different fields, appropriate*

format and *relevant points to write (Fieldnotes, 26/5/16).* This decision was seen as taking Lea's (1999, p. 159) academic literacy approach to writing in the university as they "switch practices between one setting and another, to deploy a repertoire of linguistic practices appropriate in each setting and to handle the social meanings and identified that each evokes".

Thus, student writers revealed their more complex understanding of the writing process and the development of the use of other writing elements (aside from only feedback as suggested by their academic writing teachers as discussed in Chapter 5) in their transition from school to university. Their experience shows that students were able to transfer certain reflective strategies from school to bridge the gap between expectations school and university had. This chapter has indicated that the student writers discovered writing as a *social practice* in that they were able to articulate important elements of writing beyond the linguistic level. This suggests that the student writers were learning to take up disciplinary positions and were being inducted into a *discourse community*. Students' initial writing practices from school shaped the ways in which they negotiated *crossing the bridge* in terms of meeting the expectations of university writing, discovering the common characteristics (the overlap of ESL and L2 writing) The following chapter discusses how student writers negotiate group writing as a practice in the university classrooms.

CHAPTER 7: GROUP WRITING

7.0 INTRODUCTION

Group writing will be discussed here in terms of teachers' and students' approaches to writing tasks in the three academic writing modules, English for Academic Writing, English for Executive Summary Writing and English for Report Writing. All three modules had distinct writing assessment tasks and fulfilment requirements. The profiles of the student participants and corresponding teachers were introduced in Chapter 4. I will now explore the perspectives of the teachers, based on my interviews with them and my observations of them teaching their modules and their ten student writers on writing in pairs and groups. Through the voices of the students, I show how writing preferences, experiences and the challenges of working in groups, shaped their identities as writers.

7.1 THE ROLES OF GROUP WRITING IN THE WRITING MODULES

As mentioned in previous chapters, group writing was a course requirement and teachers organised students into groups for in-class writing activities. During interviews and observations it was clear that writing groups were central to the classroom pedagogy. At first, students found this problematic but they found ways of negotiating the challenges and, on the whole, agreed with their teachers that paired and group writing played a role in supporting their learning. This chapter discusses how teachers and students perceived working in pairs and groups.

7.1.1 A Platform to Validate Each Other's Understanding during Group Discussion

When I discussed group work with the three teachers, they all concurred that discussion and writing within groups and pairs gave students a better understanding of the writing tasks.

Dr Dalia asked her students to write their thesis statement in groups, instructing them that: '*after writing your thesis statement, get to share your thoughts and understanding, as well as to confirm the thesis statement prepared by the group members and see if it is an acceptable one [...] utilise their presence to discuss and share their understanding on the given text that they read and to also compare their versions of annotated bibliography*

they wrote, looking at how individuals respond to the text differently'. This is an example of scaffold learning.

Ms Raisha also scaffolded students' learning by asking them to work in pairs when writing an annual report summary.

> Mrs Raisha suggested that one pair will look closely at statistics, the next group will look at conclusion and the last pair will look into the recommendations from the reports (if there are any, if there aren't, they have to think of a few general/ common recommendation) – a focus for a pair (particular aspect) and when they have done this, all 6 students will discuss their reading to jell the 3 aspects and if there are questions, they will get to discuss further for an in depth understanding.
>
> (Fieldnotes, 18/5/2016)

She told students: '*I am only suggesting this way to increase your understanding for reading […] could pool the resources',* as it was important for them to really understand the gist of the source text before writing. This encouraged the students to compare their comprehension of the source texts,

> *Mrs Raisha started off by giving feedbacks for the summaries that her students submitted in the previous lesson. Ms Raisha felt that her students - got the information wrong – many got the ideas inverted – probably the students did not read the ideas correctly – still repeating the ideas several times when writing the summary – asked students 'didn't you read and compare your understanding?*
>
> *(Fieldnotes, 25/5/2016)*

She wanted the students to read the source texts in groups before writing the summary,

> *brainstorm on the themes because the groups/ pairs might have different headings – wasn't looking for a standard theme/ repetition in the work – students should compare understanding whether it is possible/ not possible.*
>
> *(Fieldnotes, 8/6/2016)*

Mr Eilyas said *'learning would take place when everybody is understanding the same, how other thinks you see […] it is not an individual task'.*

7.1.2 When *"two heads are better than one!"* – a Hope to Produce Better Writing: Student Perspectives

When asked about working in groups, Adila told me that *'two heads are better than one'* and that she enjoyed the practice in the classroom.

Ms Raisha pointed out,

> *when they are in group, they can relate to another friend easier […] how they learn more is from how they can explain […] they could relate to their own explanation […] not so much from the teacher […] partner can impart knowledge to them*
>
> *(Ms Raisha)*

Even though students were not qualified to teach others, group work allowed them to help each other to learn. Ms Raisha felt they were more involved during group discussions.

Mr Eilyas, who taught Report Writing, felt that working with groups of mixed abilities was '*useful'* and helped with students' writing development.

> *students working in groups with mixed abilities could create a space for learning opportunities to those of less proficient student writers*
>
> *(Mr Eilyas)*

In his view, when the more proficient writers were able to share their strengths and knowledge, the less able ones could benefit by modelling the shared ideas. Similarly, Dr Dalia, who taught English for Academic Writing said *'students could write better when they write with other people',* as writing with others who knew a little more could boost their ability to produce better work.

7.1.3 Allows Student Writers the Chance to Lead and Be Led by Someone Other than the Teacher

The idea that that paired and group writing with peers of different abilities would enhance learning was accepted by some of my student participants but others had reservations (see Section 7.4.1).

Shuhada and Adila had different opinions about mixed ability paired writing. Shuhada considered herself a '*less competent writer'* and chose to be paired up with someone '*more competent'* hoping this would help improve her writing skills. Unfortunately, Shuhada's partner who was said to be '*more competent',* did not commit to working with her and often left Shuhada working alone."

> *I want to have a better partner […] so that I can rely on her […] but maybe she feels that I am a problem for her to get good grade.*
>
> *(Shuhada)*

On the other hand, although she felt that it would be a rewarding experience to work with someone who could help to improve her writing, she also feared that if she produced some bad writing, it might contribute to a grade which did not meet her partner's expectation.

Adila would have been happy with a partner who was a better writer or someone slightly less competent than she was:

> *I could work both. If I have a good partner that I can work well with, we would do good […] but if my partner was not so good, that could be really hard on me.*
>
> *(Adila)*

When two strong writers were paired, more learning could be gained through better interaction in different discourses. However, Adila always had a partner who was less competent.

> *When I work with someone who do not do their part, I get really annoyed. You know, I have done my part and he has to do his part […] more often, I had to lead my partner and managed the writing tasks. I would be the one who tells maybe I do this, you do this, I do that […] although I do not mind doing editing, but this is group work, we get the same marks, we should share the workload.*
>
> *(Adila)*

Pairing *better* students with *weaker* students seemed to be a common practice in Ms Raisha's class. Adila assumed the teacher role, providing learning opportunities and immediate feedback to her partner. Although she had to deal an uncommitted, unfocused partner, she appeared to be subconsciously building her leadership skills through partner management and handling of writing tasks. At the same time, although Adila never refused to work with a less competent partner, she felt that she could improve herself if she could work with someone '*better'.*

> *I am actually competitive […] and now I feel there is another girl in a competition […] working with her is a healthy competition […] I hope I could learn from her […] hope that I could improve to become better.*
>
> *(Adila)*

Siti took the lead as her two group members required more assistance in writing their report and she also helped to correct Ema's grammar. Eleena felt confident that Siti could provide comments for the section that she herself had prepared. Although Eleena and Ema did not label themselves as *less competent writers* they both felt that someone in the group had to provide feedback before they presented their first draft:

> *Siti will compile the work and before she could complete the findings, she has to read through my analysis to see whether the ideas flow*
>
> *(Eleena)*

> *Once I completed my work, passed the work to Siti and she would go through the process of editing. I would always try to complete my part and do the best […] Siti is better at grammar*
>
> *(Ema)*

These students managed their group writing and enhanced their learning, thereby meeting Mr Eilyas's expectations '*those slightly average and average ones could learn from their friends who are more competent'*. Mr Eliyas appeared to use his students' language ability in order to scaffold other students' learning. However, the formation of groups was not necessarily based on language ability, mainly because the groups were often self-appointed. For example, in this case, the group was based on a history of working together.

7.2 HOW DID THE STUDENTS WRITE WITH OTHERS?

This section presents the findings on how students managed their writing in pairs and groups in the three modules and is based on students' collective perspectives, influenced by their previous writing experiences (see Chapter 5). It was important to find out how the students completed writing tasks in pairs and groups (as required in the modules) in order to better understand their writing practices. The student groups tended to divide the tasks among themselves for various reasons and in various ways. Firstly, task distribution depended on whether the students were writing individually, paired or in groups and then,

within those two modes, depended on their personal confidence level for the different writing sections of the term paper.

7.2.1 Dividing Writing Sections and Collating at the End of the Day for Submission

All the student participants referred to distributing their writing tasks and was decided and then discussed during the planning stage.. Eleena, Ema and Siti divided and self-assigned the writing tasks according to individual levels of confidence and preferences. In other words, distribution of the writing tasks were correlated with the students' personal writing strengths. For example, Ema felt most confident to write the Introduction while Eleena was comfortable with working on any of the tasks. Siti, believed to be the most proficient writer, wrote the Findings section,

> *we divide the tasks among us […] Ema will do the Introduction part, I will do the Methodology part and Siti will compile the work and complete the Findings of the report*
>
> *(Eleena)*

After each student was assigned their task they worked individually in order to '*save time*', collating the sections into a group work, prior to the submission day,

> *Before I could start writing, we discussed the points first and it depends on me how I wanted to analyse.*
>
> *(Siti)*

The students organised their individual tasks so that, after collation, they resembled a report.

> *After we divide the task, we discuss first what needs to be written, we come out with the outline or framework for the report.*
>
> *(Eleena)*

> *For example, when Ema has to write her Introduction, we discuss how she is going to write and what she needs to cover.*
>
> *(Siti)*

> *On my part for example, I will give my Introduction to both of them so that they can give comments for me to improve [...] if they think that there's still room for improvement, we will discuss and I will improvise the work*
>
> *(Ema)*

Individual written tasks were planned and revisited in order to ensure a comprehensible flow after collation. Ema said '*even the questionnaires, we divided into three categories'* and Eleena added '*yes, everybody came out with ten questions and we combined, in the end we had 30 items'.*

These students felt that group writing without individual work could limit them.

> *I think by doing questionnaires individually, we could think of better ideas. If we were to work on the questions together, the items will be limited as we would be writing each question together […] If we work in our own space, we can think better and we have more different ideas […] if we tend to work in a group all the time, there tend to have similar ideas and that limits the items.*
>
> *(Ema)*

Working individually allowed the group members to have more space to think of the questions but it was also noted that, when constructing their questionnaire individually, they actually tended to come up with similar ideas.

In contrast, Adila and Shuhada had very different experiences of group working and task distribution. Adila felt that she always had to take the lead because the other student was simply not interested:

> *I take the initiative to lead because I feel like if I don't give them work, people won't do it and people won't know what to do […] so in that sense I would give them work and once they completed their part, I will read them […] I finalise their work*
>
> *(Adila)*

She felt that, in order to make group/pair writing a success, she had to lead the way and thereby needed to push the other student to do his/her part. It was very annoying and upsetting to her when she ended up writing and preparing the written task on her own as the pair shared the same marks.

Even though she wanted to learn to become a better writer through her partner Shuhada did not get the chance to contribute to her pair work as her partner provided little space for involvement.

> *she almost completed our assignment! She came to me and told me that she did most of the work and I only had to continue by filling up the details based on the headings that she provided […] I know she wanted to help me to ease my work […] lighten my workload but I don't want that kind of work*
>
> *(Shuhada)*

She felt that proofreading of individual work with her partner could help provide a coherent assignment but this never happened. On one occasion Ms Raisha was furious with the quality of their work. This was embarrassing for Shuhada and she felt she had to take the blame as if it was her fault for being an incompetent partner.

Work division happened in Dr Dalia's class also. Naja and her group divided their writing tasks into sections. The division of work was not based on individual skills, instead everybody took turns writing the different sections so they could each learn.

When writing an annotated bibliography in Dr Dalia's class, students were in bigger groups. They were given four articles to read prior to writing.

> *each student took an article to read. Once everybody had done with their reading, they sat down and compared the points to be written as an outline.*
>
> *(Wan)*

These students appeared to be comfortable doing work individually at the composing stage, building their understanding and constructing their knowledge. Regardless of the complexity of the writing tasks, the students felt obliged to make a contribution to the group work.

7.2.2 The Use of Different Writing Modalities

In terms of individual, paired and group writing, the three modules varied due to the nature of the assignment, classroom instructions and teachers' expectations (see Chapter 5). Instructions from the teachers on when to work in groups and when to work individually were not always carried out by the students. Rather, they often negotiated their own writing modalities.

Ms Raisha expected writing practices to be done individually, in pairs and in bigger groups. Firstly, students were asked to read three source texts individually (assigned by Ms Raisha), to digest the main idea and pick up important points. In one of the interview sessions, Ms Raisha told me that *'reading alone would help them to challenge their own understanding'*. In the class I observed, she told the students:

> *with this article, read it individually first to find a common theme in the text that is predominant […] no discussion is allowed yet […] once you have completed the task, find a pair to compare whether the content is similar […] and if you still have problems, please approach your friends from the other group as well.*
>
> *(Ms Raisha)*

Individual work was only recommended during this initial reading phase.

> *I was only suggesting this (*read source texts individually*) as a way to increase their understanding for reading, but I am not sure myself whether this is workable for them […] I feel that when they work together, it seems beneficial as they could pool the resources*
>
> *(Ms Raisha)*

The students then participated in pair work or bigger groups in order to further promote understanding of the texts prior to the summary writing. This seemed to suggest that Ms Raisha hoped her students would validate their own understanding and come to a consensus with their peers before writing the summary. She discouraged any further individual work and introduced pair work during the planning and composing stages.

> *from now, I want to see all of you working in pair, try to come out with an outline or frame first before writing out the summary*
>
> *(Ms Raisha)*

She believed that pair work created discussion on the major points that could be included and presented during the composing stage and that it could further improve writing in terms of organisation of ideas and use of language.

Finally students shared their thought and writing processes with the entire class. This strategy was implemented for in-class activities and also as part of the overall assessments.

Dr Dalia had similar beliefs.

> *basically, my approach is for the students to work individually at home […] so probably, when they come to the classroom, they gather in a group and discuss and decide who has the best answer and show me the group work they have collated […] because assessment* (final exam for this course) *is done individually, I want the students to use both approaches for their writing practice*
>
> *(Dr Dalia)*

Both Ms Raisha and Dr Dalia restricted their students' individual work to the pre-writing stage when they were asked to read source texts for summary and annotated bibliography writing, respectively. The composing and revising stages were to be done in pairs or groups. This reflects the *'think, pair, share'* approach to writing practice.

On the other hand, Mr Eilyas said:

> *the idea of working together is for every group member to learn and know every aspect of the report writing that everybody should be able to understand everything about the work and not only certain part […] please do not divide the work […] try to sit down and plan together […] decide together what to write […] and edit your work together*
>
> *(Mr Eilyas)*

Mr Eilyas was not in favour of his students moving from individual to group work. However, this appeared to be interpreted very loosely by his students.

> *We work individually at first […] we actually divided the writing tasks among us […] Ema will do the introduction part, I will do the methodology part and Siti will compile the work and complete the findings of the report.*
>
> *(Eleena)*

Mr Eilyas expected his students to work in groups (both inside and outside of the class), during the planning, composing and editing stages before submitting the work together. However, the students felt that, what seemed to be Mr Eilyas's ideal approach to group writing, was actually impractical.

Overall, students' writing development was not constrained by classroom instructions. Most of them negotiated their learning and writing processes among themselves, as instructions on how to write in pairs and groups were very vague, and they searched for writing strategies in order to complete the tasks. I concluded that, for most of the students,

no matter what approach they took, interaction during brainstorming and peer review were seen to be crucial to making the writing process work.

7.3 CRITERIA INFLUENCING CHOICES FOR GROUP FORMATION

Although student and teacher participants concurred that working in pairs and groups with peers of mixed abilities was advantageous, especially to less proficient writers, in practice, groups were often formed. based on friendships, or personal qualities such as trust and commitment, particularly when students were left to form their own groups.

From the teachers' perspectives, students of mixed ability whether working in pairs or groups, opened up learning opportunities, largely for the less competent students to learn from those with some strengths.

> *As for your report writing, the course outline requires you to be in a group of three to four. I want you to self-assign but please do some reflections before you decide who your group members will be. Look into areas which you want to improve. Find group members having that strengths so that you can learn from them*
>
> *(Mr Eilyas)*

> *Today, I am going to ask all of you to find a pair that you could work with permanently in preparation for your actual assignment. The best is to ask someone sitting beside you. Find each other's strengths and weaknesses. When you feel that you could work together, you have to promise to be fully committed with the task that was given.*
>
> *(Ms Raisha)*

7.3.1 Friendship

Some students preferred to choose group members based on previous working relationships with friends. For example, Naja, Ika, Wan and Farahin had known each other since their Diploma years. Whilst being aware of the importance of mixed abilities within a group, these students felt that consideration needed to be given to the kind of person they had to work with. From their past group experiences they learned that members with greater proficiency would be a bonus but that other qualities were equally important:

> *a person who could lead so that he/she will keep you moving […] capable of negotiating tasks […] more tolerance and patience*
>
> *(Naja)*

> *positive attitude towards learning […] supportive […] in times when we got stuck with the task, we shall support each other's learning*
>
> *(Farahin)*

> *able to respect other people's idea*
>
> *(Wan)*

In one of the interview sessions, Naja, Farahin and Wan agreed that based on the long duration of friendship, they were able to identify the characteristics of a *good* member to work with. For them, it appeared important to address whether members of the group had good leadership skills to manage the tasks, with positive attitudes to support learning and respect other people's idea. Seemingly, these students identified the strengths necessary in pair/group members while also acknowledging their own needs.

> *We do not have that much problem working in groups now as we have known each other for four years now since our Diploma years […] it is easier now, we are more confident with each other and we have improved a lot*
>
> *(Farahin)*

The selection of these particular group members was done based on friendships built over the years. They were able to maintain a good relationship and meet the expectations of their writing tasks. They also had the advantage of problem identification, thereby limiting the possibility of a frustrating writing experience.

Students who mutually agreed on their contribution when writing in groups (Ema, Adila and Siti) portrayed a higher level of engagement with each other seemed to be positive about their writing situation. Unfortunately this was not the case for Shuhada and Adila.

Eleena, Ema and Siti also decided to work together in a group based on the trust established in their long term friendship and writing relationship since their diploma years.

I would prefer to work with those who I can trust more

(Eleena)

I do not really mind who will be my group members but since this is group work, we should be able to agree on something

(Siti)

Most importantly, they have to be responsible to complete the task

(Ema)

Though there were issues concerning matching pairs and groups in pursuit of a shared goal (i.e. completing their writing task), students mostly supported each other's learning but this depended on how each member interacted with their other peers. Based on my data, despite talk of the benefits of 'mixed ability', when students were allowed to establish their own groups, these were invariably based on prior relationships rather than linguistic proficiency.

7.3.2 Trust

Some of Dr Dalia's students shared a similar opinion trust was the most important criteria in achieving their writing tasks.

My English is not that good, but I have to be confident. When I am confident other people will have trust in me, I play my part and make contribution.

(Farahin)

Siti, Ema and Eleena emphasised that, without trust, group work could not be carried out effectively due to a lack of confidence and commitment.

I personally think that to form a group, the best is to work with someone who we feel comfortable to be with […] so that if we have questions to ask, we don't feel uncomfortable, feeling self-conscious […] we also learn that we have to learn to trust each other to never judge other people when working together

(Siti)

The three of us prefer to work together but others can join […] my worry is that other people might feel offended with the way we talk and comment […] when the work is not good enough, we say it is not good enough […] we are afraid that some people might not cope with the way we work and the way we comment each other's work […] we are the open and sincere type

(Ema)

> *For me, working in group is about trusting my group members […] we have that, we trust each other could do their part […] if you don't trust your own group members, you are not confident to accept their work as a group effort*
>
> *(Eleena)*

Ika said that she felt group members needed to be able to trust each other rather than relying solely on a mixed ability trait and this had helped to raise her confidence level when writing.

> *I personally think that to form a group, the best is to work with someone who is committed […] I had a problem with one group member […] I think she is better than me but she could not do her part because she said she was afraid making mistakes […] I told her she could just write and the group members will sit down and edit the work together*
>
> *(Ika)*

Farahin gained trust from her other group members by displaying commitment towards her writing task, despite her lack of proficiency in English language. She had good rapport with her group members and they accepted her despite this lack of English. Many students felt that choosing group members who were reliable and trustworthy were among the factors to be considered.

7.3.3 *"A partner who is better than me, more competent than me."*

Some students did value the potential abilities of a partner over friendship or trust. Shuhada told me:

> *I want to have a better partner […] a partner who is better than me […] someone I could rely on because I am not good at something*
>
> *(Shuhada)*

However, Shuhada found out that not everybody benefits from being paired with someone more proficient. She said '*working with someone better is not a guarantee that more learning will happen on my side'.* After struggling to find a space to work in with her partner, and struggling with her partner's attitude towards writing their executive summary, Shuhada reflected:

> *I like the idea of working with a person who is more competent than me, like the pair I had, but I would like her to be cooperative, someone I could work with and commit with the task that we share*
>
> *(Shuhada)*

Shuhada hoped that working with someone who was more proficient would support her to become a '*better'* writer. However, her partner was individualistic and displayed independent behaviours that made cooperation difficult, suggesting that there was poor interaction as well as negative social relations while undertaking writing activities. Shuhada felt she could not process the feedback in order to understand her own writing development, because there was none.

Naja was one student who did believe that mixed ability was essential. Her personal experience working with a student who produced work that needed grammar editing troubled her as she had to spend time editing and rewriting it before submission:

> *1 always end up correcting their part and rewriting their grammar because I am not confident with my group members […] I am actually afraid of failing the course that is why always end up rewriting*
>
> *(Naja)*

Naja felt that finding group members with a good grasp of language would make her writing experience easier.

Similarly, Wan and Hana preferred to find peers who were more proficient than them and who they could rely on.

> *1 prefer to work with someone better than me because I can learn certain things for example grammar rules. I know this will be helpful*
>
> *(Wan)*

> *For writing especially, I will find group members who know how to write so that they could suggest ways to complete the task and also members with good grammar knowledge*
>
> *(Hana)*

It is important to note that students' individual needs were not asked pertaining to the kind of group conditions which would work best for them but it was left up to them to decide. It was assumed that students knew their own needs from their strengths, weaknesses, language needs, learning styles, strategies, and competence levels.

Teachers acknowledged that although mixed ability students working could be helpful for some students, others chose criteria such as past writing relationships or trust when allowed to form their own groups.

7.3.4 Personal qualities

Some students valued qualities such as cooperation, commitment and willingness to share responsibility and contribute ideas over friendship, trust or perceived language proficiency. Adila, born in Malaysia and raised in Australia, was considered to be *better* at English. She said '*I could either work alone or in groups effectively'.* Adila had a bad writing experience during her Foundation year which taught her to look for someone who was committed and responsible.

> *someone needs to take the lead […] we need to have a leader role […] in my previous experience, both of us did not lead each other and therefore it did not work […] until I had to take the role to divide work to tell him to do […] but still he did not do it until it was so close to the submission day […] he wasn't committed and I had to complete the assignment on my own […] that is not fair and it upsets me*
>
> *(Adila)*

Adila believed that, because of the effort required to write from planning to submission, a sense of responsibility must be there between the partners and she felt rather disappointed when her '*effort was taken for granted'*. The partner was irresponsible and failed to commit himself to the tasks assigned. Although Adila was upset she kept her unpleasant experience to herself without informing Ms Raisha.

> *because we were grouped together, I did not even complain to my lecturer as I felt it was my responsibility to manage the writing task and keep the relationship with my pair in the classroom*
>
> *(Adila)*

Some students talked about how positive attitudes among group members could help with the completion of the written work. Each of the students seemed to be committed to making their personal contribution to the group outcomes, even if they felt inadequate.

Farahin said '*although I am not really a good writer but I tried to complete my part. I think the points are all there'.* She completed her written work then expected the other members to proofread her language. Farahin showed a committed and positive attitude

towards academic writing and had confidence that the writing process would be successful when all group members were committed.

> *When I wrote my part, I still make mistakes but I tried anyway. I make sure that I have enough contents to write about. Since I know my work can never be perfect, I hope I can proofread my work with my group members.*
>
> *(Farahin)*

Haja and Wan also agreed that when everybody was committed and showed positive attitudes, the group writing process could be painless. Tolerance, compromise and patience when writing in groups, appeared to be important in making sure that any shortcomings could be avoided.

> *Sometimes when writing in a group, it is difficult for people who are better than us to accept other people's ideas. I think for group members, they have to be more tolerance and patience. We can always listen to good ideas and still accept if they are not that good.*
>
> *(Haja)*

> *It is important to work with someone who is positive towards learning in groups or else we will have issues. I would like to use Hana as an example. Hana knows everybody comes in with different ideas and she respects what other said. I love working with Hana.*
>
> *(Wan)*

Students who worked with these desirable traits appeared to have a positive attitude towards preference for group work.

7.3.5 *"Talk and work to the person next to you."*

I realised that students also gave thought to where they sat in the classroom. In Ms Raisha's classroom, I had observed that most of the students occupied the same seat every day.

> *It is normal in this classroom, some students prefer to sit at the back, others in front and a few near the windows away from the aisles taking the same spot with their closest friends, but some just could not been bothered and sit where there empty seats.*
>
> *(Classroom Observation, 18//5/2016)*

I then learnt that the value students placed on friendship, trust, language competency or personal qualities affected their decision about where to sit in the classroom.

However, this was not the case for Shuhada and her partner (see Section 7.3.3). Ms Raisha seemed to understand the struggle that Shuhada was facing after they submitted. In one of the interviews, Ms Raisha said the pair sent in a '*patched work [...] the summary was individually written with no discussion among them. When they met, paragraphs were joined together that caused overlapping of ideas'*. I happened to be observing when Ms Raisha returned the students' writing, I observed that Shuhada's partner was not in the classroom. Shuhada explained to Ms Raisha that they *'did not have much time to discuss and complete the task together and decided to divide the task and attached them together for the submission'*. She appeared to take blame for the task, identifying it as '*terrible work [...] Ms Raisha scolded us for doing last minute work'.* Shuhada's negative experience of paired writing was due to the inability to find time with her partner (see Section 8.4.4). Having enough time was a factor that varied considerably between students and caused delays in making contributions to the group task, potentially resulting in a lower standard of written work.

In one of the interviews, I asked Ms Raisha regarding Shuhada's challenges, she said 'I *knew there are problems with students working with people they chose but they choose their own pair, better deal with it [...] for a change today, to give everybody the chance to discuss and write, grab one friend nearest to you and complete this summary writing task'*. I observed that during this in-class activity, Shuhada paired herself with someone who sat beside her (not her partner) and carried out the task.

Ms Huslinda:	*do you remember the day Mrs, Raisha asked you to write summary with a person who sat next to you (and not your partner), what did you do during the group discussion?*
Shuhada:	*Happy, that was how group members should work. I could finally have a real discussion, we asked questions, we explained things, we helped each other. It was more a good experience. I did not get to do all that with my 'partner'. For her it is always compiling work, we never discussed this way.*
Ms Huslinda:	*Were you close to the person who you worked in the classroom that day? I mean do you know her personally?*
Shuhada:	*She is my course mate but I do not know her personally, we never worked together.*
Ms Huslinda:	*So do you think that working with someone you know is important before you get to sit down and work together?*
Shuhada:	*I mean I don't really mind. I only want a better partner. When I feel that my partner is good, because I feel she*

is way much better than me, I thought I could learn something from her, but everything goes wrong now.

Though many students seemed to be aware and weighed carefully of the useful criteria to be considered such as friendship, trust, language ability and good personality, Ms Raisha did not give options but asked her students to '*grab one friend nearest to you and complete this summary writing task'* suggesting in some situations, students may not have control over who the partner would be.

7.4 THE TENSIONS OF WORKING WITH OTHER PEOPLE

While students recognised some advantages of paired and group writing, they also had misgivings about working with other people and generally, preferred individual writing. My analysis of the data further suggested that a degree of tension existed in regards to writing in pairs and groups within these three modules.

7.4.1 PROBLEMATISING MIXED ABILITY AS THE MAIN CRITERION TO STUDENTS WORKING IN PAIRS AND GROUPS

Writing in groups was part of meeting the requirement of the assessment tasks of these writing modules. Firstly I looked at how the teachers set up pairs and groups and later I observed how the writing practices were carried out in the classrooms. When setting up group or paired activities, Ms Raisha and Mr Eilyas offered certain strategies whereas Dr Dalia was quite flexible in allowing her students to decide what worked best for them. Mr Eilyas and Ms Raisha advocated the idea of working with mixed abilities within pairs and groups but let their students develop their writing practices at the different stages.

Dr Dalia was very general in her instruction on group formation and only asked them to find group members whom they could '*work with'.* Nonetheless, this encouraged the students to look at their own language abilities and other learning needs before deciding who could complement their strengths and weaknesses.

> *I would like to remind you that all of the assignments for this writing course need to be completed in groups of two to three. Please find someone that you could really work with.*
>
> *(Dr Dalia)*

Mr Eilyas and Ms Raisha believed that a heterogeneous group could create more learning opportunities for those less proficient students and help them to recognise each other's strengths and weaknesses.

> *when I wanted to group my students, I asked them to identify themselves in mixed ability group members - those slightly average and average ones could learn from their friends who are more competent*
>
> *(Mr Eilyas)*

> *I always tell my students that we come from a mixture of mixed abilities, the weak one must always go for someone who is slightly better and the better one is supposed to guide*
>
> *(Ms Raisha)*

The categorisation of students by Mr Eilyas and Ms Raisha were: *'slightly average – average - more competent'* and *'weak - slightly better - better'* respectively. Neither of them explained these fully, but the different *levels* here probably refer to competence level (or maybe linguistic knowledge) when engaging in academic writing.

There seemed to be expectations that the '*more competent*' and '*better'* students would share responsibility for teaching and learning with their peers in an attempt to help out the '*slightly less good*' student writers. However, no guidance was given regarding facilitating the less competent students. Students felt that each group member took different roles in providing and challenging ideas and highlighting and correcting grammar related problems during the writing process but none of them raised the issue of who should play the greater role in their so-called *mixed ability* pairs and groups.

Dr Dalia's criteria became more distinctive when she asked her students to look at their group relationship and experience.

> *I found that students faced less problems […] there were no complaints so far because they knew this (*writing in groups*) is the requirement of the course […] so when I told them to form groups, I didn't formulate them […] I allowed them to choose their own partner […] when they worked with someone they know, there was chemistry between them […] but when you work with someone you don't know, you tend to work in isolation.*
>
> *(Dr Dalia)*

She believed that a positive personal relationship could provide an opportunity for the students to develop a trusting relationship and discourage them from '*working in isolation'* which could then prevent them from becoming an effective group member.

Students had different ideas on group working from their teachers and their views are discussed in the next sub-theme.

7.4.2 Group Dynamics and Conflict: Issues of Identity and Power Struggle

My data suggests that how students developed writing in groups could be undermined by the way issues and conflicts were handled. Even though producing a jointly written work was manageable it was difficult to mutually agree on differences of ideas and on task assignments.

> *group work is not only troublesome because we waste time dwelling the same issues but also burdens me emotionally trying to manage the group to work […] with disagreements […] accepting other people's ideas […] motivate other people to progress […] it tires me*
>
> *(Ema)*

Shuhada also faced struggles, having to work alone while being pressured by her partner.

> *my partner started writing on her own on the first part of the summary […] she said she completed and asked me to write my part based on the headings that she prepared for me […] I do not want to complete patch-work […] I just wish if we could sit down and write together, like other people […] I want to learn from her […] in the end, we just combined our work*
>
> *(Shuhada)*

In this case conflict arose. Shuhada experienced a negative attitude from her partner and they failed to work together successfully.

Shuhada's situation might seem insignificant, but Ms Raisha could probably have changed the group dynamic by shifting her role and identity as a teacher when Shuhada was facing her struggles and helped her into a more favourable learning environment. During the four week task completion period Shuhada was never given the opportunity to discuss the task or receive any peer feedback on the work she completed and was left discouraged with the situation unresolved.

Group working seemed possible if conflicts and stress were removed and positive interaction encouraged among the students.

> *it is difficult to manage people […] writing in groups has its own problem, especially after you divide work, people do not do it*
>
> *(Ika)*

> *what is manageable, instead of writing together, we divided the task and worked separately, relied on ourselves but when I had a look at the work before submission, I was not happy and I had to rewrite*
>
> *(Naja)*

Naja felt that when tasks were divided, it created a contest scenario '*I feel like competing who is the best writer here'* and felt unfortunate to be paired with a *'better'* and more proficient writer. During the composing stage, her partner was unwilling to negotiate content and submitted his individual work instead of a collative work.

Conflict was common during the composing stage '*normally the good ones will think their idea is better, what they write is way much better'* highlighting the power relation struggle.

Students often faced a power struggle when deciding whose ideas and words would be in the final text. The '*less better*' students often had to give up their pre-planned ideas regardless of the quality and they felt unappreciated by the '*better'* student writers.

> These *When I work with one of my group members, there is this person who always thinks that she is good and always right […] my points are not good enough […] I just agree to what she said […] I don't like this but I don't want to create problems her*
>
> *(Farahin)*

> *I had to do a lot of 'catching up' trying to understand the way she thinks […] when I voiced out my opinions, I felt it was difficult for her to understand […] I did not make any effort to explain more and in the end we just used the ideas which she contributed to the group.*
>
> *(Naja)*

> *My pair gave me the uncompleted summary before submission. She did her part and asked me to complete the remaining part and she gave me an outline with points. I do not need that, I could think the points on my own […] but I followed her suggestion anyway.*
>
> *(Shuhada)*

comments suggest that, although group members wanted to contribute to the group work,

the *'better'* writer took control of the situation and prevented their ideas from being used. All three teachers chose to take the '*wait and see*' approach, hoping that students could resolve conflict with no subsequent action required. However, students' emotions, such as frustration, were not easy to deal with but they tried to resolve conflict with *'tolerance', 'patience', 'negotiation', 'understanding'* and *'being responsible'.*

7.4.3 *"Writing with other people is a waste of time"*

A major obstacle appeared to be that some students preferred individual writing and viewed group writing as a waste of time.

> *the students are asked to work with their pair, but they are very quiet, they work alone, they keep everything to themselves, they are just physically sitting side by side… as if not interested… is this how they conduct group work?*
>
> (*Fieldnotes ELC 560, 27/4/2016)*

I asked two of the students '*have they always been quiet during group work in the classroom?'*

> *Most of our friends do not take working with people seriously because they prefer to work alone*
>
> *(Adila)*

> *Yes, they feel that if they work with other people, it delays the completion of the task as they have to wait for their pairs*
>
> *(Shuhada)*

Shuhada, who felt incompetent at English, was looking for a partner who could assist her learning. However, after she voiced her frustration, her partner avoided any discussions until one day close to the submission date when she was given the half completed summary with an outline for her to complete.

Student' reactions towards group writing were affected by how much time they had to spend negotiating their written tasks with other group members. For some students, individual writing was less stressful and they could save time by avoiding unnecessary discussions:

> *Not that I don't like to work with my friends here, but working individually is less stressful in terms of time […] when we work in groups we spend more time discussing on why people write this and that*
>
> *(Eleena)*

> *Working with other people is a waste of time especially when you don't know them as you need more time to adapt to the way they work*
>
> *(Siti)*

Thus, while paired and group writing was supposed to support students, for some, it was experienced as a burden. They had to fulfil the expectation of their task while also building relationships and managing how group members worked in order to meet the deadline.

7.4.4 Meeting Teachers' Expectations: Learning to Write in Groups Using Marking Guidelines

In the previous two chapters, I discussed what pedagogical approaches Ms Raisha, Mr Eilyas and Dr Dalia used in their writing classrooms and how students transitioned their writing experiences from school to university. It is also worth pointing out that the three teachers had certain expectations of how students could work with other people in the classrooms. As working in pairs or groups was part of their formative assessments, teachers expected their students to embrace this modality.

A lot of group discussion that occurred between group members inside and outside of the classroom was about expressing and clarifying their ideas in order to complete their writing tasks and in the process, meeting their teacher's expectations. Findings revealed that Mr Eilyas and Ms Raisha expected students to independently go through the group writing processes and, when they encountered challenges, students were expected to negotiate, providing and receiving feedback to/from their own peers.

These two teachers also expected their students to complete and fulfil their written task by referring to the course's marking guidelines (see Figure 7.1, highlighted in yellow) which they provided during a lesson. According to Ema, the marking guidelines '*were very brief without any detailed explanation'* of what it took in order for the students to achieve each percentage from each criterion.

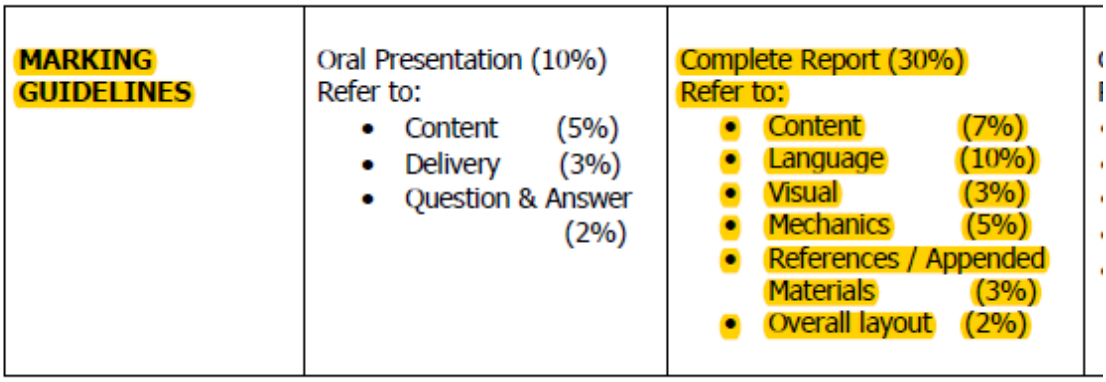


Figure 7.1: ELC 661 marking guidelines to Report Writing

Students said they needed *'more than marking guidelines'* in order for them to write their report in Mr Eilyas's class. Siti said marking guidelines *'were not clear enough [...] could not understand teacher's expectations',* so students outsourced models from their friends doing the same course to get a clearer idea of the format (see Section 6.2.2). Though these marking guidelines were expected to give an insight to the grading criterion and the goal of a particular course, it was not set up properly and no guidance was offered on its use. Students appeared to be experimenting with instantaneous suggestions and making changes during the drafting stage. Mr Eilyas preferred not to provide a standard format to help his students to structure their academic writing.

> *finding suitable format is one of the challenges when writing in the university. I told them to find their own way [...] when they have finished studying [...] how can in the future they come back to me and ask me how to write a report when they are already working*
>
> *(Mr Eilyas)*

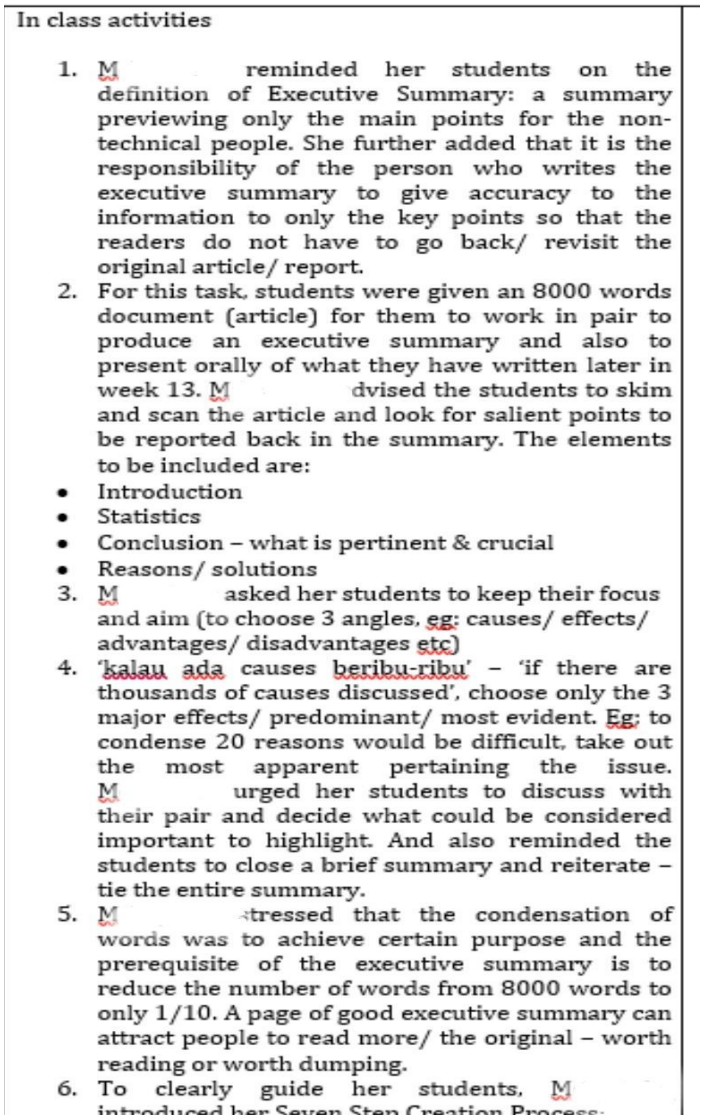
From the way he responded, Mr Eilyas seemed to believe that writing for a different discourse community with different goals would take specific conventions and thus felt that sharing the format beforehand was unnecessary. Rather, he appeared to expect the students to work out what report writing in a university context looks like, by themselves.

When trying to figure out the right format, students made and received comments and suggestions and negotiated decision making among group members. The guidelines and a model provided them with ideas of what to look for and necessitated group members working back and forth commenting and giving feedback. During the drafting stage each member took their turn to respond to their draft.

Ms Huslinda:	*What kind of errors do you look into?*
Ema:	*Based on logical thinking and for report she will do the editing*
Ms Huslinda:	*Ok, who will do the editing part? And what do you look at when you do editing?*
Siti:	*I will edit the work. I normally look into the format, the sentence structure*
Ms Huslinda:	*What about grammar?*
Siti:	*I don't have major issues with this group*
Eleena:	*We correct each other's work*
Ema:	*Owh, so tell me what do you normally comment?*
Eleena:	*If we feel the content is not good enough, we shall suggest and we will look into the options that we have*

The purpose of feedback was not only for ideas and report writing organisation, but also for getting the students to revise their own sentence level writing in their groups.

Ms Raisha's instructions to students were very straightforward and students were expected to carry out the task with no issues. She explicitly described the process of writing the summary and provided models. Marking guidelines were given so that the students could look into content, language and organisation. I captured the lesson in my observational notes in Figure 7.2:



In class activities

1. M reminded her students on the definition of Executive Summary: a summary previewing only the main points for the non-technical people. She further added that it is the responsibility of the person who writes the executive summary to give accuracy to the information to only the key points so that the readers do not have to go back/ revisit the original article/ report.
2. For this task, students were given an 8000 words document (article) for them to work in pair to produce an executive summary and also to present orally of what they have written later in week 13. M dvised the students to skim and scan the article and look for salient points to be reported back in the summary. The elements to be included are:

- Introduction
- Statistics
- Conclusion – what is pertinent & crucial
- Reasons/ solutions

3. M asked her students to keep their focus and aim (to choose 3 angles, eg: causes/ effects/ advantages/ disadvantages etc)
4. 'kalau ada causes beribu-ribu' – 'if there are thousands of causes discussed', choose only the 3 major effects/ predominant/ most evident. Eg: to condense 20 reasons would be difficult, take out the most apparent pertaining the issue. M urged her students to discuss with their pair and decide what could be considered important to highlight. And also reminded the students to close a brief summary and reiterate – tie the entire summary.
5. M tressed that the condensation of words was to achieve certain purpose and the prerequisite of the executive summary is to reduce the number of words from 8000 words to only 1/10. A page of good executive summary can attract people to read more/ the original – worth reading or worth dumping.
6. To clearly guide her students, M introduced her Seven Step Creation Process:

Figure 7.2: extracts from Observational Notes 18/5/2016

Ms Raisha's classroom instructions were quite sequential, explaining each step, and at times written on the board and demonstrated the purpose of each step. Even though students did not have to struggle to find the summary structure I observed that they had to meet other challenges, such as the dilemma of writing with other people (see Section 7.4). Ms Raisha said,

> *it is beyond my control really […] It can have a different domino effect […] I already set a set of rules before they came in the first week in class, if they wanted to choose their partner, I told them not to come and tell me my partner has problem later. I can't solve their problem then. So I told this advice, get the right partner, someone you can work with, not because that person has a certain plus point […] that plus point will only be in one area […] but someone that you can thrash your ideas with*
>
> *(Ms Raisha)*

Shuhada's difficulties left her in a dilemma (see Section 7.4.3). Since Ms Raisha warned her students of the repercussions of choosing their own partner, Shuhada did not complain to her teacher but instead approached her experience with a positive attitude as she knew her teacher expected her to resolve the problem with her peer.

Dr Dalia expected her students to examine their learning problems and '*maybe they can try to work as a group and then I go round and see what they are doing as a group [...] individual work is very difficult'.* She also said she did not *'have that much time to look at individual's problem in the classroom if they had questions [...] seek help from peers working together*. Her approach was done explicitly in order to help her students to be actively involved in developing their academic writing skills and she clearly encouraged them to increase participation during group work.

7.5 DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I have explored teachers' approaches to group writing and student writers' preferences in terms of paired and group writing and the value they gave to different criteria when choosing partners of group members. As Wigglesworth and Storch (2012) assert, group work activities can enhance learning mechanisms such as cognitive processes and also allow students to pool their linguistic resources when writing together, resulting in better writing output than writing individually.

I have illustrated *language proficiency* as one of the main criteria when putting students into pairs or groups. There was an assumption that *mixed ability* pairs or groups would contribute to linguistic knowledge and generally, to ideas of academic development through scaffolding. This assumption is supported by Vygotsky's sociocultural lens whereby the process of learning to write with other people is viewed as a social activity in which a novice writer can learn from the more experienced writer (Prior, 2006). And as I discussed in 7.4.1, academic writing teachers felt that mixed ability pairs and groups opened up learning opportunities for novice student writers to learn from 'better' student writers.

I have also discussed that through group writing, students made sense of how to write in university. These seemed to be related to the practice of peer learning coined by Boud

and Cohen (2014), suggests that ideally when students simultaneously learn, they have to contribute to the learning of others (Boud & Cohen, ibid). Although they often were able to negotiate the tensions in terms of group dynamics, collaboration and individual voice, working with other people was often a challenge and even a burden. Students had their own views regarding who they would invite to be part of their group and, unlike the teachers, this was not necessarily related to language ability. Indeed, the main criterion for students seemed to be trust and previous friendship history, although they also looked for commitment and a positive attitude. Although they perceived the advantages of writing in pairs and groups, there seemed to be a perception of power struggles when writing in a group.

Despite students' reservations, my overall view is that writing in groups did assist novice student writers in making sense of and facilitating social action (Turner & Tajfel, 1986), if one considers second language writing in the university classroom as social action. Where student writers were seen struggling to write in the university and having to write with other people, the *less proficient* student writers like Shuhada and Farahin preferred to find *more proficient* pair/ group members. In describing their strategies for *good writing*, both student writers (in different writing classrooms), worked with *better* peers, looking at each other's strengths and weaknesses at coping with the writing task, linguistic knowledge and content knowledge. It seemed to me that student writers who were better at writing were seen as good role models for other novice writers. Though both Shuhada and Farahin struggled with uncooperative group members, both seemed to invest their 'pride' for their rejected work. But in that challenge, new forms of identity were made possible because of their desire to situate themselves as writers in the university classrooms.

While some students appeared to struggle with the criteria for group formation, some struggled with gaining the feedback they felt they needed in order to meet the expectations of *good writing*. The next chapter, explores the role of feedback in more detail in academic writing development within these modules.

CHAPTER 8: USING FEEDBACK ON DRAFTS AS A MEANS TO FACILITATE STUDENTS' WRITING DEVELOPMENT

8.0 INTRODUCTION

At the end of Chapter 7, I suggested that the student writers' main concern, when working in pairs and groups, was about how they would obtain the feedback that would enable them to meet teachers' expectations with regards to producing *good writing*. The notion of feedback used in this chapter is formative, given as part of the process of producing the draft text. I draw on how students referred to feedback in my interviews with them, what they saw as the role of feedback and the kinds of feedback they received. I explore how students then dealt with this feedback and I discuss its relationship to their academic writing development in L2. Based on observations and interviews, I discuss teacher perspectives on feedback and the discrepancy between teacher and student expectations. I also describe the roles that students took in facilitating their own writing development when writing in pairs and groups.

8.1 WAYS OF COMMUNICATING FEEDBACK TO STUDENT WRITERS IN THE CLASSROOMS

Both teachers and students used feedback as a pedagogical tool to enhance the teaching and learning of university writing. No matter whether the feedback came from teachers or peers, students engaged reflectively and proactively, seeking out information relating to a specific writing task or an aspect of academic writing. From the teachers' perspectives, two main ways of communicating feedback to student writers were through corrective feedback and feedback dialogues.

I previously discussed how important it was for some of the students to receive written feedback (see Section 6.3.2) based on these three module tasks - writing an annotated bibliography, executive summary writing and report writing - that students consciously engaged in when writing in the university context. Mr Eilyas, Ms Raisha and Dr Dalia each had a preference for providing oral feedback, with the intention that this would assist with students' future academic courses (see Section 5.4.4). Students greatly valued their university teacher's feedback and as, in their school experience written feedback had been very limited, they seemed to expect it. However, due to time constraints, some teachers

felt that it was impossible for them to provide written feedback and instead resorted to providing oral feedback via teacher-student conferencing and encouraged students to write in groups in order to receive peer feedback. Students felt that their teachers should be highly directive, by noticing and commenting on their errors, and felt resentful if this did not happen.

I observed that Ms Raisha used oral feedback to identify students' errors and used praises such as *good, not bad* and *very good.* By highlighting and explaining what the students' strengths and weaknesses were, she hoped to encourage them to avoid making the same mistakes when writing out their thesis statements. When students were attempting to write their first executive summary, Shuhada said that '*Ms Raisha commented on my paper. She questioned the correct word choice when paraphrasing'.* This facilitated the building of students language and form as compared to content and idea where the student was asked to find a new word as a replacement without being asked to think of the context. This corrective feedback moved students from task to processing and then to regulation. Adila assumed that summary writing would follow a generic structure and would therefore be easy; however, minimal verbal feedback encouraged her to focus on the immediate task and not on her strategies to attain future goals.

The approach that Mr Eilyas took was based more on trial and error strategies and grammar practice. I observed that he required students to practice the target language in order to *express ideas*, and to think about how his oral feedback related to the intended learning. Eleena, Siti and Ema felt that feedback on early drafts of their report writing did lead to improvements in subsequent drafts with regard to '*language, grammar'* and also '*the structure of the report'* based on their '*proposed contents'*. Mr Eilyas '*provided elaborations'* through feedback that made them realise that writing reports across different disciplines could not be structured on generic models (as they had thought in their school days). In helping his students with their academic writing process he told the students: '*there is lack or organization, if there are problems that cannot be solved, please discuss with me. The focus is on the learning process, try to achieve from good to better to the best. However, good effort' […] The ideas are too abstract, try to comply with the requirements of the task, make it short but be precise. The use of statistics might help. Provide the audience with no schemata of the basic concept of your idea that it will gauge their attention'*.

In contrast, as the students in Dr Dalia's class had all attended ELP modules in their diploma year (see Chapter 1), feedback in the classroom focused more on self-regulation and self-evaluation rather than on teaching students how to write. Dr Dalia asked questions such as '*You have written thesis statement before, haven't you? Tell me what is a thesis statement?'* One student answered confidently '*a thesis statement controls the development of the article that we are writing'.* After confirming this definition Dr Dalia continued '*so when you write your thesis statement, check whether you have the three controlling ideas and that it is written in a complete sentence and not phrases'.* In one of the interviews, I asked the students regarding the feedback they received, they felt encouraged to continue writing their article analysis with less effort than had been required in their previous writing experiences.

While Mr Eilyas, Ms Raisha and Dr Dalia all provided corrective feedback, it appeared that they each had a different focus for the way in which feedback was intended to influence students' writing - aiming at task, process, and students' regulation level.

8.1.1 The Development of Feedback Dialogues

Findings revealed that process writing pedagogy seemed to be most prevalent where teacher-student conferencing happened regularly. I discussed that Mr Eilyas and Dr Dalia preferred to approach their students for a face-to-face discussion when giving feedback rather than providing it in written form, due to time constraints (see Section 5.2.2.2). As students' expectations of written feedback were not met due to this time constraint, most of them paid close attention to teacher's feedback during the teacher-student conferencing between, and sometimes after, lessons.

When I asked the students in an interview about their own writing processes and discussions during teacher-student conferencing, Ema, Eleena and Siti said,

Eleena:	*We brainstorm first at the beginning, we try to come out as many titles for Sir to choose from*
Siti:	*Mr Eilyas is more towards ideas, products but we are tired of that. We would appreciate if we could discuss more on current issues*
Ms Huslinda:	*So what did you propose?*

Siti:	*Actually we wanted to invent, introduce the system but we had to change the title and research more on enhancing the system instead*
Eleena:	*Yes, but the idea is limited to sir's suggestions*
Ema:	*He actually asked us to invent the technology, but we insisted on the awareness*
Siti:	*We will propose the titles and see what he accepts and we shall work from there*
Ema:	*Yes, from there we shall discuss on the idea with detailed explanation on how to conduct the study*

Even though Mr Eilyas appeared to take an authoritative role by setting up ideas, he did give students the responsibility for choosing their own topics through teacher-student conferencing. Ema, Eleena and Siti demonstrated their appropriation of the teacher's ideas, masterfully displayed their engagement, and presented themselves as experts in their specific knowledge domain.

Instructional discourse involved interpretation and understanding and showed that Mr Eilyas was not the only one who controlled the flow of the conversation.

Ms Huslinda:	*Anything in particular that he commented?*
Eleena:	*He said we are playing safe because of our simple language*
Siti:	*Not, only on language part, he did correct our title too*
Ms Huslinda:	*What about the title?*
Siti:	*He said it is too advance, he wanted us to be more specific related to our report. And he also looked into our research questions*
Eleena:	*He asked us to have more parts, like break them into sections.*
Ema:	*And not to mention grammar too*
Siti:	*Yes, he did ask us to provide three options for the answers too*
Ms Huslinda:	*I see, what is that for?*
Siti:	*For our questionnaires. At first we decided to have Yes and No options but later he proposed to have three options*
Ema:	*So far we think that we are meeting the requirements for the task. We refer to the guidelines from the other class.*

When they presented their report in progress, Mr Eilyas responded in a teacher-centered manner, which resulted in a narrower focus. He seemed to over-emphasize low level concerns such as grammar at the expense of more important issues related to content and

ideas. However, the feedback was taken seriously and initiated their follow-up moves. In one of the interviews, the students said,

Ema:	*That one meeting we had was to discuss on what we wanted to do, the frame to the work and yes basically presenting the outline […] And then we discuss on the elaboration of the body*
Siti:	*Yes, we showed Mr Eilyas the outline*
Eleena:	*But Sir rejected the title*
Siti:	*Sir didn't really reject but asked us to do more reading because the ideas were unclear. We need to read to understand the empirical findings from the literature so that we know more about our focus*
Ema:	*Sir doesn't want us to research what other people did. He asked us to find something new. So since we are researching on interventions, we are finding the technical part and we decided to write on a system, at how something work.*

The students decided when they received feedback. Mr Eilyas provided clarification which helped to sort through problems and assess their decision making.

Dr Dalia offered teacher-student conferencing feedback after her lessons ended. This was not forced onto the students but it was left up to them to approach her for feedback.

> *Students come in mixed abilities. The good ones they tend to ask questions and they when they produce/do something, they will show you. So from there, I give them feedback and they feel it is very crucial me. But so far with this particular class, when you assign them work, this class will ask ways how to improve. And the ones who really want to do well, they are very proactive. They even volunteer to show their work in front of the classroom, you don't have to ask for them. This one student comes to see me twice a week for consultation after class you know. She said she wanted to improve her language and brush up on the grammar.*
>
> *(Dr Dalia)*

Dr Dalia's students generally had a positive attitude towards university writing, offering to share their work with the class and meeting after class to discuss their writing face-to-face with her. Unlike Ema, Eleena and Siti, students in Dr Dalia's class did not reflect on the kind of feedback they received from their teacher, indicating perhaps that they had expected it would be more of a proofreading session and not an effort to develop their writing skills and genre awareness. Dr Dalia, told me that she '*did not provide error*

correction instead put aside time in class or after class to discuss students writing in pairs or bigger groups'. And I recorded in my fieldnote,

> *Dr Dalia explained the good and no so good aspects of the written work and the students had the chance to respond and defend their positions - students were observed to take down notes in order to recall what was said about the piece of writing when it was time to revise*
>
> *(Fieldnotes, 9/5/2016)*

It can be concluded that, even though there were expectations from the students for written feedback, Mr Eilyas and Dr Dalia expected teacher-student conferencing to co-construct and scaffold students' knowledge, providing further opportunities for draft revisions in order to complete their tasks.

8.2 STUDENT WRITERS AS FEEDBACK PROVIDERS: ROLE SHIFTING

Working in pairs and groups, students were expected to read each other's work and comment, using their peers as a source of feedback. However, my observations indicated that students generally only gave feedback if asked and there was no feedback guidance other than a marking guideline (which was seen as ineffective). While students were expected to become feedback providers when writing in pairs and groups, they viewed peer feedback from different perspectives.

8.2.1 Issues Surrounding Peer Feedback Practice

'I don't mind if my partner corrects me'.

The excerpt above represents the opinion of most of the students I interviewed in regards to peer feedback as advantageous when working in pairs and groups. I got the sense that paired and group writing was seen as a way for the less proficient student writers to get immediate feedback from the more proficient student writers before receiving help from the teacher. These students appeared to have no doubts as to the value of peer feedback, regardless of the fact that they were not given peer review guidelines. However, the power authority issue is at play here because the ideas from the '*better writer*' were widely used while the '*less competent*' surrendered, due to their lack of confidence as novice writers (see Section 7.4.2).

It is interesting to note that two of Dr Dalia's students played very distinctive roles in relation to peer feedback. Farahin worked with Naja and two other students, (who did not participate in the interview), and seemed to trust in and depend upon, feedback from her group in order to improve her writing.

> *If something goes wrong, group members could help to correct.*
>
> *(Farahin)*

Naja, who took the role of leader in these group discussions, said in one of the group interviews,

> *there are problems when working in a group, language, planning […] I had to take control […] I corrected my friends' work […] I am afraid of failing the course myself*
>
> *(Naja)*

Naja's concern regarding the shared marks at the end of the course forced her to collect all of the written work and provide feedback to her group members, and was perhaps due to her lack of assurance that they could produce quality work. She seemed to qualify herself as a better student writer, confident enough to provide comments to help her group to improve the quality of their work. Farahin, who also seemed to speak for the other two students, saw Naja's feedback as helpful and felt that, as a result, the whole group improved the way they arranged ideas, had better word usage and worked more effectively to finding sources.

> *I had difficulty elaborating ideas and paraphrasing […] I wrote my part and used synonyms […] we received comments from Naja […] she kept us moving without having to wait for feedback from Dr Dalia.*
>
> *(Farahin)*

Farahin and the other two group members seemed to accept their weaknesses and took advantage of the feedback from Naja in her *'almost teacher'* role to have the work reviewed before they finally collated the task for submission to their teacher.

Ika, from another group, was worried about her writing and needed help with her grammar. As grammar learning was only done incidentally in her module, she looked to her group members for help. '*I get immediate comments about my grammar mistakes when writing together with my group members'.* Group members read, corrected her work

and explained what was wrong. Here, peer feedback seemed to have a crucial role in developing writing skills.

Hana and Wan, who worked together with their other two group members, found that reviewing and evaluating each other's writing, and offering each other feedback, helped to improve the overall quality of their annotated bibliography.

> *we did not assign only an individual to read out work […] we meet and write together. When we meet, we discuss which point to include and explain why […] we work on our individual article but later we get feedback from the rest in the group.*
>
> *(Wan)*

They sat down with their group members when reading and, later, when finalising the summary of each source. This was the first time that these students had worked on an annotated bibliography, and the task completion strategies that they used suggested that it was important to understand the source argument and identify the contents prior to the writing-up stage. Hana sought comments from her group members in order to check on her understanding of the article and the points she selected as content, during the planning stage before she began writing.

Siti, Eleena and Ema's report writing experience was more '*trial and error*' as Mr Eilyas did not provide them with any examples to work from. This opened up the interpretation of what a report should look like, and they realised there was no generic structure to follow with regards to this type of writing. These students spent more time together in the planning stage compared to the other stages of writing. Brainstorming sessions encouraged them to share spontaneous feedback and agree on further actions.

> *normally I will ask them to exchange their work, the peers will see where the mistakes are […] when they discover their weaknesses, there will be chances for them to explore and learn more […] I told them, there should also be discussion between group members too […] they share ideas for improvement*
>
> *(Mr Eilyas)*

Mr Eilyas focused on the processes of preparing the project from planning to writing, encouraging their own interpretations and meaning making. He felt that a deeper learning could be gained from peer feedback rather than from him correcting his students' drafts.

> *They read each other's work […] will re-correct themselves from the comments […] I will only look at the mismatched of errors after the students corrected the work among themselves*
>
> *(Mr Eilyas)*

At first Ema, Eleena and Siti felt that working in groups was a *'troublesome'* experience because of the long brainstorming sessions during the pre-writing stage. Eleena said '*I feel like it is a burden for me to tag along with people of different thinking'.* However, she later agreed that the time spent discussing and negotiating was not wasted. Over the course of preparation before writing out the report, Eleena learned to review work that she was unfamiliar with, especially when presenting different ideas and data in the findings section which was written by Siti. Ema agreed and said,

> *true enough, my friends helped me with their comments […] Although I am confident writing the Introduction part […] I still needed help to plan […] when Eleena and Siti read my work, there was still room for improvements*
>
> *when I gave my Introduction part to Eleena and Siti for comments, both suggested what could be done to improve* (referring to comments on her language from her draft*) […] we looked at the options to agree at what needed to be written […] the latest comments were on the way I elaborated the content.*
>
> *(Ema)*

Feedback was provided to each other before they even started to pen down their ideas as well as after everybody had completed writing their parts. 'W*hen Ema was trying to write out her Introduction part for example, we discussed on what she could write and what she needed to cover'.* Despite Ema's confidence in feeling that the writing Introduction was manageable, peer feedback seemed to be a crucial platform for her to seek assurance that what she had in mind was useable. Eleena, Siti and Ema read each other's work, and discussed how it could be further improved by providing both written and oral feedback to one another. These practices seem to suggest that peer feedback was useful for improvement in the editing stage, and also in the planning stage, in order to agree on what they planned to write.

Ms Raisha's students viewed peer feedback as less decisive as she portrayed herself as the expert in the classroom. Shuhada reached out to her peers for immediate feedback but favored her teacher's feedback more.

with teacher's feedback, I don't have to refer to my classmates because sometimes they were unsure themselves.

(Shuhada)

However, she also welcomed *'corrective feedback'* from her own partner.

I need more guidance [...] I need someone to help me [...] I know she is good enough, I want her to correct me, give me advice how can I do better.

(Shuhada)

She saw peer feedback as a learning tool that she could use in order to request input. This suggests that it could offer support for students like Shuhada in meeting her writing needs. Adila said,

I do not mind proofreading and editing [...] trying to accommodate to what Ms Raisha wants us to do when working in pairs

(Adila)

She was very keen to provide feedback in an attempt to assist her partner's writing experience but appeared to base this more on meeting the expectations of her own teacher who saw her as the '*better'* writer.

The most common feedback given during the pre-writing stage addressed correct usage of sentence structure, grammar, appropriateness of ideas and key points, and writing format.

Although peers were seen as significant in providing feedback (depending on each student's needs) some students felt that the teacher's feedback was generally more useful for moving them along in their use of writing conventions, especially at the pre-writing stage. Students were constantly seeking feedback in order to ensure better writing development for future writing stages. Writing in pairs and groups was generally seen to provide opportunities for students to apply the given feedback and try out the suggestions when developing their own writing.

8.2.2 *"Can I trust peer review?"*

Ema, Elena and Siti did not only focus on sentence level problems but also on ideas and organization. Though these student writers were not trained teachers, they provided

feedback and made use of peers' comments during their revisions, portraying active collaboration and an openness to suggestions.

Ema:	*On my part for example, I will give my introduction part to both so that they can give comments for me to improve. If they think that there's still room for improvements, we will discuss and I will improvise the work*
Eleena:	*We correct each other's work*
Ms Huslinda:	*So tell me what is in the comment?*
Eleena:	*We will say that if it is not good enough, we shall suggest and we will look into the options that we have*
Ms Huslinda:	*And who will do the correction?*
Eleena:	*The person who wrote the part* *So the two members will comment, but the person who writes it will do the correction*
Ema:	*Yes, so that the editor doesn't have to do that much and she looks only into language not content*

They seemed to project a positive group experience, rather than a critical appraisal of their peer's writing which would have made the feedback less beneficial. Since they knew their own strengths, Ema, Eleena and Siti were able to maintain their focus and were self-directed to provide and receive peer feedback rather than waiting for their teachers' feedback in their next lesson. Peers were seen here to provide an alternative strategy that other group members could use in order to evaluate the correctness of their ideas.

However, some students were worried that peer feedback would invite ridicule due to their low levels of confidence around their language proficiency and generally preferred to seek feedback from teachers.

> *I don't like to work in group because when the time comes for me to provide feedback, people will know that I couldn't write well myself. How can you expect feedback from me?*
>
> *(Naja)*

> *I know that my partner is far more better than me because in the class, she always receives a lot of compliments […] her work is better than me […] she might think I am not good enough to provide feedback*
>
> *(Shuhada)*

Although there were generally no complaints regarding the lack of sophistication and objectivity of peer reviews, Naja and Shuhada raised the question of how acceptable their review would be for the draft when their peers were better writers. Both students felt that

they were not qualified to critique the draft, but there was no indication that peers ignored their comments. This could conclude that it was normal for some students to look for negativity within their own writing skills rather than to focus on the positive issues raised.

8.3 CHANGE OF PERCEPTIONS ON WAYS TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK IN THE UNIVERSITY WRITING CLASSROOMS

Students' reactions towards writing in pairs and groups appeared to be affected by who they worked with and how the collective piece of writing was managed.

Wan, Ika, Farahin and Naja worked within different groups in Dr Dalia's class. Wan was the only one who expressed a positive preference to writing in pairs and groups '*I prefer group work because we can share knowledge […] learn grammar'.* She believed paired and group writing could be a useful platform to enhance her learning and knowledge.

Ika initially thought that writing in a group was a setback to her own writing experience. However, she later reflected that facilitating others during the writing process created space for her own learning too.

> *I faced problem when one of my group members did not complete her work […] she only had to paraphrase […] she told me she didn't do it because she didn't know how to do it […] I thought at first I was going to waste my time teaching her, but I learned to do it better when I taught her*
>
> *(Ika)*

Despite feeling obligated to teach one of her group members to paraphrase, Ika realised that by teaching this skill in the sharing session, it also allowed her to improve within this area. This suggests that students can learn a great deal through explanation of their ideas to others and by participating in activities where they can learn from their peers.

Adila and Shuhada who faced different challenges with their own partners perceived group writing as relatively constructive for their own personal development. Shuhada, who labeled herself as being *'less proficient'*, strongly believed that she could learn from working with more proficient students.

> *we had a discussion a lot, like having debates […] he taught me how to deliver speech […] I learned from him to extract things from research articles […] he was very helpful […] he boosted me to become better*
>
> *(Shuhada)*

Shuhada's previous experience influenced the way she perceived and shaped her expectations about working with a partner in Ms Raisha's class. Unfortunately her partner perceived this practice otherwise.

> *I do not know why, but my pair is trying to avoid from working together […] we never met to discuss on how to go about writing our summary […] suddenly she said she has started writing and asked me to continue writing two weeks before submission.*
>
> *(Shuhada)*

Shuhada was feeling rather frustrated at how her partner reacted toward paired writing and the kind of work she produced. She expected that, by choosing someone who was more proficient than her, her writing skills and also the practice of ESL in general, would improve. However, she did not get the support that she was hoping for.

Adila, whom Ms Raisha considered to be a '*proficient writer*', also felt that writing with other people could be useful especially as she had somewhat lost her interest in writing. She felt that by working with others she could possibly change the way she perceived writing.

> *I lowered down my expectation because writing summary does not seem to be interesting to learn […] I just don't know what to expect […] well, I am hoping when working with my pair, I will see it differently.* She later added: *I work with a friend, both of us are, not to boast or anything but we know where we are amongst our course mates […] we discussed and argued to become better*
>
> *(Adila)*

Adila was fortunate to be paired up with someone who had the same proficiency. Her experience of writing with someone who was as '*good'* challenged her to become better as they shared their expertise. Students with similar skills, working in small groups, could therefore challenge each other to incorporate more abstract and complex ideas in order to expand their knowledge further.

Paired and group writing was generally seen as an opportunity for the students to be mutually responsible for their learning by sharing knowledge, ideas and experience with their peers. There was potential to engage students into learning by sharing ideas and questions during group interaction and by teaching each other and sharing knowledge

during the writing process. This suggests that learning among peers could be expected to take place when trying to achieve and meet the requirements of writing goals.

8.4 DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I have explored teacher and student feedback, the roles that students were expected to take in terms of feedback givers, and the extent to which they facilitated their own and each other's writing development. My analysis has revealed that feedback was communicated differently in each classroom and that it played an important role, not only in the development of specific drafts, but also in getting to grips with new writing practices within the university.

As I illustrated, most of the student writers worked closely on their written task based on dual content/ language focus feedback given by their academic writing teachers. It was common to all academic writing teachers to provide oral feedback during student-teacher conferences as they said it was more convenient than written feedback, which was more time consuming. Adila and Shuhada reported that Ms Raisha paid more attention to written feedback and this played a central role in their writing classroom.

Adila and Shuhada found that the substantial comments on papers provided them a *reader reaction* (Hyland, 2003) to help them to improve as writers. As other academic writing teachers felt that error correction/ corrective feedback might not be useful as they felt their students might not make use of its potential, Adila and Shuhada felt that it benefitted their writing development. Feedback did not just stop on paper, but was followed by discussions between the teacher and her student writers. Shuhada found the comments on written errors had a positive effect on her writing accuracy. She added that everybody in the classroom was expected to rewrite from feedback on both grammar and content. This practice was assumed in a way demonstrated how student writers put effort into utilizing feedback to edit their draft, addressing successful acquisition of linguistic features (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

Discussing the issue of feedback with other student writers from other writing classrooms, though individual academic teachers chose different modalities in providing feedback, both written and oral feedback involved identical comments (for written) and prompts (for oral) based on their draft, such as *wrong tenses!, wwc (wrong word choice), other*

codes such as '?' and'!' – remedial feedback to form, *explain more…, in my opinion.. what do you mean?* – to address construction of meaning. The difference was that when given written feedback, students had time to identify and reflect before explaining during the discussion. By contrast, with oral feedback, students had to respond to the comments directly and explain what they felt about it and correct *in situ* in front of their teacher. Though all of the student writers were positive about receiving feedback, talking about student writers' apprehensions about writing, Farahin and Ika were unable to accommodate to the expectations of academic writing, which was further aggravated by the lack of understanding and interpretation from the directive feedback as they saw their teacher as the more knowledgeable other with more power and authority.

Written feedback raised more issues related to power and authority into interactions between teacher and student. In oral feedback, by contrast, it seemed that 'meaning and interpretation could be constantly negotiated' (Hyland & Hyland, 2006) in a way that seemed to reduce cultural and social inhibitions about engaging with authority figures such as teachers, let alone to question them. While Dr Dalia and Ms Raisha emphasized 'meaning before form' when giving feedback, Mr Eilyas seemed to be comfortable to reverse the usual practice for writing discussions. Ema, Eleena and Siti reported that during their teacher-student conferencing, Mr Eilyas started the discussion by focussing on accuracy and formal issues, working towards the development and organisation of content. The control of most L2 interactions remained firmly in the hands of the academic writing teachers through the 'negotiated interaction' (Long, 1996). Lillis (2003) suggested that dialogic conversation only offered help when needed. According to the student writers, discussions about the writing tasks focused on *features of the text, simplifying the task and modelling indirectly from other students writers to meet the target of the academic discourse*.

From observations and interviews, feedback was provided by the teachers to varying degrees and teachers expected a certain amount of peer feedback within the pairs and groups. Not all student writers were comfortable with the idea of peer feedback. Some did not trust feedback given by peers, believing that the teacher was the expert and peers were not knowledgeable enough to diagnose their problems; this affected how much they used peer comments in their revisions.

I observed that though student writers had reservations about trusting their peers' comments and about their peer's ability to comment, at some point, they recognized that they benefited from peer feedback. For example, though Eleena, Ema and Siti at first had the same trust issue, seeing themselves as inexperienced at providing feedback and uncomfortable with the expectation, as they saw it, to take up the 'almost teacher' task, they eventually found that the feedback process helped them to interpret the meaning of the task they were working on.I observed from classroom observations, despite this issue, the role of the teacher in the classroom was to encourage student writers to be more positive about peer feedback.

Part of this process focused on the content and therefore instigated at times some power struggle around *whose ideas will be on paper*? that they had to deal with. In this regard, I would like to recall the criteria that tended to drive the formation of the writing groups. Though the teachers were keen to encourage group members with mixed abilities so as to 'scaffold learning' (Vygotsky, 1978), students tended to group together according to friendships or personal qualities such as trust and commitment - people who they thought would pull their way and contribute towards the group work (see 7.3.5). One dilemma that I would like to highlight was at the stage of incorporating feedback to improve draft. Some student writers with low confidence level were worried about the *quality of feedback* they produced within peer feedback. From group interviews, I found out that Shuhada and Naja were worried that it would invite ridicule due to their poor writing. Though some seemed to struggle with trust issues and low self-confidence when working with a peer who was more competent, the practice of peer feedback seemed to contribute to a positive group environment than to critically appraise peer's writing or making feedback less beneficial.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSIONS

9.0 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters presented my journey when conducting this study. This final chapter brings together the thesis' constituent parts and considers them as a whole in relation to my overarching research question, *What are students' experiences of academic writing in second language (L2) with specific attention to higher education (HE) context in Malaysia?* This chapter begins with a brief summary of the entire exploration, largely focusing on the social aspects of how students make meaning in the process of navigating their academic writing in the university classrooms. I refer to the research data from an emic viewpoint and with other empirical and theoretical studies to support my arguments. The first section addresses the practices of the academic writing teachers in order to further explore writing in the university as seen from the students' perspectives. Based on this, I draw out some key contrasts between school and university practices and how students make the transition from writing for one context to writing for the other. I also look at the role of feedback in the two contexts and discuss how students get to understand with the new expectations of the university through teacher feedback. I then focus on the challenges faced by students when writing with other people. In my contribution to the knowledge section, I also provide an overview of what affected students' writing in the present context. I conclude by arguing that students' views of academic writing begin to shift from a focus on form to a focus on meaning and that they see themselves as novice academic writers. In this regard, writing in the university context involves a change of identity as students bring their ESL writing experiences from school into the EMI university classrooms. The final sections of this study are on Contributions to Knowledge, Methodological Contributions, Areas for Future Research and Reflecting on My Research and Professional Context.

9.1 'STUDY SKILLS' IS STILL THE APPROACH TO TEACHING WRITING IN THE UNIVERSITY

What Mr Eilyas, Dr Dalia and Ms Raisha had in common was that the three of them used study skills as the approach to teaching writing in the classroom. These teachers tended to take a deficit approach where during the classroom observations, they identified and

attempted to fix problems that their students faced. In the case of communicating feedback, although Mr Eilyas and Dr Dalia preferred to use feedback dialogues and Mr Raisha used written feedback more, the act of providing both feedback was corrective in nature. During classroom observations, Ms Raisha used written feedback to identify students' errors from students' writing. Shuhada even said '*Ms Raisha commented on my paper. She questioned the correct word choice when paraphrasing'.* As for Mr Eilyas, the approach he took was based more on trial and error strategies and grammar practice. Eleena, Siti and Ema felt that oral feedback on early drafts of their report writing did lead to improvements in subsequent drafts with regard to '*language, grammar'* and also '*the structure of the report'* based on their '*proposed contents'*. In contrast, feedback from Dr Dalia's classroom focused more on self-regulation and self-evaluation rather than on teaching students how to write. An example of the kind of questions she asked is, "*You have written thesis statement before, haven't you? Tell me what is a thesis statement?"*

Understanding the classroom practice from one perspective, the academic writing teachers seemed to take authority assuming it was alright to 'criticise directly' on the basis that they were the expert that they knew the 'correct view' of what should be written and how to fix the problem. I observed that the direct feedback given by the teachers could be discouraging, especially for novice student writers who are trying to understand and make sense of these 'common-sense ways of knowing' (Lea & Street, 1998) while responding to feedback on the accuracy of form and also structure of each written task. One had to imagine to 'treat' the errors for language accuracy (Ferris, 1999) and 'assume' again student writer's different way of interpretation of what is 'not correct' (Lea & Street, ibid). Adila said she questioned her teacher on what she had meant by 'explain more' because she *could not understand what else to explain, when the points are all there*. Nonetheless, as an L2 user and academic writing teacher myself, I could recognise that teachers could be vague when 'fixing the problem' (Lea & Street, 1998). This was further explicable through students' responses during group interview on the feedback that they received from their teacher, which happened to be correction on content but vague leading students to confusion and frustration.

Essentially, the kind of appropriate language and style the academic writing teachers used in giving feedback could construct the kind of relationships which could facilitate students' writing development (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). For instance, although Shuhada considered herself to be an *incompetent* writer, praise from Ms Raisha such as *good, not*

bad and *very good* seemed to motivate her to repeat the 'correct' strategy and she understood her weaknesses as she had to avoid making more mistakes in her revision. Although the teachers seemed to set a lot of independent work for the student groups, they also scaffolded their learning with strategies such as code switching, model essays, and feedback. However, when it is to the extent of 'correcting' and 'prescribing' students linguistic skills, the practice challenged Lea and Street's deficit model on writing in the university.

9.2 THE TRANSITION FROM ESL TO EMI CONTEXT AS STRUGGLE

In the Malaysian education system, students learn ESL as a subject in school for 11 years and it is assumed that this will result in a certain level of proficiency (Musa, Lie & Azman. 2012). From student writers' recollections about learning ESL, their typical classroom was teacher-centred, and the emphasis was on learning the four skills, namely, speaking, listening, reading and writing. This approach of mastering specific language skills has been called an autonomous model of literacy (Street & Street, 1984). In the writing component, student writers recalled that they learned how to write *narrations, descriptions, instructions, summaries and simple speeches* which were then tested via examinations through modelling the texts by practicing the highlighted features (see Chapter 6). Street (1984) in Russell (2017, p. 399) argues that this approach sees literacy as a "decontextualized skill which once learned can be transferred with ease from one context to another". My findings show that although there was an attempt by the students to apply the practices they acquired, they did not effortlessly generalise ESL writing knowledge from school to writing tasks in the university.

In the university context where English is the medium of instruction, student writers found that their disciplines required them to write but there was no longer a focus on language. For example, Ema commented: *Writing report for Engineering? We had to write in English but we never received any comments, so we never knew what we did was right, both grammar and content.* Student writers reported that content teachers provided limited opportunities to develop language skills or language knowledge in their classrooms. Ema's response was to view grammatical accuracy as unimportant in this new context: *so why bother about grammar, I just write and submit my report.* Nor Liza Ali (2013) reports a mismatch of university policy between content teachers and students, as EMI is being provided as part of a strategy to support students who may have limited

English (Nor Liza Ali, 2013)[24]. I could see that some student writers were trying to understand why they were not able to use the English language productively in this new context. At the same time, however, student writers were finding ways to transfer certain elements or knowledge about L2 writing from school to the university. The writing modules were hence designed to support their induction into the writing practices in the university.

Data from student interviews identified a shift in practice from viewing writing as a product in school to writing as a practice in a discourse community, that is, the university classroom. This was not a straightforward shift, however, as student writers experienced 'different ways of knowing and writing, values and beliefs, which often conflict with the familiar' (Warren, 2002). As they progressed, they seemed to acquire some sense that the writing tasks involved more than mere adherence to a defined form. As they navigated the tasks they were set, student writers appeared to have a growing awareness that the purpose of writing in this different context was also different.

In summary, while student writers were negotiating how to write, their recollections of writing strategies from school and reflections of what worked and what did not, helped them in moving back and forth through drafting their written tasks. Many student writers felt that their experience of learning the four language skills, and even grammar in isolation in school, did not help them to write in the university. Therefore, they were still expecting to be scaffolded in developing their language skills. Eventually, they appeared to grasp that writing 'varies from culture to culture, from context to context' (Barton & Ivanič, 1991) that writing is situated and does not take one generic way of writing nor is transferable to other contexts. Student writers seemed to reconstruct the idea of their writing practices while sharing their emic perspective, navigating university writing in English, their second language. Most student writers seemed to expect both the academic writing teachers and content teachers to provide a supportive environment in which they could answer the question, *Is this how you write in the university?*

[24] The use of EMI is an overt and formal policy even though EMI has not been given explicit status

9.3 UNPACKING POWER RELATIONS THROUGH GROUP WRITING

From the perspective of the academic literacies, academic writing is not simply an issue of producing *good writing*; it concerns conceptualizing writing in an academic setting (Lea & Street, 1998). In terms of the academic practices in UoN, group writing is the single most visible mode used to help students to improve their English academic writing. Through the sociocultural lens, the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) views group writing as a collaborative, social activity in which novice writers can learn from more experienced writers and appropriate strategies can be employed when power issues arise from differences of practices and ideas. Adila seemed to be empowered by the role given to her by the teacher with her peers and being labelled as a *better writer* significantly raised her confidence in helping her peers. However, my study found that it was more common to see students struggling with the idea of writing with people, particularly in the planning stage when the decision of '*whose idea should be considered acceptable'* or '*whose words should be written on paper?'*. In addition, without the support of the teacher (who was seen as the expert/authority figure), it was difficult for them.

My interactions with the teachers and student writers provided rich data which yielded new findings and expanded existing knowledge, particularly with regard to writing in groups. The complexities of this modality, the different aspects of it, and the strategies employed implicitly as well as explicitly by both students and teachers, were presented shown earlier in this study. Working together was particularly challenging as all members needed to work towards meeting the goal, thus necessitating cooperation and collaboration. Group members were required to demonstrate their sense of responsibility, while respecting one another, during the process of establishing and accomplishing the task. It was obvious that some group members had some differences and difficulties which meant that it was not easy to reach a consensus. However, this type of interaction is inevitable, necessitating intervention from the teacher in order to help the students to meet the challenges.

9.4 IN SEARCH OF IDENTITY FROM THE PRACTICE OF GROUP WORK

Aside from struggling to understand the manner in which meaning is constructed in writing, student writers also seemed to be juggling the nature of power with that of

authority, with reference to their writing process. In Chapter 8, I discussed the use of feedback as a means of facilitating students' writing development. To further understand students' experience of writing in the university, in this section, I discuss how *social power relations* (Street, 2005) played a part in students' efforts to produce written work of the required standard. I illustrate how student writers revealed their concern about receiving feedback from their group members. Although feedback was given less focus in school (see Chapter 8), most student writers expected some feedback from their teacher to help them adapt to writing in groups and to help them meet the different academic expectations.

Since the institutional requirement was for group writing, students were expected to give and receive peer feedback in addition to receiving teacher feedback. However, they were not provided with clear guidelines in terms of what to look at when giving feedback. None of the student writers were trained in providing peer feedback nor given a peer review sheet as a guideline (as discussed in 8.2.1). However, whenever possible, peer feedback that did occur was on both form and content. The teachers seemed to assume that group writing would automatically provide scaffolding. However, as I illustrated in 7.2, although student writers appeared to write in groups by pooling their resources to complete tasks by learning through dialogue and interaction during discussion with their peers, there were some issues of power relations among them and students spoke of tensions and struggles throughout the process of writing.

It may be said that the feedback process can help to make meaning within an unfamiliar discourse and context and that this has implications for issues of identity (Ivanič, 1998, Lea & Street, 1998, Lillis, 2001). This could be seen when student writers were able to change their identity from novice writers writing in school to at least novice writers in the university classroom. The change of this identity in the new community of practice was due to seeing their academic writing teachers' role as experts of university discourse who, in a way, provided access to meaning-making in that discourse. Student writers were seen to develop from ESL learner, moving away learning to write as a set of autonomous skills, to go through the process of developing as effective academic writers, which Lea and Street (1998) calls academic socialisation, to being able to challenge the issue of power and identity when coping to write as less proficient novice writers. The change of identities was constructed through social processes and over time (Turner & Tajfel, 1986)

via the interaction during peer feedback to accommodate writing situated in specific genre and language to be accepted as academic writing.

What emerges from the foregoing discussion on feedbacks highlights the power relations between the academic writing teachers who were seen as the experts and authority in the writing classroom and who knew more about what constituted academic writing. However, in the process model to writing which was seen in practice among student writers, this has been described as "disempower teachers and cast them in the role of learning of well-meaning bystanders" (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993). In addition, the dilemma of power relations between less proficient and better writers also impacted student writing. In identifying and working towards common goals in the university writing classrooms, the hierarchic power relationships were backgrounded. Here, student writers demonstrated individual motivation, self-expression and responsibility.

9.5 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The findings from this study contribute to several bodies of knowledge. Most importantly, this study is a contribution to understanding writing practices in EMI university contexts. To highlight this principal contribution, this section is divided into two smaller sections that present the principal and additional contributions.

9.5.1 Principal Contributions: Reconceptualization on Students Writing: A Comparative Glance of ESL Writing to EMI

As discussed in Chapter 4, the ethnographic approach complements my case study. The in-depth interviews and classroom observations which were used as the methods for data collection allowed me to listen more to students' voices in order to gain clarification of the challenges they faced as student writers in the university. The thesis of this study is that in order for students to write in the university, they have to navigate the new writing context and they do so by bringing in their past ESL writing experience from school, resulting in them having to embrace multiple identities. Through Ivanič's (1998) notion of writing in the university, the "social context broadens their views" of what was involved in the university "writing event" and this, in turn, shaped their new identity to be part of the "membership community" to write in particular ways. One of the key issues I raised in this study is the gap between the expectations in the two different settings. ESL

teachers in school regard language teaching as involving a set of skills and emphasise *good* writing. Thus, students may learn to meet these expectations but miss out on viewing writing as a process. In this regard, I have argued to some extent that by focusing on linguistic features, ESL teachers give students the impression that accuracy and form are more important than what they say. Student writers therefore struggled with the transition from ESL writing to writing in the EMI context and grappled with the question, *How do you write in the university?* Figure 9.1 demonstrates how students transition their writing experience from school to the university context.

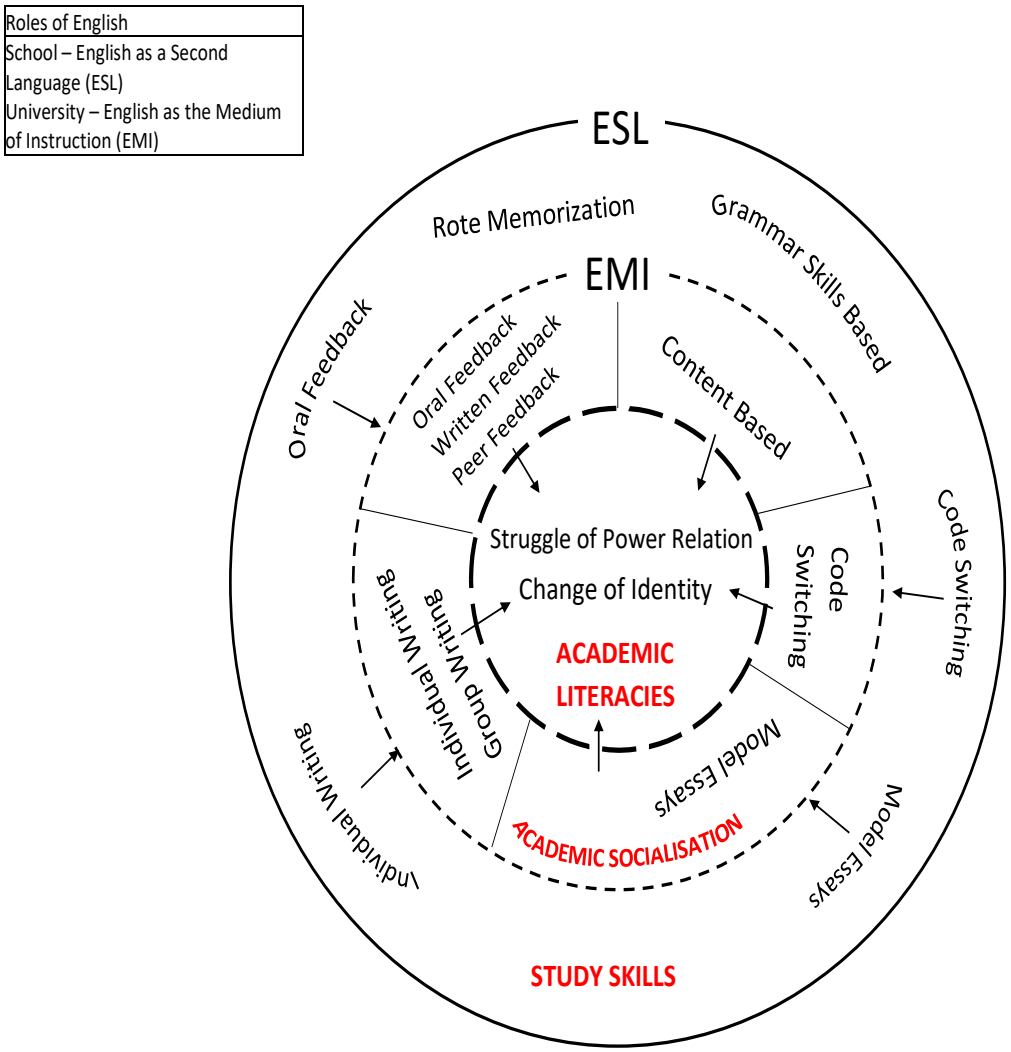


Figure 9.1: Visual representation of how students transition writing from school to university context

The above diagram shows the strategies that the student writers brought in from school in order to navigate their writing experience in the university. Based on this study's

findings, I raised the issue about students' assumption that the skills learned in school would be transferable and that writing takes the same generic form. This created confusion for most student writers regarding what university writing is all about. The students initially tried to align the practices from school and their existing ESL writing skills, thinking that these were a set of atomised skills (Lea & Street, 1998), with the requirements of the university. However, as they engaged in the module tasks, they seemed to construct the meaning of writing in the university. Their engagement with the values, beliefs, goals and activities in this new context changed their writing identity (Ivanič, 1998). Thus, the transition to university also involved a change in writing identity. In this regard, even though student writers were expected to produce different text types, they learnt about writing as a process and came to an implicit understanding that writing is "shaped by social aspects of the writing events" (Ivanič, ibid, p. 232).

In the diagram, ESL is separated from EMI with a dotted line. The line indicates that the boundary between strategies used in school are permeable; strategies learned from school may influence how students learn to write in the university. I also used arrows that move inwards to the inner circles. Although the students shared individual writing, oral feedback, rote memorization, grammar, code switching and model essays as strategies taught in schools, not all skills appeared to be practised when writing in the university context. While embracing L2 writing strategies from school, students adopted new ones from their academic writing teachers. In addition, the 'core' is the outcome of students' practices in the university writing.

Drawing on Lea and Street's (2006) three approaches to the teaching of academic literacy, Ivanič (2004) identified that when students are required to interact and write different types of text in the university, the practice falls into the category of 'academic socialisation'. The process of identifying and establishing certain conventions of writing requires students' reflections on their own genre writing experience. This takes them into a meaning-making process to uncover what one thought about writing was writing is situated in its context. It can be said that although university writing instruction focused primarily on writing to create meaning, form was still being implicitly addressed through the process of writing itself; drafting, revision and editing.

Students' recollections of English in school indicate that ESL pedagogy is underpinned by a deficit model, not only in terms of the need to fix the language, but also in terms of

form. In ESL writing, students were accustomed to focusing on grammar and on following a model essay: *good writing* was focused on form and on the end product. This explains why two of the participating students, Fara and Ika, were focused on product, and why they were concerned about their lack of grammar knowledge and the lack of scaffolding in this regard. They struggled to go beyond the idea of *good writing* as simply being *correct writing* and to understand that these writing modules aimed to scaffold them into creating "writing which is linguistically appropriate to the purpose it is serving" (Ivanič, 2004, p. 233). Some students consciously used their school-learned strategies, such as the use of sample writing (for its organisational characteristics) and their first language (for greater access to learning grammar and understanding of writing instructions). Despite the lack of feedback received while in school, students expected feedback from their university teachers and their peers while working together to develop their writing and they appeared to have an instinctive understanding of its formative and scaffolding purposes. While some students continued to engage with writing as a product, other student writers engaged in writing as a practice. As a writing teacher I found this insight to be illuminating. I could see that students were engaged in negotiating the differences between school and university culture in terms of writing, and that they moved towards an understanding of academic writing as a practice, utilising "a set of text-type shaped by social context broadens view of what is involved in writing to include also social aspects of the writing event" (Ivanič, 2004, p. 232).

Another insight regarded the flexibility of the students' roles in taking up their academic identity**.** Students within the group realised that they had to adjust to the change of identity, as the need arose, taking charge at different times in order to progress, sometimes leading, sometimes generating ideas, and at other times managing and maintaining the discussions. They appeared to fully understand that, in order to work effectively, they had to be flexible and complement their group members. This understanding and awareness play a very crucial role. The significant strategies which the student writers indirectly employed were: planning their participation, monitoring their writing tasks, and evaluating their work through peer feedback. Students also sought the teacher's advice and opinions to ensure that their work could be constituted as academic writing. These strategies show that the students had begun the art of negotiation which enables them to write with other people. In addition, I also found that the sharing of group members' expertise and diverse abilities are catalysts to achieving success within group writing.

They complemented one another's writing strengths and put aside their weaknesses, displayed their interdependence on one another, and tried hard to contribute to the success of the completed writing task. This, in turn, helped and improved skill in writing and also boosted confidence for future individual university writing experiences.

The university group writing experience also appeared to develop the learner's autonomy. Students took charge of their own learning processes which meant that they did not depend so much on their teachers, only seeking help when there was a need for it. Students expanded each other's potential learning within the group zone of proximal development. Group members' interactions supported the composing process and the accomplishment of the writing tasks. However, the quality of group writing may also depend upon other factors that need to be addressed.

My understanding of Ivanič's (1998) construction of academic writing is based on the notion of 'identification' at how do students write academically? I view that student writers participated in particular university writing practices by exploring identity modelling (Brooke, 1988 in Ivanič, 1998), which shaped their understanding of how to write in this context. My findings suggest that in this context, 'identity modelling' is that writers' identity either socially constructed by themselves on the exclusion or inclusion writing with peers who are *better* or *less proficient* at writing, or the shift of writing from ESL to EMI context and taking up different conventions of writing, or it is defined for each student writer by their own peer or teacher during feedback process and its power structures in terms of different abilities to writing in the university classrooms. This is why in Chapter 3, I suggested that learning to write "does not happen in isolation but is fundamentally social in nature" (Vygotsky, 1978) and that "writing development and learning processes are co-constructed within contexts through their interaction with wider social forcer" (Street, 2005). Such fluidity during the writing process contributes to power relations during the meaning-making of *'How to write in the university?'*, initially practising their existing skills and strategies to *cross the bridge* to academic writing. Hence, in this context, in order to perform successfully in the academic community, students have to redefine their sense of self; their identity shifts as their objectives, needs and settings have changed (Ivanič, 1998). As students make sense of what academic writing *is,* a transition occurs in writing identity at the core (see Figure 9.1).

9.5.2 Additional Contributions

The additional contributions of this study to knowledge are on theory and practice and also pedagogy concerns regarding the teaching of writing in the university.

9.5.2.1 Contribution to knowledge on theory and practice

The framework I applied, for the purposes of this investigation, is grounded on sociocultural theory and the conceptual debates and insights from Academic Literacies. I began by discussing sociocultural theory in relation to teaching and learning, particularly Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, in order to understand university writing, both from the teaching as well as the learning perspectives. I have discussed how the approach and focus of writing shifts from traditional to constructivist practices as students move from secondary schools to the university. In the context of students' interaction when writing in groups, the concept of ZPD is particularly relevant when used in scaffolding learning, and its development focuses on process learning with the more knowledgeable others, and helps to show how students construct learning to write with their peers and internalise writing experiences in different settings. In addition, teaching writing approaches, such as cooperative learning and peer learning models, are also explored to explain my empirical findings.

The transition from ESL writing in schools to academic writing in the university is also discussed through an Academic Literacies lens, which situates writing as a social practice. This approach helps one to understand the multi-layered and complex practices of teaching and developing academic writing in the university writing classrooms in Malaysia. In Chapter 3, I noted that literacy theorists such as Barton and Hamilton (2012), Gee (1996), Street and Street (1984), as well as Lea and Street (1998) argue that the new approach to understanding student writing and literacy in academic contexts is to challenge the deficit model. According to them, students' writing can be conceptualised through the use of three overlapping models: study skills, academic socialisation and academic literacies. Lea and Street (1998) share their view that "student writing and learning (are) issues at the level of epistemology and identities rather than skill or socialisation" (p. 159). I believe that this is an appropriate framework by which to gain a deeper understanding of university students' writing experiences in L2, with specific attention to group writing rather than to explore the meaning of what is *good writing*.

My findings attest to the complexity between the issues of power struggle and identity. I have explored how student writers conceptualize two transitions in terms of academic writing practices: from writing in school to writing in university and from English as a second language to EMI. I also examined how student writers shape power relations, authority and identities in relation to writing in the new discourse community where group work is the main writing modality. I observed that when students were involved in a power struggle, they negotiated different ways of finding '*what is university writing'*, and their identities changed in their new academic discourse based on the different roles that they had to take for certain writing practices. Crucially, the findings suggest that understanding students' writing in their second language is not merely about looking at linguistic limitations or blaming students for their inaccuracy of grammar use. The academic literacies model suggests that university teachers need to understand that when students change their writing setting, they will also have a shift of identity as their objectives, needs and settings have changed (Ivanič, 1998). In order to perform successfully, one has to adapt to the new academic community and this is a new concept in Malaysian schools and HEs. In addition, academic writing in contexts where English is the medium of instruction adds a layer of complexity that is seemingly not fully acknowledged and understood. This study therefore not only builds on the limited academic literacy studies that have so far been conducted in the country, it also expands the knowledge base referred to above.

9.5.2.2 Contribution to Pedagogy and Recommendations

There are a number of pedagogical implications from this study. They range from the benefits of peer learning when writing with other people, to students' preparedness for group writing, teacher monitoring, collaborative learning skills and academic literacies. All of these implications affect the manner in which group writing could be implemented in the university writing classroom.

The findings from the study demonstrate that when students write with other people, it gives them the opportunity to appreciate peer learning with its "two-way, reciprocal learning activity" (Boud & Cohen, 2014, p. 3), and at some point, student writers are able to produce better writing. This is evident at the planning stage which is used as a platform to brainstorm ideas and validate each other's understanding during group discussion before actual writing. In the process of writing, when student writers have the chance to

lead and be led by someone other than the teacher, the interaction in different discourses scaffold each other's learning to improve their "level of potential development" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 268) and produce written work that is "academic" in standard.

Another implication is that there seems to be a need to prepare student writers with strategies to deal with group members. This could be explained clearly in the classrooms instead of assuming that students can cope with the unexpected learning situations. Boud and Cohen (2014) suggest that "formalised peer learning can help students learn effectively" (p. 3). When students are unfamiliar with the approach, the practices are trial-and-error and, when used unsystematically, can cause issues of identity and power struggles resulting in unresolved conflicts. One of the student writers, Naja, felt that when writing tasks were divided, a contest ensued, creating a winners-and-losers scenario. She said: '*I feel like competing who is the best writer here'*. Burden and Cooper (2003) said that such a situation should not have happened. Another student felt pressured because their pair/group member was reluctant to work with them. Although conflict is normal and part of classroom life, it must be managed in order to restore the balance of harmony in the classroom, overcoming the difficulties and creating a more favourable learning environment (ibid).

The study also reveals that some students are taking up collaborative learning skills to writing which Bruffee (1999) calls "interdependent learning" (p. 7). In a class where teachers seemed to facilitate students' learning, their student writers negotiated, participated, evaluated and constructed the knowledge (from the given open-ended but focused tasks) to demonstrate their participation in group writing. However, in a class where the teacher took the authoritative role, students demonstrated less personal transformation and desire to take control of their learning when carrying out the writing activities. These two practices which reference peer learning are collaborative learning (ibid) and cooperative learning (Jacob, 1999). There is an overlap in practice between cooperative and collaborative learning and sometimes they are used interchangeably (Boud & Cohen, 2014) as they are primarily both about learning to work in groups. When students found group writing to be problematic, teachers who facilitated what Bruffee (ibid) calls constructive conversation, enabled students to reach consensus *collaboratively* and did not leave conflict with peers unresolved. From time to time, students could be reminded of the benefits of group work by building up their potential and not just aiming for what is considered as *good writing*.

In defining *good writing*, though it might sound like a writing product approach, university teachers could be more explicit about the genre discourse of writing. As writing in the university is "shaped by social context broadens the view of what is involved in writing to include also social aspects of the writing event" (Halliday, 1978 in Ivanič 2004, p. 232), teachers could shift from "relying solely on study skills and academic socialization models" to an "academic literacies model" (Lea & Street, 2000, p. 370). This would emphasise the importance of being explicit about the change in genre and mode of writing as student writers move between group and individual work. Students could be shown the effective model to writing approaches to academic writing. In order to lessen the struggle and conflict when students write together, teachers could manage it well by providing guidance to ensure maximum exposure to group writing, promoting deeper analysis and synthesis of viewpoints in their new discourse community.

Drawing from my findings, I believe that my major contribution to this field is how both teachers and students will be impacted in their teaching and learning, respectively. Therefore, I would like to make the following recommendations which policy makers, or the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) of each faculty in the Malaysian HE context, may find useful in terms of considering a more effective pedagogical approach to learning to write in the university:

1. <u>Implement curriculum integrated academic literacy instruction</u>

   Findings from Chapter 5 showed that the three academic writing teachers took the 'study skills' approach to fix students' problems in writing. I am not criticising the approach taken by the teachers but the literature on students' university writing, such as Lea and Street (1998) and Ivanič (1998), indicate that when seen through an academic literacies lens, the multi-layered and complex practices of teaching and developing academic writing in the classroom can be understood. Wingate (2018) proposed to show lecturers ways of "embedding academic literacy instruction into the curriculum as part of their teaching practice" (p. 11). At the university level, this could be taught to lecturers from a range of disciplines "to provide an opportunity to develop academic literacy across the curriculum" (ibid). According to Wingate (ibid), it is important for the lecturers to understand the concept of academic literacy as they could be more aware on student learning needs versus current support provision.

2. Provision for collaborative teaching

   Findings from Chapter 6 demonstrated how students struggled in making sense of *How to write in the university?* and *How to meet the expectations of writing in the university?* In one of the group interviews, the students said that they had written different kinds of reports for content subjects. The students understood that the format varied but they were not taught how to write but how to learn in the writing classroom. Wingate (2012, p. 3) expressed her frustration that "subject lecturers who are experts in the community discourses […] not obliged to engage with students' academic literacy development". When the students failed to write, the blame was put on the students as the lecturers that it was due to the students' problem with the language. Students were expected to learn 'writing' before they entered the university. It could be useful if there is some directive from the university management to propose subject lecturers to co-teach with the academic writing teachers. This could be done by allocating considerable responsibilities to teach collaboratively. Rather than teaching a generic style of writing, the academic writing teacher could get some input (writing guidelines) from the content lecturer on their expectations of how to write in their field. For example, how students should prepare a report for Engineering will vary from how students should write a report for a degree in Law.

3. Revisit the idea of group writing as a pedagogy

   Given my findings in Chapter 7, students and teachers were tending to write *in pairs or in bigger groups. F*rom t*he interview sessions, students were found to be in conflic*t with their group members. Although group writing should be seen as a supplement for the students to strengthen their text production, some of the students did not favour this approach to writing. Advocates in group work such as Wigglesworth and Storch (2012), Boud and Cohen (2014), Turner and Tajfel (1986) and Storch (2013) strongly feel that it could be a model for an instructional approach. Teachers could implement this approach but they have to mentally prepare the students to understand the challenges of working with other people and how to resolve conflicts if any arise. Since group work is manifested in many university subjects, the skills of working with other people need to be taught and students must not be automatically expected to be equipped with social skills.

Each of these recommendations may seem to be slightly over-optimistic but I believe that the higher managements of universities has the right as well as the wisdom to decide what is best for their institutions. I have not yet had the opportunity to put into practice any of the above recommendations, much less to offer any relevant experience, but I humbly believe that in the face of the evidence in the field presented in this study, one's teaching practice will be impacted if the recommendations are followed.

9.6 METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The present study employs an ethnographic case study to explore undergraduate students' academic writing practices, their L2 writing approaches and the challenges they encounter when writing in the university. To date, in Malaysia, there is a tendency for quantitative studies to be favoured over a qualitative approach largely focused on the teaching and learning of English in the classrooms (Musa, Lie & Azman, 2012). Thus, my ethnographic case study is partly inspired to undertake this calling to fill in the gap in research by using the qualitative research paradigm. Using the social constructivist mode of inquiry, in the same vein as Zulkepli (2012), my study can also be seen as an "attempt to broaden up the scope of educational research in Malaysia where positivist enquiry has been dominating the research scene" (p. 248). My constructivist inquiry attempts to interpret how students' writing practices and their perceptions are shaped by the "interdependence of social and individual processes in the co-construction of knowledge" (Palincsar, 1998, p. 345). Social construction is interested in how utterances *work* and Potter believes that "the world […] is constituted in one way or another as people talk it, write it and argue it" (Potter, 1996 in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 98).

Using an in-depth approach in order to understand students' academic writing practices, I exploited the *rich descriptions* from their voices as the main feature of this qualitative research (Wolcott, 2008). This, in turn, helped me to build a systematic understanding of the writing cultures that informed my student writers (from their perspectives) which I observed during my fieldwork when investigating this phenomenon within its real-life context. Aside from listening to the voices during the interviews, I also depended on my observation sheets and fieldnotes to recapture the students' experience when working with other people and navigating their writing process. It was sometimes not possible to accurately interpret a critical incident without looking at my own non-verbal behaviour and my stand as an observer-participant allowed me to use all of my five senses. In a

more recent study, Street (2015) suggests that an ethnographic perspective enables researchers to listen, hear, and see what people are doing with literacy and thereby engage with their real meaning.

My research participants were ten university students from three different disciplines and three academic writing teachers participating in the mandatory academic writing courses. To my knowledge, to date, there is a relatively small number of studies conducted in Malaysia that focus on university students' writing experiences, (Mustapha, 2009) on study skills, (Ahmad Mazli, 2007) students' lack of conventions of academic writing, (Osman & Bakar, 2009) learning to write an academic paper (Choy & Lee, 2012) effects of teaching paraphrasing, (Raoofi, 2014) and (Boo & Umar, 2013) L2 writing strategies, but none of these used an ethnographic case study as an inquiry into understanding the practices.

In the present study, I returned to my host university as an insider-researcher where a dual role is a "common feature of ethnographic and social research and integral to an academic literacies approach" (Bailey, 2009, p. 67). Although there were shortcomings when first negotiating access for data collection, by working closely with my participants and really listening to their voices, I was able to report their university writing experiences by "telling it like it is from the inside" (Brewer, 2000, p.17) which, to date, is not evident in Malaysian literature on student writing.

9.7 AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

A number of important issues revealed in my findings need to be further explored. In the light of significant findings about university writing practices, some students used group writing as their modality to knowledge construction. However, more empirical studies could compare the usefulness of group writing among university students in different HEIs in Malaysia. This study focuses primarily on the group writing processes leading up to the process of drafting and editing. Future researchers could extend the study by investigating the writing process that the students in the university classrooms have to go through based on the feedback from peers and teachers. Future studies could also investigate how students write an individual task versus how they write as a group with their different experiences and across disciplines. A study could also venture into looking

at the relationships and interactions among students in group discussions by looking closely at their written tasks, not only in writing classrooms but also across disciplines.

9.8 REFLECTING ON MY RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

In Chapter 1, I mentioned that there were hardly any studies done in Malaysia to try to understand university students' writing practices where English specifically is the medium of instruction. I noted that, apart from Wahiza (2012) whose study focused on understanding how students approach L2 academic literacy in the university, other researchers tended to unpack university writing practices by focusing on form, teachers' emphasis on structure and content, surface level errors and language mechanics (Mahaletchumy, 1994). I highlighted earlier that the missing link regarding the expectations of academic writing between school and HEIs put students into a challenging phase when figuring out how to write in the university while feeling at a loss at the same time.

In addition, as a dual role academic writing teacher and researcher, my aim is to understand students' writing practices, approaches and the challenges they encountered in their university writing. The findings of this ethnographic case study revealed that students ascribe their writing problems to their lack of grounding in English grammar. This, in fact, has been an issue for me too as I am struggling to become a better writer. Such reflections made me continuously question my assumptions and beliefs about my own teaching academic writing module and how this could be improved by adapting an academic literacies model in order to understand students' practices. The academic literacies model is generally new empirical and theoretical setting out to investigate reading and writing in academia as social practice (Lillis & Tuck, 2016). Prior to this study, I was not sensitive to the kind of issues in relation to academic identities that university students face. My own practice in the classroom before embarking on this PhD study was more informed by the traditional approach to teaching that I subconsciously brought study skills approach whenever I caught students grappling using looking and expected them to know *what is academic writing*, and at times, ignorantly asked them *to write!*

On another note, although I have been both an ESL and academic writing teacher for 20 years now, I went into the classroom with very little pedagogy knowledge and relied on

my own learning experience to teach others. Therefore, this journey is very rewarding because it was not merely about research to understand how students generally face challenges, it also shifted my perceptions on teaching and learning in university classrooms. As the students in this study shifted their own practices from product to meaning-making, I understand that academic literacies have changed the way in which I understand what university writing is and how I can improve my own teaching practices in order to help my own students in the classroom to become better writers.

As a writing teacher, it is important for me to understand the students' struggle from the viewpoint of the academic literacies framework so that I can see that writing should be seen not just as a skill, but as a complex, contextually based set of meaning-making practice (Guorlay, 2009). At one point during my data collection, I asked myself, "*Have I been teaching writing the way that students and expected when I was trying hard to meet the expectations of the syllabus myself*?" My growth as a teacher is not just about what I hoped to achieve, it is also about my own stance towards the dual roles that I took up at the beginning of the research journey. In the process, I understand that as a teacher, I have "to take into account the nature of student writing in relation to institutional practices, power relations and identities and consider the complexities of meaning making" (Murray & Nallaya, 2016, p. 1299), and this could also be an impetus for other academic writing teachers in Malaysian universities to be more sensitive to students' complex identity and the power struggles that they face during the process of learning how to write when contexts shift, not only from the ESL setting to a university setting but also in the context of EMI in Malaysian universities.

To end this chapter, I quote a key claim in the Literacy as Social Practice (LSP) field: "Literacy practices can only be understood in relation to the social, cultural, historical and political contexts in which they take place." Therefore, the question then arises: "How do we find out about such practices and contexts?" One response is to proffer an ethnographic perspective that enables us to listen, hear and see what people are doing with literacy and to engage with their local meanings (Street, 2005) and, basically, this is the intention of my thesis.

REFERENCES

Abdul Samad, A., Syed Abd Rahman, S. Z., & Norbaiti, S. (2008). Refining English language tests for university admission: A Malaysian example. *ASEAN Journal University of Education, 4*(1), 57-68.

Academic regulation handbook: Diploma and bachelor degree programs. (2017). *The academic affairs division* (vol. 1). Malaysia: University of Nusantara.

Ahmad Mazli, M. (2007). *The effectiveness of an academic reading course in facilitating tertiary students' comprehension of academic texts*. (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Ahmed, M. K. (1994). Speaking as cognitive regulation: A Vygotskian. *Vygotskian Approaches to Second Language Research*, 157.

Ainol Madziah, Z. (2001). *Reliability and validity in placement testing with reference to the English placement test at the International Islamic University*. (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) England: University of Surrey.

Al-Khasawneh, F. (2010). Writing for academic purposes faced by Arab postgraduate students of the college of business, UUM. *ESL World, 2*(28), 9. Retrieved from http://www.esp-world.info.

Angrosino, M. (2007). *Doing ethnographic and observational research*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Arshad, M., & Chen, W. H. (2009). Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of literacy: Scaffolding children to read and write at an early age. *Wacana, 11*(2), 319-334.

Atkinson, D., & Ramanathan, V. (1995). Cultures of writing: An ethnographic comparison of L1 and L2 university writing/language programs. *TESOL Quarterly, 29*(3), 539-568.

Aull, L. (2015). *First-year university writing: a corpus-based study with implications for pedagogy.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Azirah, H., & Leitner, G. (2014). English as a lingua franca in higher education in Malaysia. *The Asian Journal of Applied Linguistic, 1*(1), 16-27.

Bacha, N. N. (2010). Developing learners' academic writing skills in higher education: A study for educational reform. *Language and Education, 16*(3), 161-177.

Badger, R., & White, G. (2000). A process genre approach to teaching writing. *ELT Journal, 54*(2), 153-160.

Bailey, R. A. (2009). Undergraduate students' perceptions the role and utility of written assessment feedback. *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education, 1*, 1-14.

Baker, S. (2011, December). Students' writing and the transitions from school to university: Hybrid 'discourse of writing' positions of students and teachers. Paper presented at the *1st International Australasian Conference on Enabling Access to Higher Education*, Adelaide, Australia.

Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Ballinger, G. (2003). Bridging the gap between A-level and degree: Some observations on managing the transitional stage in the study of English Literature. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education, 2*(1), 99-109.

Banbrook, L. (1999). Negotiations for meaning: The learner's point of view. Paper presented at *XXIV Annual Applied Linguistics Association conference*, Perth, Australia.

Barkhuizen, G. P. (1998). Discovering learners' perceptions of ESL classroom teaching/learning activities in a South African context. *TESOL Quarterly, 32*(1), 85-108.

Bartholomae, D. (2005) What is composition and (if you know what that is) Why do we teach it?. *Writing on the margins*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Barton, D., & Hamilton, M. (2012). *Local literacies: Reading and writing in one community*. London: Routledge.

Barton, D., Hamilton, M., Ivanič, R., Ormerod, F., Padmore, S., Pardoe, S., & Rimmershaw, R. (1994). Photographing literacy practices. *Changing English*, *1*(1), 127-140.

Barton, D., & Ivanič, R. (Eds.). (1991). *Writing in the community*. London: Sage.

Baynham, M. (2000) Academic writing in new and emergent discipline areas. In M. R. Lea & B. Stierer (Eds.), *Student writing in higher education: New contexts* (pp. 17-31). Buckingham: Open University Press.

Beach, R., & Bridwell, L. S. (1984). *New directions in composition research: Perspectives in writing research*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Behroozizad, S., Nambiar, R. M., & Amir, Z. (2014). Sociocultural theory as an approach to aid EFL learners. *Reading*, *14*(2), 217-226.

Berman, R. (1994). Learner's transfer of writing skills between languages. *TESL Canada Journal, 12(*1), 29-46.

Berninger, V. W., Fuller, F., & Whitaker, D. (1996). A process model of writing development across the life span. *Educational Psychology Review, 8*(3), 193-218.

Bhajan, K. (1995). *Writing instruction methodology: a study of the current practices of ESL teachers.* (Unpublished Master's thesis.) Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Malaya.

Biber, D., & Gray, B. (2010). Challenging stereotypes about academic writing: Complexity, elaboration, explicitness. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *9*(1), 2-20.

Biggs, J. B. (1989). Approaches to the enhancement of tertiary teaching. *Higher Education Research and Development, 8*(1), 7-25.

Boo, Y. M., & Umar, I. N. (2013). *L2 writing challenges for the undergraduates: A performance analysis and a literature review on SIL domains*. Osaka: The Asian Conference on Language Learning.

Boud, D., & Cohen, R. (Eds.). (2014). *Peer learning in higher education: Learning from and with each other*. London: Routledge.

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *9*(2), 27-40.

Boyaltzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. California: Sage Publications.

Brakus, P. (2003). *A product/process/genre approach to teaching writing: a synthesis of approaches in a letter writing course for non-native English-speaking administrative Personnel.* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) England: University of Surrey.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. London: Sage.

Bremner, S. (2010). Collaborative writing: Bridging the gap between the textbook and the workplace. *English for Specific Purposes*, *29*(2), 121–132.

Brewer, J. D. (2000). *Understanding social research: Ethnography*. Great Britain: Open University Press.

Briner, R. B. (1999). The neglect and importance of emotion at work. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *8*(3), 323-346.

Bruffee, K. A. (1999). *Collaborative learning: Higher education, interdependence, and the authority of knowledge*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Brooke, R. (1998). Modelling a writer's identity: Reading and imitation in the writing classroom. In R. Ivanič (Ed.), *Writing and identity: The discoursal construction of identity in academic writing*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Burden, P., & Cooper, J. M. (2003). *An educator's guide to classroom management.* New York: Houghton Mifflin College Division.

Burhans, C. S. (1983). The teaching of writing and the knowledge gap. *College English*, *45*(7), 639-656.

Buston, M. N. (1971). The world of disposables. *Executive Housekeeper, 18*, 20-21.

Camps, A., Guash, O., Millan, M., & Ribas, T. (2000). Metalinguistics activity: The link between writing and learning to write. In A. Camps & M. Milan (Eds.), *Metalinguistics activity in learning to write* (pp. 103-124). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Canagarajah, S. (1999). Interrogating the "native speaker fallacy": Non-linguistic roots, non-pedagogical results. In G. Braine (Ed.), *Non-native educators in English language teaching* (pp. 145–158). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Carson, J. (2001). Second language writing and second language acquisition. *On Second Language Writing*, 191-200.

Casanave, C. P. (2014). *Controversies in second language writing: Dilemmas and decisions in research and instruction*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Chan, S. W., & Wong, B. E. (2004). Assessing oral skills of pre-tertiary students: The nature of the communicative act. *Proceeding of the International Conference on English Instruction and Assessment*, National Chung Cheng University, Taiwan.

Chandrasegaran, A. (1991). *The composing processes of university student writers*. (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) Singapore: National University of Singapore.

Chin, V., Ling, T. H., & Yih, Y. J. (2016). Investigating English language anxiety among UiTM Sarawak undergraduates. *Journal of Creative Practices in Language Learning and Teaching*, *4*(1), 50-62.

Chow, V. F. T. (2007). *The effects of the process-genre approach to writing instruction on the expository essays of ESL students in a Malaysian secondary school.* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) Penang: Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Choy, S. C., & Lee, M. Y. (2012). Effects of teaching paraphrasing skills to students learning summary writing in ESL. *Journal of Teaching and Learning*, *8*(2), 77-89.

Clarence, S., & McKenna, S. (2017). Developing academic literacies through understanding the nature of disciplinary knowledge. *London Review of Education, 15*(1), 38-49.

Crotty, M. (2005). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. London: Sage.

Coffin, C., Curry, M. J., Goodman, S., Hewings, A., Lillis, T., & Swann, J. (2005). *Teaching academic writing: A toolkit for higher education*. London: Routledge.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education*. New York: Routledge.

Connor, U. (1996). *Contrastive rhetoric across cultural aspects of second language writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cooper, P. A. (1993). Paradigm shifts in designed instruction: from behaviourism to cognitivism to constructivism. *Educational Psychology Review*, *4*, 165-196.

Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (1993). Introduction: How a genre approach to literacy can transform the way writing is taught. *The Power of Literacy: A Genre Approach to Teaching Writing*, 1-21.

Council of Europe. (2018). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment.* Companion volume with new descriptors. *https://rm. coe. int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989.*

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Choosing among five traditions: Qualitative inquiry and research design*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). USA: SAGE Publications.

Daiute, C., & Dalton, B. (1993). Collaboration between children learning to write: Can novices be masters? *Cognition and Instruction*, *10*(4), 281-333.

Dale, H. (1994). Collaborative writing interactions in one ninth-grade classroom. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 87(6), 334-344.

David, M., & Sutton, C.A. (2011). *Social research: An introduction* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

De Groot, A. M., & Kroll, J. F. (1997). *Tutorials in bilingualism: Psycholinguistic perspectives.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Defazio, J., Jones, J., Tennant, F., & Hook, S. A. (2010). Academic literacy: The importance and impact of writing across the curriculum. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, *10*(2), 34-47.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). *Qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Sage: London.

Diener, E., & Crandall, R. (1978). *Ethics in social and behavioral research*. Chicago: U Chicago Press.

DiPardo, A., & Freedman, S. W. (1988). Peer response groups in the writing classroom: Theoretic foundations and new directions. *Review of Educational Research*, *58*(2), 119-149.

Dobao, A. F., & Blum, A. (2013). Collaborative writing in pairs and small groups: Learners' attitudes and perceptions. *System*, *41*(2), 365-378.

Donato, R. (1994). Collective scaffolding in second language learning. In J. Lantolf, & G. Appel (Eds.), *Vygotskian approaches to second language research* (pp. 33-56). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Durako, J., Stanchi, K. M., Edelman, D., & Amdur, B. M. (1997). From product to process: Evolution of legal writing program. *University of Pittsburgh Law Review, 58*(3), 719-762.

Dwyer, S. C., & Buckle, J. L. (2009). The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *8*(1), 54-63.

Elbow, P. (1998). *Writing with power: Techniques for mastering the writing process*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R., & Yuan, F. (2004). The effects of planning on fluency, complexity, and accuracy in second language narrative writing. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *26*(1), 59-84.

Emig, J. (1971). *The writing process of twelfth graders*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Evans, S., & Green, C. (2007). Why EAP is necessary: A survey of Hong Kong tertiary students. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *6*(3), 3-17.

Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. London: Longman.

Feez, S., & Joyce, H. (2002). *Text based syllabus design*. Sydney: Mcquaire.

Ferris, D. R. (1999). The case for grammar correction in L2 writing classes: A response to Truscott. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *8*(1), 1-11.

Ferris, D. R. (2003). *Response to student writing: Implications for second language students*. London: Routledge.

Fetterman, D. M. (1998). Webs of meaning: Computer and internet resources for educational research and instruction. *Educational Researcher*, *27*(3), 22-30.

Fisher, R., Cavanagh, J., & Bowles, A. (2011). Assisting transition to university: Using assessment as a formative learning tool. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 36*(2), 225-237.

Flower, L., & Hayes, J. R. (1980). The cognition of discovery: Defining a rhetorical problem. *College Composition and Communication, 31*(1), 21-32.

Foo, B., & Richards, C. (2004). English in Malaysia. *RELC Journal, 35*(2), 229-240.

Forest, R. W., & Davis, T. S. (2016). Investigating local sociocultural and institutional contexts for discipline-specific writing. *Discipline-specific writing* (pp. 26-44). London: Routledge.

Freeman, D., & Johnson, K. E. (2005). Response to "language teacher learning and student language learning: Shaping the knowledge base." In D. J. Tedick (Ed.), *Language teacher education: International perspectives on research and practice* (pp. 25-32). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Friedrich, P. (Ed.). (2008). *Teaching academic writing*. London: Continuum.

Fulkerson, R. (2005). Composition at the turn of the twenty-first century. *College Composition and Communication*, 654-687.

Ganobcsik-Williams, L. (2011). Welcome to the inaugural issue of the journal of academic writing: The roles of writing development in higher education and beyond. *Journal of Academic Writing*, *1*(1), ii-iii.

Gardner, A., & Johnson, D. (1997). *Teaching personal experience narrative in the elementary and beyond*. Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona Writing Project Press.

Gass, S. (1997). Input, interaction, and the second language learner. In N. Storch (2013). *Collaborative writing in L2 classrooms*. Great Britain: Short Run Press.

Gebhard, J. G., & Oprandy, R. (1999). *Language teaching awareness: A guide to exploring beliefs and practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gee, J. (1996). *Social linguistics and literacy: Ideology in discourses*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Genesee, F. (1994). Integrating language and content: Lessons from immersion. *Education Practice Report, 11*. Retrieved from https://escholarship.org/content/qt61c8k7kh/qt61c8k7kh.pdf.

Geertz, C. (1973). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. *Turning points in qualitative research: Tying knots in a handkerchief*, 3, 143-168.

Ghabool, N. (2012). Investigating Malaysian ESL students' writing problems on conventions, punctuation, and language use at secondary school level. *Journal of Studies in Education*, *2*(3), 130-143.

Gill, S. K. (2002). *International communication: English language challenges for Malaysia*. Serdang: Universiti Putra Malaysia Press.

Gill, S. K. (2004). Language policy in Malaysia: Reversing direction. *Language Policy, 4*(3), 241-260.

Gill, S. K. (2008). Change in language policy in Malaysia: The reality of implementation in public universities. *Current Issues in Language Planning, 7*(1), 82-94.

Goldstein, L. (2006). Feedback and revision in second language writing: Contextual, teacher, and student variables. *Feedback in Second Language Writing: Contexts and Issues*, 185-205.

Gourlay, L. (2009). Threshold practices: Becoming a student through academic literacies. *London Review of Education, 7*(2), 181-192.

Grabe, W., & Kaplan, R. (1996). *Theory and practice of writing*. London: Addison Wesley Longman.

Graham, S., Gillespie, A., & McKeown, D. (2013). Writing: Importance, development, and instruction. *Reading and Writing, 26*(1), 1-15.

Griffith, A. I. (1998). Insider/outsider: Epistemological privilege and mothering work. *Human Studies, 21*, 361-376.

Gruber, H. E., & Vonèche, J. J. (Eds.). (1977). *The essential Piaget*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Halcomb, E. J., & Davidson, P. M. (2006). Is verbatim transcription of interview data always necessary? *Applied Nursing Research, 19*(1), 38-42.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning*. London: Edward Arnold.

Hammersley, M. (Ed.). (1993). *Social research: Philosophy, politics and practice*. London: Sage.

Hammond, J. (1992). *English for social purposes: A handbook for teachers of adult literacy*. Macquarie University, Sydney: National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research.

Harris, Z. (1968). *Mathematical structures of language: Interscience tracts in pure and applied mathematics*. New York: Willey & Sons.

Hassan, M. K., & Akhand, M. M. (2010). Approaches to writing in ESL/EFL context: balancing product and process in writing class at tertiary level. *Journal of MELTA, 15*(1-2), 77-88.

Hausfather, S. J. (1996). Vygotsky and schooling: Creating a social context for learning. *Action in Teacher Education, 18*(2), 1-10.

Heath, S. B., & Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life and work in communities and classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Heng, C. S., & Tan, H. (2006). English for mathematics and science: Current Malaysian language-in-education policies and practices. *Language and Education, 20*(4), 306-321.

Heng, T., & Chan, S. (1996). The process approach to writing: The need for an encounter. Paper presented at *MELTA Biennial International Conference*, Kuala Lumpur

Hertz, R. (1997). *Reflexivity and voice*. London: Sage.

Hiew, W. (2012). English language teaching and learning issues in Malaysia: Learners' perceptions via Facebook dialogue journal. *Researchers World, 3*(1), 11-19.

Hill, H. C., Rowan, B., & Ball, D. L. (2005). Effects of teachers' mathematical knowledge for teaching on student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal, 42*, 371–406.

Hill, M. (1991). Writing summaries promotes thinking and learning across the curriculum: But why are they so difficult to write?. *Journal of Reading, 34*(7), 536-539.

Hinkel, E. (2006). Current perspectives on teaching the four skills. *TESOL Quarterly, 40* (1), 109-131.

Hirvela, A., & Belcher, D. (2001). Coming back to voice: The multiple voices and identities of mature multilingual writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *10*(1-2), 83-106.

Hng, H. Y. (1998). *CEO Malaysia: Strategy in nation-building*. Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications.

Hong, L., Convertino, G., & Chi, E. H. (2011, July). Language matters in twitter: A large scale study. In Fifth international AAAI conference on weblogs and social media meaning. *Applied Linguistics*, *6*(1), 71-90.

Horowitz, D. M. (1986). What professors actually require: Academic tasks for the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, *20*(3), 445-462.

Hull, G., & Rose, M. (1989). Rethinking remediation: Toward a social-cognitive understanding of problematic reading and writing. *Written Communication*, *6*(2), 139-154.

Hyland, F. (2000). ESL writers and feedback: Giving more autonomy to students. *Language Teaching Research*, *4*(1), 33-54.

Hyland, K. (2002). EAP: Issues and directions. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 1*(1), 1-12.

Hyland, K. (2003). Genre-based pedagogies: A social response to process. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *12*, 17-29.

Hyland, K. (2007). Genre pedagogy: Language, literacy and l2 writing instruction. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *16*(3), 148-164.

Hyland, K., & Guinda, C. S. (Eds.), (2012). *Stance and voice in written academic genres.* Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hyland, K., & Hyland, F. (2006). Feedback on second language students' writing. *Language Teaching*, *39*(2), 83-101.

Horner, B. (1999). *"The birth" of "basic writing"* In B. Horner & Z. L. Min (Eds.), *Representing the 'other': basic writers and the teaching of basic writing*. Urbana: ILNCTE.

Ida Fatimawati, A, B. (2012). *A study on the relationship between Malaysian learners' self-concept in academic writing and their engagement in one higher learning institution.* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) New Zealand: Massey University.

Isarji, H. S., Ainol Madziah, Z., Mohamed Saharin, & Mohd Azmi, O. (2008). The English language proficiency of Malaysian public university students. *Enhancing the quality of higher education through research: Shaping future policy* (pp. 40-65). Kuala Lumpur: The Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia.

Ivanič, R. (1998). *Writing and identity*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Ivanič, R. (2004). Discourses of writing and learning to write. *Language and Education, 18*(3), 220-245.

Ivanič, R., & Lea, M. R. (2006). *New contexts, new challenges: The teaching of writing in UK higher education.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Irvin, L. L. (2010). What is "academic" writing? *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*, 1, 3-17.

Jacob, E. (1999). *Cooperative learning in context: An educational innovation in everyday classrooms*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Jagues, D. (1997). *Learning in groups*. USA: Routledge.

James, M., Applefield, R., & Mahnaz, M. (2001). *Constructivism in theory and practice: Toward a better understanding.* Watson School of Education: The University of North Carolina at Wilmington. http://doi. org/10.1007/s13398-014-0173-7.2.

Jarrell, D. (2000). Authentic materials for low-level writing classes. *Language Teaching Ideas*, *5*(1), 4-5.

Jenkins, J. (2000). *The phonology of English as an international language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Johns, A. (2003). Genre and ESL/EFL composition instruction. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Exploring the dynamics of second language writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Johnson, K. E. (2006). The sociocultural turn and its challenges for second language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, *40*(1), 235-257.

Jones, J. S., & Watt, S. (2011). *Ethnography in social science practice.* London and New York: Routledge.

Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia. (1995). *Sukatan pelajaran sekolah rendah bahasa Inggeris*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia. (2014). *Buku penerangan dasar memartabatkan bahasa Malaysia memperkukuhkan bahasa Inggeris (The handbook of upholding the*

Malay language and strengthening command of English policy). Putrajaya: Kementerian Malaysia. Retrieved from http://www.moe.gov.my on 26/3/2020.

Kho, G. W., Wong, T. W., & Chuah, K. M. (2013). Writing difficulties faced by Politeknik Kuching Sarawak commerce diploma students in doing their assignments. *The Asian Journal of English Language & Pedagogy, 1*, 90-101.

Kim, K. (2013). Teaching approaches and student involvement in learning to write: Gap between Korean students' expectations and teaching approaches. *Sage OPEN*. doi: 10.1177/2158244013490702.

Kirkgoz, Y. (2009). Learners' and lecturers' perceptions of the effectiveness of foreign language instruction in an English-medium university in Turkey. *Teaching in Higher Education, 14*(1), 81-93. doi:10.1080/13562510802602640.

Kirkpatrick, T. A. (2011). *Internationalization or englishization: Medium of instruction in today's universities.* Hong Kong: The Hong Kong Institute of Education.

Knudsen, S. (2014). Students are doing it for themselves–'the problem-oriented problem' in academic writing in the humanities. *Studies in Higher Education, 39*(10), 1838-1859.

Koch, T., & Harrington, A. (1998). Reconceptualizing rigour: The case for reflexivity. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 28*(4), 882-890.

Kovacic, A., Kirinic, V., & Divjak, B. (2009). Linguistic competence in tertiary-level instruction in English and its relevance for student mobility. *Journal of Information and Organisational Sciences, 33*(1), 25-37.

Krause, K. L., & Coates, H. (2008). Students' engagement in first-year university. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 33*(5), 493-505.

Kroll, B. (2001). Considerations for teaching an ESL/EFL writing course. *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language, 3*, 219-232.

Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2009). Planning the focus group study. *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research, 24*(5), 17-33.

Lamb, B. C. (1994). *A national survey of UK undergraduates' standards of English.* London: Queens's English Society.

Lantolf, J. P. (Ed.). (2000). *Sociocultural theory and second language learning.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lavelle, E., & Zuercher, N. (2001). The writing approaches of university students. *Higher Education, 42*(3), 373-391.

Lea, M. R. (1999). Academic literacies and learning in higher education: Constructing knowledge through texts and experience. *Students Writing in the University: Cultural and Epistemological Issues*, 103-124.

Lea, M. R., & Street, B. V. (1998). Student writing in higher education: An academic literacies approach. *Studies in Higher Education*, *23*(2), 157-172.

Lea, M. R., & Street, B. V. (2000). Student writing and staff feedback in higher education: An academic literacies approach. In M. R. Lea & B. Stierer (Eds.), *Student writing in higher education* (pp. 32-46). London: Open University Press.

Lea, M. R., & Street, B. V. (2006). The "academic literacies" model: Theory and applications. *Theory into Practice*, *45*(4), 368-377.

Lea, M. R., & Stierer, B. (2000). (Eds.) *Student writing in higher education: New contexts*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

LeCompte, M. D., & Schensul, J. J. (1999). *Designing and conducting ethnographic research (Ethnographer's toolkit, No.1)*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira.

Lee, M. B. (2001). *Language learning strategies, EFL performance, and gender: A synchronized look at the forest and the trees.* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) United States: University of Kansas.

Lee, S. K. (2003). Multiple identities in a multicultural world: a Malaysian perspective. *Journal of Language, Identity and Education*, *2*(3), 137-158.

Leki, I., & Carson, J. (1997). Completely different worlds: EAP and the writing experiences of ESL students in university courses. *TESOL Quarterly*, *31*(1), 39-69.

Leki, I., Cumming, A., & Silva, T. (2008). Composing processes. *A Synthesis of Research on Second Language Writing in English*, 118-138.

Lillis, T. (2001). *Student writing: Access, regulation, desire*. London: Routledge.

Lillis, T. (2003). Student writing as 'academic literacies': Drawing on Bakhtin to move from critique to design. *Language and Education, 17*(3), 192-207.

Lillis, T., & Tuck, J. (2016). Academic literacies: A critical lens on writing and reading in the academy. *The Routledge handbook of English for academic purposes*. London: Routledge.

Lillis, T., & Turner, J. (2001). Student writing in higher education: Contemporary confusion, traditional concerns. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *6*(1), 57-68.

Long, M. H. (1983). Training the second language teacher as classroom researcher. *Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics*, 281-297.

Long, M. H. (1996). The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition. In W. C. Ritchie & T. K. Bhatia (Eds.), *Handbook of second language acquisition,* (pp. 413-468). New York: Academic.

Louth, R., McAllister, C., & McAllister, H. A. (1993). The effects of collaborative writing techniques on freshman writing and attitudes. *The Journal of Experimental Education, 61*(3), 215-224.

Lowe, H., & Cook, A. (2003). Mind the gap: Are students prepared for higher education?. *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 27*(1), 53-76.

Macaro, E., & Wingate, U. (2004). From sixth form to university: motivation and transition among high achieving state-school language students. *Oxford Review of Education, 30*(4), 467-488.

MacDonald, S. P. (1987). Problem definition in academic writing. *College English, 49*(3), 315-331.

Mahaletchumy, N. (1994). *What do ESL teachers do when they say they are teaching writing?* (Unpublished Master's thesis). Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Malaya.

Mahathir Mohamad (1991). *Sixth Malaysia planning 1991-1995.* Kuala Lumpur: National Printing Department.

Malaysian Examinations Council (2011). Retrieved from http://webmpm.mpm.edu.my/bi/main.php.

Mann, S. J. (2008). *Study, power and the university*. Maidenhead: McGraw Hill & Open University Press.

Maros, M., Tan, K. H., & Salehuddin, K. (2007). Interference in learning English: Grammatical errors in English essay writing among rural Malay secondary school students in Malaysia. *Journal e-Bangi, 2*(2), 1-15.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G.B. (2006). *Designing qualitative research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mary, N. M. (2002). An academic writer in Kenya: The transition from secondary school to the university. In F. David & R. David (2002). *Writing and learning in cross-national perspectives: Transitions from secondary to higher education.* Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English.

Matsuda, P. K. (2003). Basic writing and second language writers: Toward an inclusive definition. *Journal of Basic Writing*, 67-89.

Matsuda, P. K., & De Pew, K. E. (2002). Early second language writing: An introduction. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *4*(11), 261-268.

Matsuda, P. K., & Silva, T. J. (Eds.). (2001). *On second language writing*. New York: Erlbaum Associates.

Matsuda, P. K., & Tardy, C. M. (2007). Voice in academic writing: The rhetorical construction of author identity in blind manuscript review. *English for Specific Purposes, 26*(2), 235-249.

Matsumoto, K. (1995). Research paper writing strategies of professional Japanese EFL writers. *TESL Canada Journal*, 17-27.

Matthews, R. S., Cooper, J. L., Davidson, N., & Hawkes, P. (1995). Building bridges between cooperative and collaborative learning. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, *27*(4), 35-40.

Maybin, J. (Ed.). (1994). *Language and literacy in social practice: Multilingual matters*. Clevedon: The Open University.

Maybin, J. (2014). Teaching Writing Process or Genre? In S. Brindly (Ed.), *Teaching Writing*. London: The Open University.

McEwan, M. P. (2015). Understanding Student Transition to University: the expectations of essay writing for students and staff. *International of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 29*(3), 511-523.

McKeachie, W. J. (1988). The need for study strategy training. ln C. E. Weinstein, E. T. Goetz, & P. A. Alexander (Eds.), *Learning and study strategies: Issues in assessment, instruction and evaluation* (pp. 3-9). San Diego: Academic Press.

McKenna, S. (2004). Lecturers' discourses about the interplay between language and learning: Research in higher education. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 18*(2), 278-287.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expended sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Ming, T. S., & Alias, A. (2007). Investigating readiness for autonomy: A comparison of Malaysian ESL undergraduates of three public universities. *Journal of Reflections on English Language Teaching*, *6*(1), 1-18.

Minichiello, V., & Kottler, J. A. (2010). *Qualitative journeys: Student and mentor experiences with research*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Ministry of Education Malaysia. (1995). *Sekolah wawasan: Konsep dan pelaksanaan*. Kuala Lumpur.

Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2008). *Education in Malaysia: A journey to excellence*. Malaysia: Educational Planning and Research Division.

Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2012). *The Malaysia education blueprint 2013-2025: Preliminary report*. Putrajaya: Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia.

Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia. (2007). *National higher education action plan 2007-2010*. Retrieved from: www.mohe.gov.my.

Mohammadi, M. P., Abidin, M. J. Z., & Cheong, L. F. (2012). The effect of process writing practice on the writing quality of form one students: A case study. *Asian Social Science, 8*(3), 88-99.

Morra, A. M., & Asis, M. I. (2009). The effect of audio and written teacher responses on EFL student revision. *Journal of College Reading and Learning, 39*(2), 68-81.

Murray, D. M. (1972). Teach writing as a process not product. *The Leaflet, 71*(3), 11-14.

Murray, H. G. (1984). The impact of formative and summative evaluation of teaching in North American universities. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education, 9*(2), 117-132.

Murray, N., & Nallaya, S. (2016). Embedding academic literacies in university program curricula: A case study. *Studies in Higher Education, 41*(7), 1296-1312.

Musa, N. C., Lie, K. Y., & Azman, H. (2012). Exploring English language learning and teaching in Malaysia. *GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies*, *12*(1), 35-51.

Mustapha, R. (2009). Social integration among multi-ethnic students at selected Malaysian universities in Peninsular Malaysia: A survey of campus social climate. *Asean Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, *1*(1), 35-44.

Nambiar, R. M. K. (2007). Enhancing academic literacy among tertiary learners: A Malaysian experience. *3L Journal of Language Teaching, Linguistics and Literature, 13*, 1-19.

Nazim, M., & Ahmad, J. (2012). Developing writing skills: A practical remedy of common writing problems among students of writing skills courses at preparatory year. *Journal of Language, 12*(3), 348-360.

Nespor, J. (1987). The role of beliefs in the practice of teaching. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 19*(4), 317-328.

Nik Suryani, N. Y. (2003). *The use of metacognitive strategies in an EAP/ ESP lesson.* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Malaya.

Nikitina, L., & Furuoka, F. (2012). Sharp focus on soft skills: A case study of Malaysian university students' educational expectations. *Education Research Policy, 11,* 207–224. doi: 10.1007/s10671-011-9119-4.

Nordin, S. M. (2017). The best of two approaches: Process/genre-based approach to teaching writing. *The English Teacher, 11,* 75-85.

Nordin, S. M., Halib, M., Ghazali, Z., & Mohd Ali, R. M. (2010). Error correction and students' perception on teachers' written feedback: An exploratory study on L2 learners in a Malaysian university. *International Journal of Learning, 17*(2), 54-64.

Nor Liza Ali (2013). A changing paradigm in language planning: English-medium instruction policy at the tertiary level in Malaysia. *Current Issues in Language Planning. 14*(1), 73-92. doi: 10.1080/14664208.2013.775543.

Norton, L. S., Keenan, P., Williams, K., Elander, J., & McDonough, G. (2009, September). Helping students make the transition from A level to degree level writing: A staged action research approach. *BERA Annual Conference, Manchester*, 2-5.

Nunan, D. (1991). *Language teaching methodology* (vol. 192). New York: Prentice Hall.

Nunan, D. (1999). *Second language teaching and learning*. London: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Oliver, D. G., Serovich, J. M., & Mason, T. L. (2005). Constraints and opportunities with interview transcription: Towards reflection in qualitative research. *Social Forces, 84*(2), 1273-1289.

Osman, H. (2004). Genre-based instruction for ESP. *The English Teacher, 33*, 13-29.

Osman, W. H., & Bakar, A. L. A. (2009). Learning to write an academic paper among medical students of Universiti Malaysia Sabah. *Proceedings of the 2nd ICTL (2009) INTI University College*, 2, 1-21.

Pahl, H., & Rowsell, J. (2012). *Literacy and education: Understanding the new literacy studies in the classroom.* London: SAGE.

Palincsar, A. S. (1998). Social constructivist perspectives on teaching and learning. *Annual Review of Psychology, 49*(1), 345-375.

Palmer, C. (2010). Observing with a focus: Field notes and data recording. In J. S. Jones, & S. Watt (Eds.), *Ethnography in social science practice*. London & New York: Routledge.

Palpanadan, S., Ismail, F., & Salam, A.R. (2015). Role of model essays in developing students writing skills in Malaysian schools: A review of literature. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 6*(2), 56-61.

Panhwar, A. H., Ansari, S., & Ansari, K. (2016). Sociocultural theory and its role in the development of language pedagogy. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies, 7*(6), 183-188.

Parveen, S., Iqbal, A., & Javaid, Z. (2018). A comparative study of process, product and process genre theory in writing of essay at intermediate level. *European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences, 7*(4), 681-689.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Paxton, M. (2012) Student voice as a methodological issue in academic literacies research. *Higher Education Research & Development, 31*(3), 381-391. doi: 10.1080/07294360.2011.634382.

Pennycook, A. (1989). The concept of method, interested knowledge, and the politics of language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly, 23*, 589–618.

Pennycook, A. (2001). *Critical applied linguistics: A critical introduction*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Phillipson, R. (1992). ELT: the native speaker's burden?. *ELT Journal, 46*(1), 12-18.

Pianko, S. (1979). A description of the composing processes of college freshman writers. *Research in the Teaching of English*, *13*(1), 5-22.

Pica, T. (1994). Review article: Research on negotiation: What does it reveal about second language learning conditions, processes and outcomes? In N. Storch (2013), *Collaborative writing in L2 classrooms*. Great Britain: Short Run Press.

Pillai, S., Khan M. H., Ibrahim, I. S., & Raphael, S. (2012). Enhancing employability through industrial training in the Malaysia context. *Higher Education, 63*(2), 187-204.

Pincas, A. (1982). *Teaching English writing*. London: Macmillan Press.

Polio, C., & Gass, S. M. (1998). The role of interaction in native speaker comprehension of non-native speaker speech. *The Modern Language Journal, 82*(3), 308-319.

Polly, D., Allman, B., Casto, A., & Norwood, J. (2017). Sociocultural perspectives of learning. *Foundations of Learning and Instructional Design Technology,* 1-5. Retrieved from http://bit.ly/SocioculturalLearning on 12/4/2018.

Postlethwaite, T. N., & Thomas, R. M. (2014). *Schooling in the ASEAN region: Primary and secondary education in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Potter, J. (1996). *Representing reality: Discourse, rhetoric and social construction.* London: Sage.

Prior, P. (2006). A sociocultural theory of writing. *Handbook of writing research* (pp. 54-66), New York & London: The Guilford Press.

Puteh, S. N., Rahamat, R., & Karim, A. A. (2010). Writing in the second language: Support and help needed by the low achievers. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 7, 580-587.

Rahmah M. R. (1999). *The effects of planning on ESL/EFL students' performance.* UiTM, Shah Alam: Institute of Research, Development and Commercialization.

Raimes, A. (1983). *Techniques in teaching writing*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Raimes, A. (1985). What unskilled ESL students do as they write: A classroom study of composing. *TESOL Quarterly*, *19*(2), 229-258.

Rajadurai, J. (2010). “Malays are expected to speak Malay”: Community ideologies, language use and the negotiation of identities. *Journal of Language, Identity and Education, 9,* 91-106.

Ransdell, S., & Barbier, M. L. (2002). An introduction to new directions for research in L2 writing. In G. Rijlaarsdam, S. Ransdell, & M . L. Barbier (Eds.), *Studies in writing: New directions for research in L2 writing* (pp. 1-10). Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Ransdell, S., & Levy, C. M. (1996). Working memory constraints on writing quality and fluency. In C. M. Levy & S. Ransdell (Eds.), *The science of writing: Theories, methods, individual differences, and applications* (pp. 93-105). New York & London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Raoofi, S. (2014). *L2 writing self-efficacy, task-value, and strategies of Malaysian undergraduate students.* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) Serdang: Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Ravitch, S. M., & Riggan, M. (2016). *Reason & rigor: How conceptual frameworks guide research.* London: Sage Publications.

Raymond, E. (2000). Cognitive characteristics. *Learners with mild disabilities* (pp. 169-201). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, A Pearson Education Company.

Razianna, A. R. (2000). *Learners' understanding of the experiences of learning English.* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) Exeter, UK: Exeter University.

Reid, J. (1994). Responding to ESL students' texts: The myths of appropriation. *TESOL Quarterly*, *28*(2), 273-292.

Riley, P. (1997). The guru and the conjurer: Aspects of counselling for self-access. In P. Benson & P. Voller (Eds.), *Autonomy and independence in language learning* (pp. 114−131). New York: Longman.

Riswanto, R. (2016). Improving the students' ability in writing report genre through mind mapping at junior high schools in South Sumatera, Indonesia. *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Science, 2*(1), 1-18.

Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development.* Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Rohayah, N., & Naginder, K. (2004). Process vs product: Where should the focus be? *39th RELC International Seminar on Innovative Approaches to Reading & Writing Instruction, Singapore.*

Rose, M. (1980). Rigid rules, inflexible plans, and the stifling of language: A cognitivist analysis of writer's block. *College Composition and Communication, 31*(4), 389-401.

Russell, F. A. (2017). The role of the English learner facilitator in developing teacher capacity for the instruction of English learners. *Teachers and Teaching*, *23*(3), 312-331.

Russell, D. R., Lea, M., Parker, J., Street, B., & Donahue, T. (2009). Exploring notions of genre in "academic literacies" and "writing across the curriculum": Approaches across countries and context. In C. Bazerman (Ed.) (2005), *Genre in a changing world: Perspectives on writing* (pp. 459-491). Colorado: Clearinghouse/Parlor Press.

Saeed, M., Varghese, M., Holst, M., & Ghazali, K. (2018). Student perspectives of medium of instruction in Malaysia. *English Medium Instruction Programmes: Perspectives from South East Asian Universities*, 70-86.

Saeidi, M., & Sahebkheir, F. (2011). The effect of model essays on accuracy and complexity of EFL learners' writing performance. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research, 10*(1), 130-137.

Saldana, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researcher*. London: Sage Publications.

Sallang, H., & Ling, Y. L. (2019). The importance of immediate constructive feedback on students' instrumental motivation in speaking in English. *Britain International of Linguistics Arts and Education (BIoLAE) Journal, 1*(2), 1-7.

Salomon, G. (Ed.). (1993). *Distributed cognitions: Psychological and educational considerations*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Santos, T. (1988). Professors' reactions to the academic writing of non-native speaking students. *TESOL Quarterly, 22*(1), 69–90.

Santos, T. (1992). Ideology in composition: L1 and ESL. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 1*(1), 1-15.

Sarudin, I., Zubairi, A. M., Nordin, M. S., & Omar, M. A. (2008). The English language proficiency of Malaysian public university students. *Enhancing the Quality of Higher Education through Research: Shaping Future Policy*, 40-65.

Saunders, W. M. (1989). Collaborative writing tasks and peer interaction. *International Journal of Educational Research, 13*, 101-112.

Scardamalia, M., & Bereiter, C. (1991). Literate expertise. *Toward a general Theory of Expertise: Prospects and Limits*, 172-194.

Schmitt, N. (2008). Instructed second language vocabulary learning. *Language Teaching Research, 12*(3), 329-363.

Schwandt, T. A. (1994) Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. In Denzin & Lincoln (1994), *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues*. London: Sage.

Selvaratnam, V. (2019). Malaysia: National language policy and employability. *International Higher Education, 96*, 16-18.

Sert, N. (2008). The language of instruction dilemma in the Turkish context. *System, 36*(2), 156-171. doi: 10.1016/j.system.2007.11.006.

Shafie, L. S., Osman, N., & Darus, N. A. (2011). The sociolinguistics of texted English among bilingual college students in Malaysia. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, *1*(16), 258-264.

Shamsudin, S., & Mahady, N. R. A. (2010). Corpus linguistics based error analysis of first year Universiti Teknologi Malaysia students' writing. *Corpus Linguistics*, 1-7.

Sheldon, E. (2009). From one to another: Discursive construction of self-representation in English and Castilian Spanish research articles. *English for Specific Purposes*, *28*(4), 251-265.

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22, 63-75.

Silva, T. (1992). L1 vs L2 writing; ESL graduate students' perceptions. *TESL Canada Journal*, 27-47.

Silva, T. (1993). Toward an understanding of the distinct nature of L2 writing: The ESL research and its implications. *TESOL Quarterly*, *27*(4), 657-677.

Silvia, P. J. (2007). *How to write a lot: A practical guide to productive academic writing*. New York: American Psychological Association.

Simons, H. (2009). *Case study research in practice*. London: SAGE Publications.

Simpson, J. (2017). Responding to our students' writing: What is good for us and for them?. *HOW Journal*, *10*(1), 45-52.

Sirat, M., Pandian, A., Muniandy, B., Mohamed Sultan, F. M., Haroon, H. A., Kabilan, M. K., & Abdul Razak, R. R. (2008). *The university curriculum and the employment of graduates.* Malaysia: Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia.

Siti Zuraina Abdul Majid, Muhammad Yusoff Hashim, Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, Lee, K. H., Ahmad Fawzi Basri, & Zainal Abidin Wahid. (1999). *Sejarah Malaysia Tingkatan 5*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

Smith, K. (2004). School to university: An investigation into the experience of first-year students of English at British universities. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, *3*(1), 81 – 93.

Souba, R., & Chuah, K. M. (2011). The Malaysian University English Test (MUET) and its use for placement purposes: a predictive validity study. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, *8*(2), 234-245.

Spack, R. (1988). Initiating ESL students into the academic discourse community: How far should we go?. *TESOL quarterly*, *22*(1), 29-51.

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stake, R. E. (2010). *Qualitative research: Studying how things work*. New York: Guilford Press.

Stapa, S. H., & Majid, A. H. A. (2012). The use of first language in developing ideas in second language writing. *American Journal of Social Issues & Humanities*, *2*(3), 148-151.

Storch, N. (2002). Patterns of interaction in ESL pair work. *Language Learning, 52*(1), 119-158.

Storch, N. (2013). *Collaborative writing in L2 classrooms*. Great Britain: Short Run Press.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedure and techniques.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Street, B. V. (Ed.). (1993). *Cross-cultural approaches to literacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Street, B. V. (2005). At last: Recent applications of new literacy studies in educational contexts. *Research in the Teaching of English*, *39*(4), 417-423.

Street, B. V. (2015). Academic writing: Theory and practice. *Journal of Educational Issues, 1*(2), 110-116.

Street, B. V., & Street, B. B. (1984). *Literacy in theory and practice* (vol. 9). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (1998). Interaction and second language learning: Two immersion students working together. *The Modern Language Journal, 82*(3), 320-337.

Swales, J. (1990). Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2004). *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills* (vol. 1). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Takahashi, T. (1989). The influence of the listener on L2 speech. *Variation in Second Language Acquisition*, 1, 245-279.

Tan, K. E., & Miller, J. (2007). Writing in English in Malaysian high schools: The discourse of examinations. *Language and Education, 21*(2), 124-140.

Taylor, H. J. (2002). Insider knowledge: Issues in insider research. *Nursing Standard, 16*(46), 33-35.

Thang, S. M., Wong, F. F., Noor, N. M., Mustaffa, R., Mahmud, N., & Ismail, K. (2012). Using a blended approach to teach English for academic purposes: Malaysian students' perceptions of redesigned course materials. *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning*, *7*(2), 142-153.

Thorne, S. (2016). *Interpretive description: Qualitative research for applied practice* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Tinto, V. (1988). Stages of student departure: Reflections on the longitudinal character of student leaving. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *59*(4), 438-455.

Too, W. K. (2017). English language teaching and policies at the tertiary level in Malaysia. In E. S. Park & B. Spolsky (Eds.), *English education at the tertiary level in Asia* (pp. 109-129). Abingdon: Routledge.

Trafford, V., & Leshem, S. (2008). *Stepping stones to achieving your doctorate: By focusing on your viva from the start: Focusing on your viva from the start*. United Kingdom: McGraw-Hill Education.

Turner, J. C., & Tajfel, H. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, *5*, 7-24.

Undergraduate course booklet: Bachelor degree programme session 2018/2019 (2018). *The academic affairs division*. Malaysia: University of Nusantara.

Research Ethics Policy. (2018). University of East Anglia. Retrieved from: https://www.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/8216919/University+Research+Ethics+Policy+-+25+09+18.pdf/a2918689-109c-447d-a2e8-5e3ff2e52d28.

UoN Official Website. (2017). Retrieved from http://www.UoN.edu.my.

Van Der Stuyf, R. R. (2002). Scaffolding as a teaching strategy. *Adolescent Learning and Development*, *52*(3), 5-18.

Varonis, E. M., & Gass, S. (1985). Non-native/non-native conversations: A model for negotiation. *Applied Linguistics*, *6*(1), 71-90.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wahiza, W. (2012). *English language academic literacies for employability of Malaysian undergraduate students*. (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) Australia: University of Western Australia.

Wahiza, W., O'Neille, M., & Chapman, A. (2012). *Exploring academic literacies of ESL undergraduate students.* Paper presented at *International Conference of Innovation Research in a changing and challenging World at Phuket, Thailand*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Wahiza_Wahi/publication/258201707_Exploring_academic_literacies_of_ESL_undergraduate_students/links/56b0162d08ae8e37214d17c4.pdf.

Walsh, S. (2006). Talking the talk of the TESOL classroom. *ELT Journal*, *60*(2), 133-141.

Warren, D. (2002). Curriculum design in a context of widening participation in higher education. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, *1*(1), 85-99.

Wei, L., & Martin, P. (2009). Conflicts and tensions in classroom codeswitching: An introduction. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *12*(2), 117-122.

Wenger, E. (1998). Communities of practice: Learning as a social system. *Systems Thinker*, 9(5), 2-3.

Wertsch, J. V. (1991). *Voices of the mind: A sociocultural approach to mediated action.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Why PPSMI is Abolished. (2011). *The Star*. Retrieved from http://www.thestar.com.my.

Widdowson, H. (2003). *Defining issues in English language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wigglesworth, G., & Storch, N. (2012). What role for collaboration in writing and writing feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *21*(4), 364-374.

Williams, A., & Williams, P. J. (1997). Problem-based learning: An appropriate methodology for technology education. *Research in Science & Technological Education, 15*(1), 91-103.

Winch, C., & Wells, P. (1995). The quality of student writing in higher education: a cause for concern? *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 75-87.

Wingate, U. (2012). Using academic literacies and genre-based models for academic writing instruction: a 'literacy' journey. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 11*(1), 26-37.

Wingate, U. (2018). Academic literacy across the curriculum: Towards a collaborative instructional approach. *Language Teaching*, *51*(3), 349-364.

Wingate, U., & Tribble, C. (2012). The best of both worlds? Towards an English for academic purposes/academic literacies writing pedagogy. *Studies in Higher Education, 37*(4), 481-495.

Winterson, J., & Russ, M. (2009). Understanding the transition from school to university in music and music technology. *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education*, *8*(3), 339–354.

Wolcott, H. F. (1994). *Transforming qualitative data: Description, analysis, and interpretation*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Wolcott, H. F. (2008). *Writing up qualitative research.* Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Wood, D., Bruner, J., & Ross, G. (1993). The role of tutoring in problem solving. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 17,* 89-100.

Wragg, E. C. (1994). *An introduction to classroom observation.* London: Routledge.

Yang, L. F., & Ishak, M. S. A. (2012). Framing controversy over language policy in Malaysia: The coverage of PPSMI reversal (teaching of mathematics and science in English) by Malaysian newspapers. *Asian Journal of Communication*, *22*(5), 449-473.

Yang, M., Badger, R., & Yu, Z. (2006). A comparative study of peer and teacher feedback in a Chinese EFL writing class. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *15*(3), 179-200.

Yang, Q. (2016). *Improving college English writing teaching: From product approach to process-focused approach*. DEStech: Transactions on Social Science, Education and Human Science.

Yesuiah, S. (2016). *Make MUET a must for university admission*. Retrieved from http://www.nst.com.my.

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Yunus, M. M., & Chien, C. H. (2016). The use of mind mapping strategy in Malaysian university English test (MUET) writing. *Creative Education*, *7*(4), 619.

Zaaba, Z., Ramadan, F. I., Anning, I. N. A., Gunggut, H., & Umemoto, K. (2011). Language in-education policy: A study of policy adjustment strategy in Malaysia. *International Journal of Education and Information Technologies*, *5*(2), 157-165.

Zamel, V. (1976). Teaching composition in the ESL classroom: What we can learn from research in the teaching of English. *TESOL Quarterly*, 67-76.

Zamel, V. (1983). The composing processes of advanced ESL students: Six case studies. *TESOL Quarterly*, *17*(2), 165-188.

Zamel, V. (1984). In search of the key: Research and practice in composition. In H. Jean, O. Richard, & P. T. Barry (Eds.), *On TESOL '83: The question of control* (pp. 195-207). Washington DC: TESOL.

Zamel, V. (1985). Responding to student writing. *TESOL Quarterly*, *19*(1), 79-101.

Zhu, W. (2004). Faculty views on the importance of writing, the nature of academic writing, and teaching and responding to writing in the disciplines. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *13*(1), 29-48.

Zulkepli, N. (2012). *An investigation into English as a second language (ESL) learner participation in language learning opportunities: A social view*. (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation.) England: University of Exeter.

Zuridah, M. D., & Stephanie, P., & Mohana. N. (2008). The English language test for academic staff. In M. D. Zuraidah (Ed.), *Enhancing the quality of higher education through research: Shaping future policy* (pp. 9-39). Kuala Lumpur: The Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia. 9-39.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

1. MUET format and weighting

Test Component	Code	Time Allocation (minutes)	Maximum Possible Score	Weightage (%)
Listening	**800/1**	**30**	**45**	**15**
Speaking	**800/2**	**30**	**45**	**15**
Reading	**800/4**	**120**	**75**	**45**
Writing	**800/4**	**90**	**75**	**25**

2. Malaysian University English Test (MUET) Grade System

Band	Description
Band 6	Very good user. Very good command of the language. Highly expressive, fluent, accurate and appropriate language; hardly any inaccuracies. Very good understanding of language and contexts.
Band 5	Good user. Good command of the language. Expressive, fluent, accurate and appropriate language but with minor inaccuracies. Good understanding of language and contexts. Functions well in the language.
Band 4	Competent user. Satisfactory command of the language. Satisfactorily expressive and fluent, appropriate language bit with occasional inaccuracies. Satisfactorily understanding of language and contexts. Functions satisfactorily in the language.
Band 3	Modest user. Modest command of the language. Modestly expressive and fluent, appropriate language but with noticeable inaccuracies. Modest understanding of language and contexts. Able to function modestly in the language.
Band 2	Limited user. Limited command of the language. Lacks expressiveness, fluency and appropriacy; inaccurate use of the language and contexts. Limited ability to function in the language.
Band 1	Extremely limited user. Poor command of the language. Unable to use language to express ideas. Inaccurate use of the language resulting in frequent breakdown in communication. Little or poor understanding of language and contexts. Hardly able to function in the language.

(Both adapted from Malaysian University English Test (MUET) by The Malaysian Examinations Council, 2014)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSES
OFFERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, ACADEMY OF MODERN LANGUAGES, UNIVERSITY OF NUSANTARA

DEGREE LEVEL

ELC 400	Preparatory College English
ELC 500	English for Academic Reading
ELC 501	English for Critical Academic Reading
ELC550	English for Academic Writing
ELC 560	English for Executive Summary Writing
ELC 590	English for Oral Presentations
ELC 600	Literary Appreciation
ELC 640	English for Job Application
ELC 650	English for Professional Interaction
EWC 660	English for Proposal Writing
EWC 661	English for Report Writing
EWC 662	English for Business Correspondence
EWC 663	English for Meetings and Discussions

APPENDIX C
(Log – In Search of Participants)

My research log in search of teacher-participants (24th January 2016 – 20th April 2016)

Date	*Plan of Actions*	*Outcomes*
24th Jan 2016	*Wrote an email to the then Dean to request approval to conduct study in the Academy during 2015/2016 Academic Session II that ran from 29th February 2016-19th June 2016*	-
31st Jan 2016	*Resent the request email*	-
1st Feb 2016	*Then Dean replied my email and promised to discuss my request with the Head of Programme*	-
22nd Feb 2016	*Flew home to Malaysia and expected to start collecting data by 7th March 2016 (the second week after the semester resumed)*	*Landed and prepared for all possibilities at the field*
25th Feb 2016	*Called up the officer from the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) on my status of research clearance by the Ministry Higher Education (MOHE)*	*Application approved and collected the letter*
29th Feb 2016	*Met the then Dean of the Academy to gain access and consent to approach the academic writing teachers as my participants – wrote a formal letter to the Dean and attached the letter from EPU and MOHE*	*Dean granted access for data collection – advised me to meet the Coordinator of Management to get a complete list of teachers teaching ELC courses from the English department*
30th Feb – 5th Mar 2016	*-Approached some colleagues and talked about my research and my intention to enter their classroom for data collection* *-Met the Coordinator of Management to have the list of teachers teaching ELC courses* *-Wrote an invitation letter and emailed all ELC teachers*	*--Spoke to ten teachers and three agreed to meet for an initial discussion* *- Three teachers agreed to be interviewed but disagreed to be observed* *-Received not even one reply*
8th Mar 2016	*Met Dr Nana the Resource teacher for ELC550 for a discussion to understand the writing course*	*-To consider ELC550 as an entry for classroom observation – did not get consent*
9th Mar 2016	*Met Mr Zaidi (Resource teacher for ELC 560) and Dr Dalia (Resource teacher for ELC501) for a discussion to understand the courses*	*-To consider both ELC560 and ELC501 as entries for classroom observations – did not get consent*

10th Mar – 23rd Mar 2016	*Made some readings on how to conduct interviews effectively – revisited frames for research questions – approached a few colleagues as my participants*	*-again, agreed to be interviewed with no classroom observations*
24th Mar 2016	*Was doing some reading at the language lab in the morning and one senior lecturer, Mr Eilyas approached and asked about my data collection – I told him that no one teacher has agreed and asked me to explain my data collection procedures*	*Mr Eilyas agreed to be interviewed and observed – invited me to attend his 2pm class on the same day – agreed to the idea and met the students to get their consent as my student-participants*
28th Mar 2016	*Received a text message on my phone from Dr Dalia in the morning. On second thought, she agreed to be observed too – invited me to her classroom for her 12-noon session*	*Met the students to get their consent as my student-participants*
9th Apr 2016	*Met Mrs Raisha my mentor for the very first time to talk about my research intentions*	*At first, she was reluctant to be observed but later agreed to invite me for classroom observation on the 20th April*
20th Apr 2016	*Mrs Raisha took me to her class in her car*	*Met the students to get their consent as my student-participants*

1: Sample Interview Frame for Teacher-Participants
These are the semi-structured interview questions that will be used to participants (probes will be used when deemed necessary).

TEACHER-PARTICIPANTS:

A) GENERAL QUESTIONS ON TEACHERS
Q: Please tell me about your experience to date.

- What academic qualifications do you hold? Where did you receive your qualifications?
- How many years of teaching experience do you have?
- What are the levels (pre-diploma, diploma, degree, masters, PhD) of HE students have you taught?
- What are the English Language proficiency courses have you taught so far?
- What are some of the other professional development and learning courses have you participated in?
- What do you think qualifies a person to become an English university teacher? What makes you believe so?

B) TEACHER'S WRITING EXPERIENCE AS A LEARNER OF ENGLISH
Q: Could you describe how you learned to write in English?

- Can you still recall how you were taught ESL writing in primary/ secondary/tertiary levels?
- Did you have/ follow any specific guidelines to writing in English?
- How would you describe your experience then?
- Were you an effective writer when you work alone or writing with someone would be more helpful? Could you please tell me more about your experience?
- When you prepared an essay with a friend or in a large group, how did you manage to complete it? Could you describe the process?
- How would you evaluate your experience of becoming an L2 writer while writing with another L2 writer? Was it an easy practice?
- What happened to the essay you submitted to your teachers/ lecturers? Did you take it back and do correction? Or just top it off to the pile of essays that you had?
- Did you think feedback given by your teachers/ lecturers were useful?
- What kind of feedback did you remember getting?

C) TEACHER'S TEACHING WRITING EXPERIENCE TO SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS
Q: Can you explain how do you teach writing in second language (L2) in your classroom?

- Is there any specific teaching approach to writing that you use in your classroom?
- How do you engage students to write in their L2?
- How do you help students having difficulties to write in their L2?
- How do you manage reading essay of a big class?

- How do you make the students informed with their writing weaknesses?
- In what way do you think is effective for students learning to write in HE?
- How do you lead the students into the processes of writing at HE?
- What are the challenges you face in teaching writing to L2 learners?

2: Sample Interview Frame for Student-Participants

These are the semi-structured interview questions that will be used to participants (probes will be used when deemed necessary).

STUDENT WRITER-PARTICIPANTS

A) GENERAL QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT WRITERS

Q: Please introduce yourself and your aim for attending this English course this semester.

- What other academic qualifications (certificate, pre-diploma, diploma) do you hold?
- Where did you receive your qualification(s)?
- Have you attended any other English proficiency courses from anywhere else aside from your current institution?
- Do you come from an English speaking background?
- Do you use English with your parents and siblings at home?
- Do you read English reading materials? Do you keep any written journal/ diary in English?
- What do you do to improve your English?
- What do you hope to achieve from this course at the end of this semester?

B) STUDENT WRITER'S EXPERIENCE AS L2 WRITERS IN HE

Q: Could you describe how you learned to write in English?

- Can you still recall how you were taught writing an essay in English in primary/ secondary/tertiary level(s)?
- Did you have to follow any specific guidelines to writing in English?
- Was the approach to teaching writing in schools individually or a pair or a group work more than 3 students?
- How would you describe your experience then?
- What happened to the essay you submitted to your teachers/ lecturers? Did you take it back and do correction? Or just top it off to the pile of essays that you had?
- Did you think feedback given by your teachers/ lecturers were useful?
- How different is it to write now at the HE level?
- What are the difficulties that you face while writing in HE?
- What are the factors that motivate you to write despite of the many tumbling blocks?

C) STUDENT WRITER'S EXPERIENCE TO COLLABORATIVE WRITING IN THEIR SECOND LANGUAGE

Q: Could you tell me about your experience on writing collaboratively in higher education institution?

- What do you think collaborative writing means?
- How do you think working with someone else will improve your writing?
- Have you written any academic essays or any written work in the classroom in English with one of your course mate in the past? Was it during your certificate, pre-diploma or diploma?
- Were you an effective writer when you work alone or writing with someone would be more helpful? Why?
- Are there any benefits to write in your second language with someone else?

- Are there any disadvantages to writing with someone else?
- When you prepared an essay or written work with a friend or in a large group, how did you manage to complete it?
- What happened when you were to ask to write with another friend?
- How would you describe your experience of becoming an L2 writer while writing with another L2 writer? Was it an easy practice?
- What is your experience now writing with someone else at degree level?
- What do you feel the hardest to face while writing? To have good knowledge on the topic that you will write? To write grammatically correct? To know how to make proper citation? To negotiate how to write with you pair? Please elaborate.

D) STUDENT WRITER'S EXPERIENCE TO L2 COLLABORATIVE WRITING FOR ASSESSMENT WORK

Q: Could you explain how do you write an essay collaboratively?

- Are your writing processes the same as the one you adopt when you write alone? What are the differences/ similarities?
- What are some of the features of this type of written work make it hard for you to write with someone else?
- How do you manage your writing workload when working with someone else?
- Please explain the processes that you had to go through while preparing this essay (referring to their analytical essay).
- When you work in pair, what drives you to write? Having enough content related to the topic? Feeling confident with the language tool that you have?

E) STUDENT WRITER'S EXPERIENCE TO L2 WRITING COLLABORATIVELY (QUESTIONS BASED ON LEARNERS' TEXTS)

Q: Could you describe your experience in producing this work with your pair?

- What do you think about your written work?
- What are the strengths?
- What stood out memorably good?
- Why do you think that?
- Are the points/ ideas discussed clearly? How do you know this?
- Is the writing clear, coherent and easy to understand? Is the vocabulary appropriate? Are the grammar rules used appropriately? Could you tell me more?
- What seemed weakest?
- What would you like to further develop?
- What questions do you still have?

EDU ETHICS APPLICATION FEEDBACK 2015-2016

APPLICANT DETAILS	
Name:	Nur Huslinda binti Che Mat
School:	Education and Lifelong Learning
Current Status:	**PG student**
UEA Email address:	N.Che-Mat@uea.ac.uk

EDU Recommendation	
Approved, data collection can begin	✓
Minor revisions/further details required (see feedback below)	
Not Approved, resubmission required (see feedback below)	

EDU REC feedback to applicant: Committee meeting date …17.2.16……

Comments:

On the 17.2.16, the Ethics Committee recommended the following *minor revisions/further details* to be provided in relation to your application:

Application form:
'4.2 Can you clarify how you will ensure that the videoing of the class will ONLY be of the teacher? If you are examining the interactions of the teacher and the students will you not also video them?
4.10 – how can you ensure confidentiality if the details are going to be provided to the institution afterwards? Are the classes sufficiently large so that students are relatively ensured of anonymity? How would this apply to the lecturers? In 4.13 you do note the issue and difference between anonymity and confidentiality and the possibility of lecturers being identifiable.'

These points have now been addressed and it is good to see an explicit explanation of how the video will be focused on the lecturer only in 4.13. Your approach to ensuring confidentiality has now also been described in more detail and matches the explanations on the PIS forms.

PIS lecturers:
Section 5 – we are concerned that if a participant chooses to no longer participate in the project that video recordings of classroom activities can still be used. If a participant chooses to withdraw they should be able to withdraw their data from all aspects if possible. Please clarify and also address this issue in the consent section of the form.
Section 8 – match up details for retaining data. Generally this would be 10 years to align itself with Uni data protection policy and would cover your 5 years indicated. Adjust accordingly

All the above points have now been addressed.

APPENDIX F
(Approval Letter from the Economic Planning Unit)

UNIT PERANCANG EKONOMI
Economic Planning Unit
Jabatan Perdana Menteri
Prime Minister's Department
Block B5 & B6
Pusat Pentadbiran Kerajaan Persekutuan
62502 PUTRAJAYA
MALAYSIA

Telefon : 603-8000 8000

Ruj. Tuan:
Your Ref.:

Ruj. Kami:
Our Ref.: UPE 40/200/19/3301 (4)

Tarikh:
Date: 3 February 2016

Nur Huslinda Bt. Che Mat
12 Barnesdale Road,
NR4 6LL, Norwich,
Norfolk, England,
United Kingdom.
Email : huslinda@yahoo.com

T RESEARCH IN MALAYSIA

KAD PAS INI ADALAH SURAT RASMI DIKELUARKAN MENURUT PEKELILING AM: PERATURAN BAGI MENJALANKAN PENYELIDIKAN DI MALAYSIA. DILARANG MEMBAWA PAS INI KELUAR DARI MALAYSIA.

SESIAPA YANG MENJUMPAI HENDAKLAH MENYERAHKAN KEPADA KETUA PENGARAH UNIT PERANCANG EKONOMI, JABATAN PERDANA MENTERI 62502 PUTRAJAYA

Tarikh 8 MAC 2016

b/p Ketua Pengarah
Unit Perancang Ekonomi
Jabatan Perdana Menteri

as follows), I hereby acknowledge receipt of
sia. Your application is now complete and in
agencies identified by the Economic Planning
require about a month for this process.

NDA BT. CHE MAT

196

WRITING PRACTICES: COLLABORATIVE
N THE ESL MALAYSIA UNIVERSITY CLASSROOMS"

2. An approval letter will be issued to you as soon as the **Research Promotion and Co-ordination Committee, EPU** make their decision. You can collect the official approval letter at our office in Putrajaya. A copy of the letter will be sent to you via email.

Yours sincerely,

(MUNIRAH BINTI ABD. MANAN)
Macroeconomics Section
Level 4, Blok B5, Parcel B
Economic Planning Unit
Prime Minister's Department
Federal Government Administrative Centre
62502 Putrajaya
Email: munirah@epu.gov.my
Tel : 03 88725281/03 88723222
Fax : 03 88883798

APPENDIX G
(Approval Letter from the Academy of Modern Languages, University of Nusantara)

Date : 2 March 2016

Nur Huslinda binti Che Mat
12 Barnesdale Road
Norwich, Norfolk
NR4 6LL
United Kingdom

Madam

APPROVAL FOR CONDUCTING A STUDY IN ACADEMY OF [redacted]

Referring to the above matter.

2. Please be informed that the Academy has no objection for you to conduct your study entitled **"Academic Writing Practices: Collaborative Writing in the ESL Malaysian University Classrooms".** However, it is subjected to the following conditions;

2.1 Participation of lecturers and learners are on a voluntary basis.

2.2 The process of teaching and learning activities are not affected by the research process.

2.3 Any data/ information and findings are for the requirements of the course of study only.

2.4 Please bring along letter of approval to conduct research in a public higher education institution by the Malaysian Economic and Planning Unit (for oversea students).

2.5 Please provide a copy of the report upon completion of the study for reference purposes.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX H
(Sample Consent Form for Teacher-Participants)

Dear Lecturer;

Faculty of Social Sciences
School of Education and Lifelong Learning

University of East Anglia
Norwich Research Park
Norwich NR4 7TJ
United Kingdom

Email:edu.reception@uea.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0) 1603 591451

Web:www.uea.ac.uk

ACADEMIC WRITING PRACTICES: COLLABORATIVE WRITING IN THE ESL MALAYSIA UNIVERSITY CLASSROOMS

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

(1) What is this study about?

You are invited to take part in a research study about collaborative writing in English as a second language (ESL) in a Malaysia higher education institution (HEI). The study will look at how learners become second language (L2) writers and to understand the difficulties and the challenges that L2 learners experience in their L2 writing classroom. The research will provide some insights for the lecturers in order to develop more effective ways and selecting appropriate approach to guide their learners in developing and improving their L2 writing.

You have been invited to participate in this study because you have at least one academic qualification to teach English as a Second Language either at Degree or Masters level and curently teaching an Academic Writing course using collaborative as an approach to writing for March-June 2016 semester. This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. By giving your consent to take part in this study you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read.
- ✓ Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below.
- ✓ Agree to the use of your personal information as described.

(2) Who is running the study?

Nur Huslinda binti Che Mat is conducting this study as the basis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of East Anglia. This will take place under the supervision of Dr.Anna Magyar and Prof. Anna Robinson-Pant.

FUNDING DECLARATION
This study is being funded by MARA (Majlis Amanah Rakyat), Malaysia.

University of East Anglia

Dear Student;

Faculty of Social Sciences
School of Education and Lifelong Learn

University of East Anglia
Norwich Research Park
Norwich NR4 7TJ
United Kingdom

Email:edu.reception@uea.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0) 1603 591451

Web:www.uea.ac.uk

ACADEMIC WRITING PRACTICES: COLLABORATIVE WRITING IN THE ESL MALAYSIA UNIVERSITY CLASSROOMS

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

(1) What is this study about?

You are invited to take part in a research study about collaborative writing in English as a second language (ESL) in a Malaysia higher education institution (HEI). The study will look at how learners become second language (L2) writers and to understand the difficulties and the challenges that L2 learners experience in their L2 writing classroom. The research will provide some insights for the lecturers in order to develop more effective ways and selecting appropriate approach to guide their learners in developing and improving their L2 writing.

You have been invited to participate in this study because you are year one undergraduate student and curently taking an Academic Writing course for March-June 2016 semester. This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. By giving your consent to take part in this study you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read.
- ✓ Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below.
- ✓ Agree to the use of your personal information as described.

(2) Who is running the study?

Nur Huslinda binti Che Mat is conducting this study as the basis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of East Anglia. This will take place under the supervision of Dr.Anna Magyar and Prof. Anna Robinson-Pant.

FUNDING DECLARATION
This study is being funded by MARA (Majlis Amanah Rakyat), Malaysia.

COURSE INFORMATION

Confidential

Course Code	:	EWC661
Course Name	:	English for Report Writing
Level	:	Degree
Total SLT	:	Equivalent to 2 credits Face-to-face (F2F): 22 hours Non Face-to-Face: 26 hours Guided and 32 hours Non-guided
Part	:	
	:	
Course Status (Core/ Non-core)	:	
Pre-requisite	:	ELC501/ ELC590

Course Outcomes

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to retrieve and manage information when preparing a well-structured report. (A4)
2. Present a proposal and write a well-structured report. (A5)
3. Display teamwork skills through cooperation with others, respect and accept their opinions in preparing the report. (A3)

Course Description

This course teaches students how to develop a range of essential written communication skills using common report writing conventions to produce an effective investigative report. In doing so, it also enables students to further improve their skills in retrieving and eliciting information related to the issue at hand. Besides that, it provides a platform for students to inform and persuade when presenting a proposal. In tandem, it reinforces teamwork skills through establishing good rapport among the team members throughout the report preparation. At the end of the course, students will collaboratively produce the report which has great quality, clarity and impact.

Syllabus Content

1. **Introduction to Report Writing**
   - Types of reports
   - Qualities of a good report
   - Components of a formal report
2. **Language Used in Report Writing**
   - Formal language for reports
   - Active and passive sentence construction
   - Personal and impersonal language
   - Clear and concise verb tenses
   - Appropriate language for questionnaire item construction
   - Error identification
   - Editing and proofreading skills
3. **Proposal Writing and Presentation**
   - Introducing the basic elements of a proposal (background to the study, problem statement, objectives and methodology)
   - Formulating the purpose and objectives of the proposed study
   - Retrieving appropriate and relevant materials from various sources
   - Extracting relevant information from the selected materials
   - Writing references using APA format
   - Synthesizing and paraphrasing the selected information
   - Writing coherent paragraphs
   - Presenting the content of the proposed study

Assessment

Week	Assessment	Duration	Weightage
6-7	Proposal Presentation (Group work) • Oral Presentation (15%) • Proposal (20%)	15 minutes	**35%**
12	Peer Assessment on Teamwork (Individual)	20 minutes	**5%**
14	Complete Report (Group work) • Written Report (40%) • Portfolio Assessment on Information Retrieval and Management (20%)	10 weeks	**60%**
Total			**100%**

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Course Code	:	EWC661
Course Name	:	English for Report Writing
Level	:	Degree
Total SLT	:	Equivalent to 2 credits Face-to-Face (F2F): 22 hours Non Face-to-Face: 26 hours Guided and 32 hours Non-guided

Learning Outcomes:

Week 1

At the end of this lecture, students will be able to:
- identify types of reports
- identify qualities of a good report
- recognise the main parts of a report

Task/ Activities
- Group discussion – qualities of a good report / components of a formal report
- Internet search – samples of formal reports for group discussion/ reference

Week 2

At the end of this lecture, students will be able to:
- determine research topics for their proposal
- produce appropriate and relevant online sources / articles / materials related to their topics
- use appropriate tenses for different sections of a report

Task/ Activities
Group task:
- Group task - brainstorm suitable topics for report writing (maximum of 4 students per group)
- Select at least five (5) online articles / materials from various sources to be used in the Introduction section of the proposal
- Briefing on creating and maintaining a process portfolio (Selecting relevant materials, delegating tasks, identifying group members' contributions)

Week 3

At the end of this lecture, students will be able to:
- write the proposal / introduction section of the report
- differentiate between active and passive sentences, personal and impersonal language
- use clear and concise verb tenses

Task/ Activities
- Group discussion - the details/ essentials under the introduction section

Week 4

At the end of this lecture, students will be able to:
- extract information from the selected articles/ materials to be included and synthesised into the introductory section of a proposal
- synthesise, paraphrase, and cite information from the selected materials

Task/ Activities
Group tasks:
- prepare various sections of the proposal

APPENDIX K
(Classroom Observation Schedule)

ClassroomObservationX/5

Title	Classroom Observation X (weekX/14)	
Date/ Day/ Time		
Venue		
DESCRIPTIVE NOTES		**REFLECTIVE NOTES**
SETTING:		
ACTIONS:		
DURING THE LESSONS (INTERACTIONS):		
EMERGING QUESTIONS/ ANALYSES:		
FUTURE ACTION:		

Interview Protocol

Research Title: Academic Writing Practices: Collaborative Writing In The ESL Malaysia University Classrooms	
Time of Interview:	
Date:	
Place:	
Interviewer:	
Interviewee:	
Position of Interviewee:	
This study aims to better understand learners' writing practices, their writing approaches and their impediments that they encounter when writing collaboratively in their second language (L2) in the context of a Malaysian HEI classroom. By exploring lecturers' and learners' perceptions, beliefs and attitudes towards these writing practices, some useful insights on the challenges of becoming L2 writers will contribute to an understanding about writing in HEI.	
Q1:	