Language Proficiency and Writing Strategies of a Taiwanese Early ESL Learner: A Case Study

Chu-Chun Cheng
Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, National I-Lan University,
Yilan City, Taiwan
Email: chuchun@niu.edu.tw

Abstract

This qualitative case study purported to investigate whether learning English as a second language early might contribute to one's ultimate second language proficiency of a Taiwanese international undergraduate student in the U.S. In the meantime, it also investigated the academic writing process, especially a wide array of writing strategies employed by this early ESL learner to achieve better academic literacy in his target discipline. Semi-structured interviews and the writing samples of the focal participant were collected while analytic induction was conducted to analyze this data. Findings indicate that early ESL learning might not be highly correlated to one's proficiency in academic writing. However, early ESL learning did have some benefits on one's general English language ability, such as native-like pronunciation and excellent listening ability. Additionally, when writing in L2, this early ESL learner would employ a broad range of writing strategies such as rhetorical, metacognitive, and cognitive strategies to solve his academic writing problems and to succeed in his target academic community. Novice L2 writers would be taught academic writing strategies explicitly to adapt to their target discourse community more quickly. Furthermore, L2 writing or content course instructors might need to be more sensitive to their students' difficulties in their academic writing.

Key Words: age of ESL learning, second language proficiency, second language writing strategies, international student English teaching, EFL, TESOL, goals

1. Introduction

For many years, students have gone abroad in search of opportunities to advance their study. In the past few decades, the quantity, scope and sheer size of the higher education enterprise in the United States have attracted students and scholars from all parts of the world in unprecedented numbers. According to the statistics of Open Doors, an online press reporting the data of the international students in the United States higher education and American students overseas, the number of international students enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States increased to a total of 1095,299, of which Asia remains the largest region in the international population, accounting for 52% of total U.S. international enrollments in the 2018-2019 academic year.

As the enrollment figures for Asian international graduate students in North American universities continue to increase, it is becoming increasingly important that the Anglophone academy learn as much as possible about the challenges that these students face as they compose the writing tasks required of them. This is especially the case for international students in the social sciences, where the ability to express complex ideas in writing is often a bellwether of academic success (Schneider & Fujishima, 1995). In the early 1990s, second language (hereafter, L2) researchers

began applying the findings of studies conducted on first language (hereafter, L1)

writers to the circumstances of international students enrolled in North American universities. For the most part, those who carried out this type of research viewed international students as "outsiders" who undergo a process of acculturation (Schumann, 1978) in their struggle to learn the rhetorical conventions and overall ways of their academic disciplines. In recent years, researchers in the field of second language writing have investigated the writing experiences of international students of various nationalities as they compose papers for their coursework in the social sciences (e.g., Angelova & Riazantseva, 1999; Connor & Mayberry, 1996; Paltridge & Starfield, 2019; Riazi, 1997; Spack, 1997; Shi, Harrison & Henry, 2017).

Most of these studies concern the academic writing problems of undergraduate students (e.g., Beaufort, 2004; Leki & Carson, 1997) and graduate students (e.g., Gosden, 1998; Hansen, 2000; Torrance, Thomas & Robinson, 2000). There are also abound in studies that investigate how second/foreign language writing is acquired (e.g., Harklau, 2002), how culture and cultural patterns might influence the success of second/foreign language writers (e.g., Kubota, 1998), the struggles of multilingual scholars to publish in English-medium journals (e.g., Curry & Lillis, 2004) as well as what perspectives and expectations second/foreign language learners and writing/content course instructors share in common (e.g., Basturkmen & Lewis, 2002; Zhu, 2004).

While these studies had yielded numerous beneficial results, few had focused primarily on a particular population consisting of Taiwanese social science international undergraduate students who were early English as Second Language (ESL) learners in search of advanced studies. In addition, those studies did not concern much about the acquisition of academic literacy, especially academic writing process and strategies of Taiwanese international undergraduate students in the U.S. Moreover, while many researchers advocated the benefits of learning English early, few studies investigated the effect of learning English early on academic writing proficiency and overall language proficiency of such ESL learners.

Therefore, the purpose of this case study was to bridge these research gaps by investigating the effect of early ESL learning on L2 language proficiency, especially L2 academic writing proficiency of a Taiwanese international undergraduate student in the U.S. In the meantime, it also purported to investigate the academic writing process and strategies of this early ESL learner. Lastly, it strived to provide some tentative conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Age of ESL Learning and Second Language Proficiency

Age has often been considered as a major, if not the most primary, factor determing the ultimate success in learning a second or foreign language (Rivera, 1998; Marinova-Todd, Marshall & Snow, 2000; Birdsong & Mollis, 2001). According to the critical period hypothesis (Penfiled & Roberts, 1959), a period of time when learning a language is relatively easy and typically meets with a high degree of success, children are generally considered capable of acquiring a new language rapidly and with little effort, especially before age 9 when the human brain becomes too stiff and rigid. In contrast, once this period is over, at or before the onset of puberty, learners in average are less likely to achieve native-like abilities in the target language. In addition, the level of ultimate attainment in second language acquisition is constrained to a significant degree by the

age at which learning begins. An "earlier is better" rule of thumb seems to capture the negative correlation between age of learning onset and eventual asymptotic performance (Moyer, 1999; Rivera, 1998).

It is generally accepted among psycholinguistics that a critical period for L1 acquisition exists, but controversy arises when the critical period for second language acquisition would have serious implications for foreign language teachers working with older students, not the least of which would be a need for a complete overhaul of expectations and methods of evaluations (Harley & Wang, 1997; Rivera, 1998; Marinova-Todd, Marshall & Snow, 2000; Birdsong & Mollis, 2001). If older students are biologically incapable of mastering another language to a very high level, then they should not be graded in comparison to native speakers. As expectations are lowered, so too should teaching methodologies be modified to promote limited proficiency, allow for a greater number of errors, and avoid even broaching the unreachable goal of native fluency. Furthermore, if a critical period for L2 learning does exist, then schools should obviously introduce second and foreign languages earlier, and governments should introduce policies to accelerate the exposure to English of children the earlier the better. Clearly, knowing these facts is relevant to policy and practice in education. However, more relevant research will be needed to assist researchers in making the ultimate judgments with regard to age and L2 proficiency.

2.2. Second Language Learning/Writing Strategies

To date, some leading second language acquisition (SLA) scholars and researchers have proposed various taxonomies of language learning/writing strategies (e.g., Cohen, 2000; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Wenden & Rubin, 1987). For instance, Cohen (2000) argues that language learning/writing strategies should be devised with an explicit goal that contributed to the ultimate learning proficiency of the target learners. Oxford (1990) made a distinction between direct and indirect learning strategies. For him, direct strategies, such as memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies, were strategies that would directly affect the ultimate language learning outcome of the target learners while indirect strategies, such as meta-cognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies, were strategies that would implicitly yet powerfully affect the language learning process of the target language learners.

Among them, O'Malley and Chamot (1990)'s taxonomy has received relatively much more attention from SLA scholars all over the world and became the main referencing rubric that examined the second language writing strategies employed by the focal participant of this study. In particular, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) have categorized various learning/writing strategies into three domains, which were 1) cognitive strategies involving the processing of information, summarizing, and recognition, 2) metacognitive straits, which involve higher-order planning, monitoring, evaluating, and comprehension, and 3) social and affective strategies, which involve interaction with others or feelings of self-assurance. O'Malley and Chamot (1990)'s strategies were summarized as follows and would be adapted as the main reference that examined the second language writing strategies employed by the focal participant in this study:

•cognitive strategies: ideas generating strategies; revising strategies; summarizing strategies; recognition strategies

•metacognitive strategies: organizing strategies; planning strategies; monitoring strategies; evaluating strategies; comprehending strategies

•social and affective strategies: motivation-enhancing strategies; confidence-enhancing strategies; emotion controlling strategies

3. Purpose and Research Questions

Few of the previous studies that comprise this growing body of literature has focused

primarily on the effect of early ESL learning on academic writing and the process of academic literacy, especially the academic writing process and strategies of a Taiwanese undergraduate political science student. The present study, conducted at a major research university in the northeastern U.S., strive to address this void in the literature by examining qualitatively how a Taiwanese undergraduate student in Political Science perceive the academic writing tasks required of him. At this stage, early ESL learners are defined as those who learn English at age three to five.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What were the Taiwanese ESL learner's perfections of the effect of his own early ESL learning related to his current academic writing proficiency and overall language proficiency in English?

2. What was this early Taiwanese ESL learner's academic writing process and strategies?

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

Case study was chosen as the primary approach to inquiry because it allowed for more detailed, in-depth personal descriptions of the overall academic and sociopolitical contexts of this focal partisan, a Taiwanese early ESL learner who had chosen to pursue his advanced study in America since the onset of this study. Specifically, case study could enable a researcher to investigate a bounded system, a case (i.e., early ESL learning), through multiple sources of information derived from observation, interviews and so on (Crewsell, 2017, p.73). Since one of the purposes of the researcher was to write an in-depth and multi-layered qualitative study, multiple sources of information, including questionnaire, participant's writing samples as well as observation notes and research logs would be an appropriate approach to achieve this end.

4.2 Site and Participant

This study was conducted at a northeastern research university in the U.S. The focal participant for this study was William (pseudonym). William was a young male in his early twenties. He grew up in various places, including Europe, Singapore, and Taiwan. He started to learn English as soon as he was born for being immersed in a multicultural/multilingual environment in Europe, where his daily conversation with others was often carried out in English. In addition, after his family moved to Singapore when he was four years old, he began to be educated at an international kindergarten in British English since Singapore was a former British colony. His family moved back to Taiwan when he was seven and since then he received his elementary and middle school education in Taiwan. At the age of 17, he went to the U.S. to study senior high school there and then majored in both political science and psychology during his college years. He was highly interested in applying for law school and becoming a lawyer in America in the near future.

4.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The principal data gathering instruments for this study were several semi-structured audio-taped interviews with the focal participant (ranging from fifty minutes to one hour) and multiple academic writing drafts and revision that William voluntarily submitted for analysis. In an attempt to limit researcher bias, I also recorded my own observations in my notes and research logs throughout the course of the study. All interviews were done in Chinese and then transcribed to English, for Chinese was our mother tongue that significantly facilitated our interview process. Since William was eloquent and willing to share his opinion with others, those interview went very smoothly.

In keeping with qualitative research methods, analytic induction (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Leki, 1995) was used to analyze the transcribed interview data and the focal participant's academic writing samples (i.e., academic writing drafts and papers). In this approach, the researcher returned repeatedly to transcripts or questionnaires to read and examine the data, searching for salient or recurring themes. Based mainly on these transcriptions, research logs, and other relevant materials, I had gathered for this study, I began to search for re-emergent themes relevant to this study, especially those highly related to the proposed research questions. Initially, I

was often struck as how to find systematic and consistent emerging categories. However, as I became more and more acquainted with these materials, I started to be aware of some recurring patterns. I then used his writing samples to confirm whether these patterns might actually exist. For instance, I got the impression from these interviews that William was anxious about his grammar and insufficient academic vocabulary. As a result, I would examine and re-examine his writing samples to see if there were indeed abundant persistent grammar and vocabulary issues he had described in our interviews.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Early ESL learning and English language proficiency

For William, early ESL learning did not contribute greatly to his academic English writing. However, early ESL learning enabled him to have a native-like pronunciation, have almost no difficulties holding academic debates with native speakers during his college years, and make it easy for him to pick up new phrases or vocabulary whether in daily conversation or in lectures with his good listening ability. As he explained, he thought that his English writing was still rather "immature" and fraught with problems such as wrong word choices and limited vocabulary compared to his native peers despite the fact that he had learned English almost as soon as he was born in Europe:

... To be honest, I do not think that early ESL learning did me much favor when it comes to writing academic papers in English. Look at my papers... don't you think that there are various problems such as wrong word choices or immature paragraph development? And why do I still have rather limited vocabulary than my American classmates? I do not know... I do not like my academic English papers... they are just not good enough. I could argue so much better in my Chinese papers....

(1st interview, transcribed by the Investigator)

In this excerpt, William was pretty frustrated with the fact that his English writing was not as good as his native peers. He was really frustrated with this because he knew that excellent English writing ability was the key for him to be a successful lawyer throughout his future career and that major law firms would value their future employees heavily on how well argued and well written the writing samples they submitted. Therefore, he had put some efforts into making his English writing better such as asking his American classmates or professors to help him edit or give him advice on his paper and had a private writing tutor for the past two years. However, he could still perceive that his paper was not as good as his native peers' due to his "rather limited vocabulary" and "wrong word choices", and he seemed to feel anxious about these issues for he knew that it would take considerable time and require more efforts for him to be eventually more conversant with vocabulary and word choices.

While he did not perceive that early ESL learning contribute greatly to his L2 academic writing, he did perceive some possible benefits of early ESL learning in his daily communications

with his native peers and his ability to hold effective academic debates with his American classmates in class:

.... But I think that early ESL learning really helps me speak English pretty well with a native-like accent. My American friends often tell me how good my English is because they have no problems understanding me. In my college years, we might have to debate academically with our classmates from time to time, and I do not think that I have problems debating with my American peers in front of other classmates. It is not difficult. Not for me.

(1st interview, transcribed by the Investigator)

In this excerpt, William talked about how early ESL learning could contribute to some possible benefits of his native-like accent and good L2 speaking ability by giving us the example of his ability and his ease to hold academic class debates with his native peers in class. In fact, he showed more confidence in his L2 speaking ability and seemed to be proud of it because his L2 speaking ability was so good that he could debate with his American classmates and argue his view of points pretty well in front of his classmates. And he was proud because he thought, "…it was not difficult. Not for me."

According to William, early ESL learning not only helped him acquire good L2 speaking ability but also helped him greatly with his L2 listening ability. For example, he could pick up some L2 phrases with ease when talking with his American friends or when he was in class:

.... Well, I think that one of the best advantages of early ESL learning for me would be my good listening ability. It is easy for me to understand or to learn almost every single thing said in English. It is like instinct or something…. I am good at picking up new phrases or vocabulary when I talk to my American friends or when I am in class. For example, when I first heard the word "arraignment", I found that I was sensitive to the syllables and could it quite right. It is a piece of cake.

(1st interview, transcribed by the Investigator)

In this excerpt, William talked about another possible benefit of his early ESL learning such as his ability to pick up new phrases in daily conversation and expressed his confidence in his L2 listening ability. For example, he used the word "arraignment" to illustrate that once he heard a new word, he was able to spell it almost right and learn it pretty easily by hearing it for the first time. In addition, he was pretty confident in his L2 listening ability because he used expressions such as ".it was a piece of cake" here to describe how effortless it was for him to learn a new L2 word through his ears.

In conclusion, William thought that early ESL learning did not necessarily correlate with his current L2 academic writing ability because he still had many problems with L2 vocabulary and word choice in his L2 academic writing and he regarded that his L2 academic writing was not as good as his American classmates'. However, he attributed his good L2 speaking and listening ability to be the result of his early ESL learning, and he was very confident in his L2 speaking and listening ability because he commented these with optimistic attitude such as "...it was a piece of cake" and "…it was not difficult. Not for me."

5.2 A Wide Array of Academic Writing Strategies

William would employ several academic writing strategies when he wrote his L2 academic papers to help him solve problems such as generating ideas for and revising his L2 academic papers. The top three academic writing strategies William would employ were rhetorical strategies,

cognitive strategies, and metacognitive strategies. Those strategies would be discussed separately and would be given relevant quotes to illustrate how William actually employ them in his L2 academic writing as follows:

5.2.1 Rhetorical Strategies: Genre Awareness.

William appeared to have a clearer understanding of different genres of writing. He noticed that there were some differences between an English and Chinese research papers. For example, he said that vague language should not be used in English academic writing, but it could be used in Chinese literary writing, for the terms in English academic writing needed to be defined accurately while vagueness was the norm of Chinese writing conventions to express some indefinite images and this kind of indirect writing style could be highly valued in Chinese literacy works:

... I noticed that the Chinese research papers in political science was written with a more vague writing style than that in English research papers. Generally speaking, Chinese research papers

are written in a winding style: it expands on and on and takes a long time to get to the author's point, but English research papers are usually written in a clear and concise way. Well, it might be attributed to the fact that we had a history of preferring vagueness in Chinese literature. We think that vagueness is the beauty of ancient Chinese poems. However, different from Chinese literature which allows vague writing to interpret images and allows writers to write in an ambiguous, indirect way, English academic writing in my field is more descriptive and requires more linear and logical thinking. In our field, the writer needs to propose the topic first and then support it with some evidence. Basically, that was what I did for most of my assignments in political science. I need to find facts to support my argument. Or my argument will be dead, shot and no longer be heard or accepted by anyone except me ...

(3rd interview, translated by the investigator)

In this excerpt, William talked about how he thought that the notion of vagueness received different evaluations in English and Chinese papers, and he accounted for this phenomenon by giving us an example of how vagueness was valued in ancient Chinese poetry and widely accepted in Chinese research papers, while he perceived that vagueness was discouraged and received not so well in English research papers. He was well aware of the fact that he had to be more "linear and logical" when he wrote his English research papers and was constantly looking for "facts" to support his arguments.

5.2.2 Cognitive strategies: Generating Ideas.

William had a variety of means to generate ideas. He used brainstorming to generate most ideas in his mind and then decided on what ideas could be further developed. He also adopted thinking of associations and interacting with other people including supervisors and peers. However, the most frequently used strategy for him to generate ideas was to read extensively. He reported that whenever he was not so familiar with the topic he was asked to write about, he had to read extensively to familiarize himself with the required field. He described his process of generating ideas by means of reading extensively as follows:

.... I usually start by skimming the study guide, reading materials bought from bookshop and reference books recommended by the lecturer. In this way I formed the general conception of the unit. Then I read the unit guide several times and pondered the requirement of the assignment. From these readings some ideas occurred to my mind and I put the related notes into the outline

in the meantime. And then I would use search engines such as google scholar to help me find relevant research papers or books. I would try to borrow them from library or download them. I would glance these materials to see if any particular idea "speaks "to me and narrow down my research scope to find more specific topic for my research paper. I think that you need to read extensively so that you will be able to find a topic that really interests you and motivates you to voice your opinion on it.

(2nd interview, translated by the investigator)

For him, reading extensively was a very important writing strategy for him to generate ideas for his L2 academic writing. Because he was still a newcomer in his discipline, he might not know where to begin and what kind of topic might pique his interests if he was asked to select a topic and write a research paper. However, when he employed the strategy of reading extensively, he would be able to glean tons of possible research topics, expand his knowledge base of his discipline, and eventually focus on a single topic that motivated him most and that he had the strongest desire to voice his opinion.

5.2.3 Cognitive strategies: Revising Strategies.

In general, William would pay a lot of attention to revision in his academic writing process. Since he typed the content into the computer directly when he wrote, the revision process was

continuous and he tended to be very flexible about it. He described his revising process as follows:

... I am flexible for revising process. I may revise my body while writing any part of my paper. I seldom revise until I complete the writing. Conversely, I usually revise while writing. Since the structure of my paper is pretty fixed (ex. introduction, body and conclusion), I focus more on revising paragraphs. I put paragraphs under the same topic. This takes me a lot of time. But the word processing can help me with the revision of spelling and grammatical mistakes.

(3rd meeting with William, translated by the investigator)

In this excerpt, he talked about how flexible he was when he revised his paper and how constantly he revised back and forth while he was writing it. He also talked about how effective word processing was to help him revise his spelling and grammatical mistakes.

Overall, the results of the data analysis demonstrate that this participant employed a wide range of writing strategies, which could be categorized into rhetorical strategies, cognitive strategies, and meta-cognitive strategies. However, he would use writing strategies very differently with respect to different genres. Regarding grammar and content, for example, he implied that studying grammar and vocabulary was the most effective way of improving one's writing, but that one should not pay much attention to grammar and vocabulary when developing the initial ideas.

Studies in L2 writing have found that good writers in general concern themselves with ideas first (Hirose & Sasaki, 1994; Zamel, 1983). This study reveals that the participant's primary concern was with planning not only the content but also the organization of his papers before starting to write. He could make good use of the strategy of drafting an outline to guide his English writing. He could take advantage of metacognitive strategies, which are usually regarded as strategies mastered by adults (Victori, 1995). In other words, he has the capability to control the whole writing process as adult L2 writers.

An interesting point is that this participant preferred the strategy of extensive reading. That was, when he was asked to write a research paper with his own topic choice, he would use search engines such as google scholar to help me first find relevant research papers and books and then

eventually narrowed down his research scope to a single topic that interested him most. The possible explanation is that he was not so familiar with the target field in English even though he might have some background knowledge in the same field in Chinese. Therefore, he had to search for more information to help familiarize himself with the target field and generate more ideas to satisfy the requirements of the target academic community. This finding concurs with the finding of Hinkel (2004), that second language writers were highly dependent on resources for more information on the one hand, and on the other hand, for language borrowings. They accumulated considerable content and then removed unnecessary material. This strategy can help novice writers write a long essay without too much retrieval from long-term memory. During the process of reading, L2 writers could paraphrase the appropriate sentences and use them in their assignments or papers.

6. Conclusions and Implications

The findings from this investigation have many implications for the teaching of L2 writing. First of all, novice L2 writers must be taught L2 writing strategies explicitly, as these strategies can help them adapt to the target discourse community more quickly (Braine, 2002; Dong, 1998). According to Sasaki (2002, 2007) and Victori (1995), L2 students who function at lower proficiency levels may need greater help with their second language skills in order to transfer their writing skills. As most of the metacognitive, cognitive, communicative and social/affective strategies can be transferred across languages and cultures positively, L2 writing teachers can assist L2 writers to identify those strategies they have acquired in their mother tongue and employ them in their English writing. To further reduce L2 writers' anxiety, L2 writing teachers may also inform L2 writers that L1 writers have some similar challenges they face in writing practice when they are novice writers.

Furthermore, this study identified the voice of L2 writers who had been hidden from view. The disadvantage they experience in writing leads to frustration and pressure, despite the fact that they are highly motivated and talented. If they are studying at a university in another country, they have to cope with cultural differences as well as an invisible language barrier. Additionally, they need to adapt themselves to the new environment, which is different from the one with which they are familiar, and try as well to resonate with the culture that dominates the target academy. Therefore, L2 writing or content course teachers need to be more sensitive to students' difficulties in their writing (Braine, 2002; Canagarajah, 2002; Nguyen & Gu, 2013).

For future studies, researchers might be interested in doing a grounded theory study to understand the perceptions of early/late ESL learners whether they regard their early/late ESL learning might have an impact on their general and academic writing. In addition, researchers could initiate an in-depth longitudinal case study or ethnography on tracing how those learners write for their discipline-specific field and whether they do have some advantages or disadvantages when it comes to writing. Moreover, researchers might be interested in conducting a study concerning the attainment of academic literacy, especially the academic writing processes and strategies of early/late ESL learners who left for advanced studies in America or in any part of the world.

References

Angelova, M., & Riazantseva, A. (1999). "If you don't tell me, how can I know?": A case study of four international students learning to write the U.S. way. *Written Communication*, *16*(4), 491-525.

Basturkmen, H., & Lewis, M. (2002). Learner perspectives of success in an EAP writing course. *Accessing Writing*, *8*(1), 31-46.

Beaufort, A. (2004). Developmental gains of a history major: A case study of one institutional site of composing. *Research in the Teaching of English*, *39*, 136-185.

Birdsong, D., & Mollis, M. (2001). On the evidence for maturational constraints in second-language acquisition. *Journal of Memory and Language*, *44*, 235-249.

Braine, G. (2002) Academic Literacy and the Non-Native Speaker Graduate Student. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *1*, 59-68.

Canagarajah, A. S. (2002). *Critical academic writing and multilingual students*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press

Cohen, A. D. (1998). *Strategies in learning and using a second language*. New York, NY: Longman.

Connor, U., & Mayberry, S. (1996). Learning discipline-specific academic writing: A case study of a Finnish graduate student in the United States. In E. Ventola & A. Mauranen (Eds.), *Academic writing: Intercultural and textual issues* (pp. 231-253). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Creswell, J. W. (2017). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Curry, M. J., & Lillis, T. (2004). Multilingual scholars and the imperative to publish in English: Negotiating interests, demands, and awards. *TESOL Quarterly*, 38(4), 663-688.

Dong, Y. R. (1998). Non-native graduate students' thesis/dissertation writing in science: Self-reports by students and their advisors from two U.S. institutions. *English for Specific Purposes*, *17*(4), 369-390.

Goetz, J. P., & Lecompte, M. D. (1984). Ethnographic and Qualitative Design in Educational Research. London: Academic Press.

Gorsen, H. (1998). An aspect of holistic modeling in academic writing: Propositional clusters as a heuristic for thematic control. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *7*(1), 19-41.

Hansen, J. (2000). Interactional conflicts among audience, purpose, and content knowledge in the acquisition of academic literacy in an EAP course. *Written Communication*, *17*(1), 27-52.

Harklau, L. (2002). The role of writing in classroom second language acquisition. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *11*(4), 329-350.

Harley, B., & Wang, W. (1997). The critical period hypothesis: Where are we now?. In A. M. B. de Groot & J. F. Kroll (Eds.), Tutorials in bilingualism: Psycholinguistic perspectives (pp. 19-51). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Hinkel, E. (1994). Native and non-native speakers' pragmatic interpretations of English texts. *TESOL Quarterly*, *28*(2), 353-376.

Kubota, R. (1998). An investigation of L1-L2 transfer in writing among Japanese university students: Implications for contrastive rhetoric. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 7(1), 69-100.

Leki, L. (1995). Coping strategies of ESL students in writing tasks across the curriculum. *TESOL Quarterly*, *29*, 235-260.

Leki, I., & Carson, J. (1997). "Completely different worlds": EAP and the writing experiences of ESL students in university courses. *TESOL Quarterly*, *31*, 39-69.

Marinova-Todd, S., Marshall, D., & Snow, C. (2000). Three misconceptions about age and L2 learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, *34*, 9-34.

Mu, C., & Carrington, S. (2007, June). An investigation of three Chinese students' English writing strategies. *TESL-EJ*, *11*(1), 1-23

Nguyen, L. T. C., & Gu, Y. (2013). Strategy-based instruction: A learner-focused approach to developing learner autonomy. *Language Teaching Research*, *17*(1), 9-30.