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**AN ANALYSIS OF THE WRITING OF NATIVE LANGUAGE EDUCATED AND
SECOND LANGUAGE EDUCATED NONNATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH**

By

Michael T. Khirallah

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

AN ANALYSIS OF THE WRITING OF NATIVE LANGUAGE EDUCATED AND SECOND LANGUAGE EDUCATED NONNATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH

By

Michael T. Khirallah

Given the increasing numbers of immigrants with interrupted education in their native language who are forced to complete their secondary schooling in the United States, research on the relationship between first language education and second language literacy is critical for higher education teachers and administrators. This dissertation focuses on both teacher perception and actual linguistic differences in the second language writing of native language educated nonnative speakers (NLE NNSs) (i.e., completion of secondary school in the student's native country) and second language educated nonnative speakers (SLE NNSs) (i.e., 3 to 5 years of secondary school in the United States). Essays from both populations of students were first read by 9 experienced English as a second language (ESL) college-level writing teachers to determine if they could identify which population the essays were drawn from. These teachers were first interviewed, and despite their beliefs that the two groups had distinct characteristics in their writing, the teachers could not accurately identify which population the essays were drawn from; in addition, the majority of the teachers were not in agreement in their identification of the essays.

In the second part of the dissertation, a group of ESL and basic composition teachers rank ordered the essays. Results indicate a statistical difference between the rank order of NLE NNS writing and SLE NNS writing, suggesting that teachers assess the former group as overall better writers. The third and

fourth parts of the dissertation examined more closely the linguistic differences between the two populations using measures of fluency, accuracy, complexity, and cohesion. Thirty-nine essays (22 NLE NNSs and 17 SLE NNSs) were independently coded by two coders with backgrounds in applied linguistics. The essays were coded for error-free T-units, s-nodes per T-unit, error count, error classification, and cohesive ties. The results indicate that NLE NNS and SLE NNS essays showed no significant differences in measures of fluency (word count and mean T-unit length), accuracy (percent of error-free T-units, percent of errors per T-unit, error count, and error classification), complexity (percent of s-nodes per T-unit), and cohesion (number of cohesive ties). The fifth and sixth parts of the dissertation involved holistic/analytic rating of the 39 essays in the following categories: content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. In addition, a qualitative analysis of a subset (n=6) of the sample was performed. The results indicate that NLE essays were rated significantly higher than SLE essays in content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and overall mean total score. There were no significant differences in the ratings for mechanics. The qualitative analysis indicates that NLE NNS essays were richer, more complex than their SLE counterpart. Finally, in a subset of the sample (n=18), there were no significant differences between the two groups with respect to socioeconomic status (SES) and parents' educational background.

In summary, this study points to significant differences between NLE and SLE writing. NLE writers are judged to be better academic writers. The implications for teacher training, student placement, curriculum development, and methodology in the L2 writing classroom will be explored.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Research in second language acquisition (SLA) and bilingual education has extensively examined the role of first language (L1) instruction in the early grades as a predictor of academic achievement in the second language (L2) (Modiano, 1966; Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa, 1976; Gaarder, 1977; Gudschinsky, 1977; Haddad, 1980; Edelsky, 1982; Goldman, 1983; Faltis, 1986; Genesse, 1987; Saville-Troike, 1991). Few studies, however, have analyzed the effect of such a relationship beyond the early grades. In higher education, many language programs serving English nonnative speakers (NNSs) rarely consider the L1 proficiency of their students in assessment, placement, and curriculum. While intake procedures typically include questions on education in the L1, this information usually has little impact on the course of instruction.

What impact does L1 proficiency have on L2 academic proficiency, particularly at the college level? Cummins (1981) maintained that there is an interdependence that exists between a bilingual's two languages; therefore, interrupted education in the L1 could possibly slow the growth of cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP) in the L2. In concrete terms, Cummins (1989) argued, this principle means that acquiring academic proficiency in an L1 develops a deeper conceptual and linguistic proficiency that is related to academic literacy in the L2. There is "an underlying cognitive/academic proficiency which is common across languages" (p. 44).

Cummins maintained that immigrants need approximately 2 to 3 years to reach proficiency in basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) but may need 5 to 7 years in the development of CALP. However, much of the research has been targeted at early arrivals, specifically those who have arrived prior to the onset of puberty. Little research has examined the implications for various aspects of proficiency, notably in regard to such academic skills as writing and reading for late arrivals. While Cummins' concept of CALP may transfer to late arrivals, empirical research needs to be carried out to confirm this.

For teachers and administrators involved in language policy and curriculum, the increasing numbers of NNSs with interrupted education in the L1 demand comprehensive research. A comparison of the 1980 and 1990 census of the U.S. population reveals a 40% increase in the number of foreign-born, from 14 million to almost 20 million people. The total Asian population now stands at seven million, an increase of 107% since 1980. Hispanics number over 22 million, a 53% increase. By the next census, some states such as Texas are predicting a majority population of English NNSs. First and second generation children of immigrants comprise the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population under the age of 15 (Fix and Zimmerman, 1993). For those who would argue that this is simply the pattern of immigration this country has always experienced, consider that almost one million *more* immigrants came to the United States during the 1980s than the *total* who arrived during the first 10 years of this century.

Assuming that the census data are correct and the projections in the next census indicate a substantial increase, our institutions of higher education face a daunting challenge, particularly in the area of academic achievement. Collier (1989) maintained that the level of cognitive complexity necessary for mastery

of subjects in secondary schools is often too great for NNSs who have not acquired CALP in their L2 (often those who arrive prior to completing any secondary schooling in the L1), and that there may not be enough time left in high school to make up for the lost years. These findings tend to be corroborated by longitudinal studies of NNSs in secondary schools. Watt and Roessingh (1994) tracked 232 ESL high school students in Alberta, Canada, finding a stunning 74% dropout rate two to three times higher than the general population of the school. They concluded that lack of CALP in the L1 means that CALP in the L2 may not be attainable given our current programs and structure. While this study focused on Canadian students, some data are available on students in U.S. schools. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (1994), the drop-out rate for all youths was 11% in 1992 compared to the 29% dropout rate for Hispanic youth. And despite the myth of the model Asian minority, Chuong (1994) found high dropout rates among Vietnamese in Oakland public schools in California. She maintained that similar patterns of dropout rates are reported in Los Angeles and Houston. She asked, "What happened to the straight-A Vietnamese student?" (p. 12).

Ogbu (1978) was one of the first to explore the difference in academic and social achievement between the foreign-born and U.S.-born groups of similar ethnicity. Ogbu found significant differences in rates of achievement between the two groups: Specifically, the foreign-born tend to outperform the U.S.-born of similar ethnicity. Gibson and Ogbu's (1992) collection of cross-linguistic studies analyzed the differences in achievement between the two types of groups (e.g., Mexicans born in Mexico vs. Mexican-Americans born in the U.S.) and found similar results: Foreign-born NNSs outperformed those born or raised as language minorities in the United States. While Ogbu's work is rooted

in sociolinguistic arguments (namely that the experience of racism and oppression create failure for language minorities), aspects of cognitive development in the L1 for foreign-born and foreign-educated NNSs could account for part of the success.

Portes and Zady (1996) argue that Ogbu's contention that involuntary minority status accounts for socioeconomic and academic success among immigrant groups versus U.S.- born minorities is an overgeneralization. They argue that among immigrant groups disparity in socioeconomic and academic success is so great that other factors must be contributing. They do not doubt Ogbu's argument of self-esteem and the oppressiveness of a majority environment; however, viewed solely from the immigrant experience one might find that some immigrants experience more low self-esteem and oppressiveness than others because of their ethnicity. Portes and Zady examined data collected on over 5000 second-generation students (having one immigrant parent and being born in the United States or living in the United States for at least five years) representing 77 nationalities. Various psychosocial factors were analyzed. After controlling for SES and English proficiency (among other variables), the researchers found identification with the ethnocultural group as one of the biggest predictors of academic achievement. For example, membership in a non-Southeast Asian group was the main predictor of academic achievement; membership in a Filipino group does not become significant until self-esteem is accounted for; membership in the Haitian group becomes negatively associated with academic achievement. Interestingly, for each of these ethnic groups, their acceptance by the majority culture in addition to their own acceptance of the majority culture were predictors of their overall academic success. In effect, Ogbu's theory of

voluntary and involuntary minority status can be extended to two types of immigrants -- those accepted by the majority culture and accepting of its values versus those less acceptable to the majority culture and less accepting of the culture's values.

Ferris and Politzer (1981) in a study of Spanish speakers (one group born and schooled in Mexico and the other group born and schooled in the United States) found that when both groups attended high school in the United States the group born in Mexico outperformed the U.S.-born group in measures of academic motivation and grade point average. Adams, Astone, Nunez-Wormack, and Smoldaka (1994) confirmed Ogbu's prediction about foreign-born and U.S.-born NNSs in their study of Puerto Rican and Mexican-American ninth-grade students. They found that Hispanic native language educated students outperform in school the Hispanic students born in the United States or SLE NNSs.

An additional factor possibly affecting the SLE or immigrant students' academic success in secondary school and higher education is the institutional structures and policies. Minicucci and Olsen (1992) in a review of limited English proficient students in secondary schools in California found a mismatch between the traditional structure of the schools and the needs of this population. Despite the fact that almost one-third of California's limited English proficient population was enrolled in grades 7-12, few services or appropriate programs were available to meet their needs. A study by John Hopkins University (1992) on the dynamics of the student assignment process in high schools in the U.S. found that such critical factors as student ability plays a limited role in how students are placed. Often the testing of bilingual students' language proficiency has rendered test scores useless.

The result of this systemic breakdown in testing and placement is an early exit from language development classes based on spoken proficiency. Because these students have managed to acquire the surface structures of English and seem to exhibit good interpersonal skills, they are mainstreamed into content classes where they often fail to handle complex context-reduced language used by teachers and textbooks (Ortiz and Maldonado-Cohen, 1986). Because context-reduced situations require both high-level language proficiency and context knowledge (Williams, 1990), teachers mistakenly assume that the orally proficient student is learning disabled. Over-representation of limited English proficient students in special education classes has been documented (Mercer, 1973). For example, Holtzman (1986) estimated that Hispanics in Texas were over-represented in special education programs by 315%. For these students who manage to enter higher education, the situation is not significantly improved.

Gray, Vernez, and Rolph (1996) collected data on 14 institutions of higher education to study the immigrant's access to post-secondary education. They found that while 65% of immigrants were more likely to enroll in some type of post-secondary education compared to 57% of native speakers, inadequate language skills were reported as the outstanding problem faced by immigrants. More revealing was their lack of specific data on various language groups, suggesting that most colleges gather few data on immigrant status and rarely analyze the data that are available. In addition, another possible significant variable is SES. However, SES is typically not reported in data on this population; more likely, SES information is included in either general discussions of the college age population or in minority reports which do not isolate the immigrant groups. The research suggests that the profile of the NNS

in secondary schools is one who enters the educational system with limited L1 education, tends to have higher rates of attrition than native speakers or even other NNSs with higher levels of L1 education, encounters difficulty at the college level, and is becoming one of the fastest growing populations in our school systems. These statistics coupled with the lack of comprehensive research in SLA on this population compounds the problems for teachers and administrators attempting to serve the unique needs of this group, particularly in higher education.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between L1 educational background and L2 academic writing proficiency both in perception by ESL practitioners and in reality based on a research design involving two populations of NNSs. Why perception? Because the final part of this study involves application of the research to assessment, curriculum, and instruction, the perception of this relationship by ESL practitioners is critical to the study. Earlier studies have addressed the relationship between L1 and L2 in terms of acquisition (or communicative competence) or the relationship between schooling in the primary grades in the L1 and its correlation with L2 academic proficiency. This study builds on our current knowledge of L1-L2 relationships by exploring L1 educational background in terms of high school completion and the subsequent effect that completion has on L2 academic writing proficiency, particularly at the college level. Why high school completion in the L1? Too often earlier studies relied on primary school completion in the L1 as a sort of threshold level of literacy needed to impact L2 literacy. But literacy cannot be so easily defined. What is the literacy being measured? Functional literacy?

Academic literacy? The literacy needed to write a letter to a friend? Or the literacy needed to take notes in a classroom lecture and then synthesize those notes with a personal experience in order to respond to an essay question?

This study focuses on the L2 academic literacy needed to function at the college level, and more specifically at the undergraduate level. This type of literacy involves responding to a number of academic tasks ranging from writing essay questions on a test to an extended paper involving a synthesis of primary and secondary research. Therefore, the educational background being measured will be the typical background needed to matriculate in a college program, namely completion of high school. While completion of high school doesn't guarantee similar types of preparation, particularly given the range of L1s represented by the students in this study, this is a practical measurement of assessment of one's L1 academic literacy. By focusing on two populations, those who have completed high school in their L1 and those who have completed high school in the L2, this study attempts to determine the effect of that L1 background on L2 academic proficiency. The term "native language educated" or NLE refers to any NNS who has completed high school in his or her L1; the term "second language educated" or SLE refers to any NNS who has completed high school in an L2 environment. While all of the data collected from SLE NNSs come from NNSs who have completed high school in the United States, this study does not attempt to apply this label exclusively to ESL students in the United States. In fact, the theoretical assumptions of the study would suggest that completion of high school in the L1 allows for more abstract thinking, more cognitively complex tasks, a more seamless education (having been educated in the L1 since primary school), and ultimately more complex output. A serious interruption during that sensitive developmental period (i.e.,

immigrating to an L2 environment prior to the beginning of the high school experience) negatively impacts one's L2 academic proficiency. Therefore, immigrating to any L2 environment without completion of high school in the L1 would be problematic for L2 academic proficiency. This study, however, will be limited to one aspect of academic proficiency, namely L2 writing proficiency as measured by analysis of one's writing sample.

Research Questions

The research questions posed by this study attempt to define the relationship between one's L1 educational background and L2 academic writing proficiency. I propose several questions beginning with perceptions of ESL practitioners to actual linguistic analysis of the writing from the two populations. By beginning with perceptions, I plan to investigate if there already exist intuitions from professionals in the field about this study's chief argument. Since any discussion and implications from the findings will ultimately be tied to programming and curriculum for ESL students at the college level, the need to assess perceptions is critical at the outset. The subsequent linguistic analysis and holistic/analytic measurements will be used to complete the picture. Therefore, the questions are tied to the framework of the research for this dissertation:

1. Are there differences between the writing of NLE and SLE NNSs at the college level with the following variables being held constant: age, overall L2 proficiency as measured by a standardized L2 instrument, L1 background, years of education in the L1, years of education in the L2? More specifically, are there linguistic differences (as measured by the number of words, error-free T-units, s-nodes per T-unit, and error types) between the two populations? Do

differences exist in holistic/analytic measurements of the writing?

2. Do ESL teachers believe there are differences between the two populations' writing? What specifically are the differences, according to ESL teachers?

3. Can ESL teachers accurately predict the writing of NLE and SLE NNSs based on the perceived differences?

4. Do ESL and native English speaker (NES) college level writing teachers rate the writing of the two populations differently?

5. Are there qualitative differences in a comparison of the writing between the two populations?

6. Does SES account for any of the variation in writing between the two populations?

7. Does family educational background (namely, the parents' educational background or whether the NNS is the first generation in college) account for any of the variation in writing proficiency between the two populations?

8. If differences exist in the writing between the two populations, what are the implications for L2 assessment and placement at the college level? Materials development/ curriculum in ESL programs at the college level?

9. If differences exist in the writing of the two populations, what are the implications for TESOL teacher training programs for potential higher education teachers? Teaching strategies and methodologies with the two populations?

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Nature of Academic Writing

Research in L1 academic discourse during the last twenty years has helped shape L2 writing research by providing insights into expectations of various discourse communities. What has emerged from the research is a growing acceptance that academic writing isn't a set of written conventions or prescribed rhetorical patterns or a specific grammar; indeed, L1 academic discourse researchers have discovered quite the opposite: Academic writing is dependent upon the academic community from which it emerges. Even attempting to define a specific discourse community becomes problematic given the variation among writers within one discipline. Yet despite this variation, a number of researchers have attempted to describe aspects of academic writing that differentiate this type of writing activity from other types of writing. Any discussion of specific linguistic features of academic discourse should begin with a brief review of the overall approaches to composition pedagogy in American colleges and universities. Thus, this review will focus first on the various processes or approaches used in the last century and then on the product of academic writing itself.

Prior to the 1970s, composition studies focused almost exclusively on what has been called a "Current-Traditional rhetoric." Invented by late-nineteenth century educators, this theory of discourse privileged four modes of rhetoric, including exposition, description, narration, and argumentation, in a single format -- the five-paragraph framework (Crowley, 1998). Students were

expected to model in paragraphs and essays the modes of discourse written by professional writers. Reacting against a traditional approach to the teaching of writing as a product initiated and shaped by the classroom teacher, the Expressivist School of the 60s and 70s focused on writing as a means of self-actualization, in which students discovered themselves through the process of composition (Reid, 1993).

Peter Elbow's (1975) early work emphasized "freewriting," a technique quickly developed by the Expressivist School which allowed students to begin this process of self-discovery. The early 70s also saw the emergence of the Cognitive School, which attempted to relate the processes of writing to cognitive psychology and psycholinguistics (Reid, 1993). The research from this school focused on the early stages of composition, including the use of invention heuristics, a list of closely related questions centered around a rhetorical device such as definition or comparison or cause and effect. These schools of writing spawned an industry of research, including case studies of individual writers and think-aloud protocols. The end result was a dramatic shift away from the product to the process, from the text to the writer.

Crowley (1998) argues that the paradigm shift long hoped for in composition studies, from process to product, ultimately never happened given the fact that most composition texts today utilize the principles of the Current-Traditional approach with a process methodology. The 1980s and 1990s have seen the emergence of a new school of writing that has built on the work of the Expressivist and Cognitivists yet attempts to account for the social and historical forces that ultimately shape the writer. The Social-Epistemic school has argued that knowledge itself is socially constructed. Writers do not write out of thin air; rather, they construct reality based on the constraints of their

environment, whether one is writing out a refugee experience or a suburban America experience. The Social-Epistemic school acknowledges that personal writing is closely related to the social and historical forces that shaped that person. Berlin (1997) maintains that the challenge in the classroom is helping students to understand that arguments based on rationalism or observable evidence should always be questioned. The central questions in the Social-Epistemic classroom involve the effects of our knowledge and whose version of the truth is being given in an argument; thus, all arguments arise not out of absolute truth but out of ideology. The concept of "discourse communities" was developed by this school of thought in recognition of the varieties of expression available based on the target audience and the community from which the writing emerges.

Schools of writing, however, are always more concerned with the process of getting to the text. Even the Current-Traditional approach, with its emphasis on product, is ultimately about the process needed to get to the product. Defining academic writing always requires an analysis of the product itself. What ultimately is academic writing?

Elbow (1991) has argued that academic discourse in general involves a number of linguistic features or mannerisms including formality of language, impersonality (reliance on passive voice), explicitness or detailed metadiscourse ("The argument I plan to put forward..."), hedging (cautionary tone), and complex sentences involving extensive subordination. However, he has maintained that the problem of academic writing or discourse communities is the notion that somehow this is better writing or that writing teachers should even be engaged in a pedagogy that focuses on academic discourse as opposed to personal writing. Raimes (1991) believes that because of the

variation in academic writing and the difficulty of describing a general theory of academic writing, writing teachers should focus on changing the attitudes of professors in other disciplines rather than changing the writing of students to conform to some nebulous script for academic writing. Like Elbow, Raimes is suspicious of the intent of discourse communities given their exclusivity. In her classes she admits to teaching two types of writing: writing for learning (with emphasis on the process of composition) and writing for display (in-class writing that produces a quick product to simulate academic exams).

Reid (1989) maintains that there are two fundamental considerations in academic writing in higher education: purpose and audience. Not only does the professor design or determine the purpose, he or she is also the audience. This close connection between the purpose and audience tends to be lost on NNSs causing a breakdown in communication. Reid argues that the answer is explicit teaching of contrastive rhetoric as introduction to the nature of academic writing for NNSs.

The problem with research on academic writing or academic discourse begins with one's definition of academic writing. If it is simply a set of prescribed features that Elbow describes, then acquisition of such features would not be problematic. Shaw and Liu (1998) explored this claim. They examined the development of academic discourse in a group of L2 learners representing 15 different L1 groups at two stages of their L2 development (before and after a three month intensive English for Academic Purposes or EAP program). Pre- and post-writing samples were compared utilizing Elbow's academic discourse mannerisms to determine if there were any differences in frequency of such mannerisms. The results indicate significant increases across all L1 groups in the features of academic discourse from the pre- and

post-testing with the exception of complexity or increased use of subordination. In effect, their prose became less like speech and more like written English. Interestingly, there was no increase in correctness as measured by fewer errors per T-unit, yet the post-tests were rated higher overall. In addition, there was no significant difference in the number of words used in the pre- and post-test. The researchers conclude that academic discourse appears to be acquired over a briefer period of time than overall language proficiency (correctness, complexity); however, despite the lack of correctness, lack of change in length, and lack of complexity of structure, the L2 writers were able to demonstrate mastery of academic discourse at least to the degree that they improved from their pre- and post-tests. But the problem with their conclusions goes back to their acceptance of Elbow's features of academic discourse as the framework for their research. Did the students acquire academic discourse or did they simply acquire some superficial features of writing that one could mark as "academic?" The focus of this chapter is on studies that have examined various aspects of L2 academic writing. The L2 researchers were not concerned specifically with the nature of academic writing and discourse communities; rather, they defined (in general) academic writing as any writing task assigned for college audiences and purposes. Thus, the research targets the L2 writer more than the writing task. This type of literature review reflects the concerns of this study which focuses on two proposed different populations of L2 writers: NLE NNSs and SLE NNSs.

L2 Academic Writing

A few studies have attempted to analyze the writing differences of short-term international students and long-term immigrants at the college level.

Terminology becomes problematic because no consistent definition of these populations is found in the literature. Some researchers will refer to those who have been here for a long period of time as “long-term residents” or “immigrants” or “permanent residents” or even “undergraduates.” Additionally, some studies may have chosen subjects based on the length of their residence but not on the L1 educational background.

Scarcella and Lee (1989) were some of the first researchers to examine the effect of length of residence on L2 writing. They analyzed writing samples of short-term U.S. residents (less than three years) and long-term U.S. residents (more than five years). All of the students were Korean and were undergraduates at the University of California at an advanced L2 proficiency level as indicated by a score of 85 or greater on the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP) (1977), a 60 minute multiple choice proficiency test of grammar or sentence expression, vocabulary, and reading. The results indicated that there were no differences at the morpho-syntactic level for either group; however, long-term resident writers' essays were better organized and contained fewer lexical errors. Why? The authors speculate that long-term residents are considerably more advanced when it comes to organization and vocabulary than their short-term counterparts because of the length of their residency and exposure to English; however, at the morphological and syntactical level, their development may have slowed or even ceased completely (p. 149). The authors offer no reasons as to why this occurs.

In a qualitative study of L2 composing processes of students with an interrupted L1 education, Boshier (1993) discovered differences in the acquisition of L2 writing for academic purposes compared to students who had completed high school in their native country. Three students participated in the

study, including one who had completed high school in her native country and the other two who completed high school in the United States. The students were videotaped as they responded in writing to an article they read; in addition, they were interviewed after the writing sample regarding their writing process. Boshier found that the students with interrupted education in their L1 had fewer problem-solving strategies for writing in an L2 and tended to focus less on the quality and more on the quantity of their content. Boshier suggested that completion of high school in the native language seemed to impact one's acquisition of L2 academic writing; however, length of residency in the U.S. did not (the two U.S.-educated NNSs had been in the U.S. for 7 and 8.5 years). The limitation of this study is that only 3 subjects participated which makes it difficult to generalize to the NNS population. Boshier argued that many of the U.S.-educated NNS students are not getting the assistance they need at the college level because institutions of higher education are uncertain how to respond to this population.

In a more extensive study of the immigrant in higher education, Boshier and Rowekamp (1992) found a negative correlation between years of education completed in the United States and academic success. The researchers examined the effect of length of residency in the United States, sex, years of schooling in the native country, years of schooling in the United States, and language proficiency on first, second, and third year GPAs of 56 NNSs enrolled at a university. The NNSs were predominately Southeast Asian with some Hispanic, Korean, Chinese, and Ethiopian. The most important predictor of academic success was the number of years of schooling completed in the student's native country. Length of residency in the United States and years of schooling in the United States were negatively correlated with GPA in each of

the three years at the university.

Leki (1992) suggested that Schumann's Acculturation Model (1978) provided a possible sociolinguistic framework to understand the problem of the difference in proficiency and performance between international and immigrant students in higher education. Schumann maintained that second language acquisition is only one aspect of acculturation and the degree to which a learner acculturates to the target group controls the degree to which he or she acquires the L2. Schumann identified two aspects of distance -- psychological and social. He detailed a number of social variables for "good" language learning, including the expectation that both the target culture and native culture will interact socially and maintain positive attitudes about each other's group. In addition, the L2 group is typically small and expects to acculturate to the target culture, while still maintaining a native culture identity. Leki (1992) speculated that immigrant students would be less likely to have these conditions met. Because they are often refugees who settle in their L1 communities, typically living at home in an L1 environment that perceives the L2 environment with suspicion and sometimes fear, the perceived social distance is great. For teenagers, immigrating at a fragile developmental stage in their lives, the desire to communicate with their L2 peers becomes their primary focus. Leki argued that immigrant students often are advanced conversationally but may be less skilled in writing because of the lack of literacy in their L1. Empirical research is needed to provide further support for her suggestions.

In a study of college age immigrants who had graduated from U.S. high schools, Ioup (1989) attempted to isolate the reason why orally proficient speakers had been unable to acquire the language particular rules of English, such as the plural morpheme, verb formation, and common derivational

morphology in their writing. She administered neuropsychological tests which relied on nonverbal aspects of general intelligence. The results indicated that there were no cognitive factors which could account for their failure to acquire the language particular rules of English. While the students in her study do not match the profile of learners past the age of puberty at the time of their exposure to the L2, it does suggest that the mismatch of linguistic skills is not a factor of a learning disability or mental impairment, despite the similarity of their writing to students with learning disabilities.

Tarone, Downing, Cohen, Gillette, Murie, and Dailey (1993) provided one of the more comprehensive empirical research projects on the effect of U.S. education on the L2 writing of immigrant students. The subjects of their study were Southeast Asian-American students at the high school level (referred to as the "immigrant group") and a mixed L1 group of international students at the college level. Writing samples were collected from students at the 8th-, 10th-, and 12th-grade level of secondary school. In addition, writing samples were collected from students at the college level enrolled in special sections of ESL and in advanced level composition courses. The results indicated that there was no change in writing ability from the eighth grade through the beginning college level. In a comparison of the immigrant college students' and international students' writing, there was no difference in the overall evaluation of their writing ability. In analysis of the effect of age of arrival or years in the United States on L2 writing ability, the researchers found no correlation in fluency, accuracy, or performance. Only with respect to organization and coherence was age on arrival a better predictor of performance than years in the United States. The authors concluded that the striking lack of improvement over a five-year period of immigrant students in U.S. secondary schools would

“present serious evidence that the educational system is not serving these students well” (p. 162). They argued that one possible conclusion is that Collier (1989) may well be correct in her assertion that L2 learners who have not become literate in their L1 before attempting L2 literacy lag behind substantially in their acquisition of academic literacy, if indeed they ever ultimately reach that goal.

In a discussion of the role of grammar in writing instruction, Frodensen (1995) speculated that in American colleges and universities, foreign students have a strong background in formal grammar while long-term immigrants are less familiar with such terminology; however, her definitions of the populations are unclear and no empirical studies are referenced. Goldstein and Conrad (1990), in a study of student input and negotiation of meaning in ESL writing conferences, maintained that student-initiated revisions improved text more than teacher-initiated revisions. Of the 3 subjects in their study, the student who initiated the fewest revisions and improved the least was a U.S.-educated NNS. While this study did not examine writing differences among these types of students, the researchers concluded that one of the variables for the subject's lack of improvement may have been the influence of her secondary schooling in the United States where the teacher typically initiates questions and the student responds. The problem with this explanation is that it contrasts with the conventional view (but not always the practice) of U.S. teaching methodology which promotes more student-initiated questions and involves active participation from students than in other cultures. However, the role of conversation and turn-taking between these two populations has not been empirically explored.

In a study of the use of the *because* clause in spoken and written English,

Schleppegrell (1996) maintained that immigrant ESL students (whom she has identified as having spent most of their lives in the United States) use clause combining strategies in their essays that are appropriate to spoken English but not to academic writing. Their writing lacks appropriate academic register. These violations of register are additionally manifested in a more oral, idiomatic tone to their writing through their use of "sure" and "totally," including phonological errors in their writing with phrases such as "worth my wild" for "worth my while" (p. 274). Schleppegrell examined essays from Asian L1 students who graduated from U.S. high schools and were enrolled in the university by having met the entry requirement of an advanced level of English proficiency. She concluded that the students' lack of appropriate use of the *because* clause in academic writing was related to their lack of L1 literacy, which would have exposed them to a variety of written genres. This conclusion would have to be viewed with caution given the lack of empirical evidence relating L1 literacy to linguistic features in academic writing. Although her study focused on the use of the conjunction in spoken English and ESL writing, her argument clearly identified U.S.-educated NNSs or long-term residents as different L2 academic writers because of their L1 educational background.

Weigle and Lynch (1996) investigated the construct validity of a recently revised university placement exam that was designed to measure the level of English proficiency needed for university course work. The test consisted of three subtests: composition, listening and notetaking, and reading and vocabulary. The researchers tested several hypotheses about group differences between 2 groups of test takers -- recently arrived international graduate students (less than 1 year in the United States) and immigrant undergraduate students (more than 1 year in the United States). The composition was

evaluated on content, rhetorical control, and language. The results supported one of their hypotheses that the immigrant undergrads performed significantly better than the international graduate students on the language subscale of the composition subtest. Interestingly, there was no difference between those who had studied or lived 6 to 10 years in the United States and those who had studied or lived 1 to 5 years in the United States. Although their conclusions were targeted at validating a new language test, the researchers argued that there are critical differences between the two populations that need to be addressed in ESL programs. The results of their study maintained that the immigrant undergraduates outperformed the recently arrived graduates in at least language ability in writing. However, there are a number of concerns that were not addressed in this study:

1. The researchers define an immigrant undergraduate as anyone with more than one year of exposure to English in the United States. There could be dramatic differences in comparing an immigrant with one year of exposure and one with four years' exposure.
2. The L1 groups are not identified so we're not certain that this variable was held constant in the study.
3. The researchers confounded the differences between long-term immigrant and recently-arrived international students by adding the graduate/undergraduate feature.

Bosher (1998) explored the writing process of 3 Southeast Asian students (one who graduated from high school in her native country or NLE NNS and the other two who graduated from U.S. high schools or SLE NNS). The students were asked to read an article and then respond to a prompt about the article. The students were videotaped as they wrote (an alternative to think-aloud

protocols of the writing process), with the camera focused on their paper and pen to record pauses, rereadings, or any signal indicating thought processes during the writing. After the writing, they were interviewed about their writing process. The 2 U.S. graduates spent less time pausing than their native educated counterpart. In addition, the NLE NNS focused more on discourse features of her writing, spent more time planning, and utilized examples beyond the personal. Interestingly, regarding correction of errors, the NLE NNS spent more time clarifying her syntax while the SLE NNSs attended more to spelling and other surface features of their writing. Finally, the NLE NNS utilized more problem-solving strategies (e.g., employing search routines in the original article that the prompt was drawn from).

Finally, Harklau, Losey, and Siegal (1999) are the first researchers to attempt to pull together a body of research devoted exclusively to the classrooms and programs that serve SLE NNSs. Their volume, informed by a Social-Epistemic perspective that “casts writing and instruction as socially situated and constructed” (p. vii), offers mainly qualitative case studies of SLE NNSs in and out of the classroom, searching for the fit between their world and the academic community. One of the pieces in the collection offers a disturbing view of a secondary ESL program: Hartman and Tarone (1999) interviewed ESL teachers at a high school and discovered that poor placement, insufficient training of teachers, and a curriculum that is not informed by current L2 writing research are all factors that contribute to the proficiency gap experienced by SLE NNSs. In the same volume, Johns (1999) argues for a socioliterate approach in teaching writing to SLE NNSs. She maintains that the Social-Epistemic view reacts against an Expressivist view that privileges personal identity over social identity, and in her socioliterate classroom students are

encouraged to bring in examples of literacy from the community (e.g., bilingual flyers from a grocery store) to begin the discussion of the nature and purpose of texts in light of the social environment in which they have been created (p. 161). Harklau, et al. have produced the first collection that attempts to call attention to SLE NNSs, or "Generation 1.5," originally coined by Rumbaut and Ima (1988) to describe an immigrant generation caught between the cultural and linguistic experience of the first and second generations.

Although the research over the last decade (not surprisingly corresponding to the increased number of SLE NNSs in post-secondary education) has articulated some of the issues facing these two populations, and in isolated cases has attempted to find empirical evidence of the differences, no comprehensive study has conclusively defined the differences, although the Harklau et al. volume is the closest to creating a body of scholarly research on this issue. A number of studies identified in this review have attempted to determine whether such differences exist; however, comprehensive empirical evidence arguing for differences in the academic writing between NLE and SLE NNSs does not exist in the literature. Compounding the problem is the lack of a clear identification of the populations in the literature. What exactly do researchers mean by "residents" and "internationals"? Length of residence often becomes substituted for interrupted education in the L1 since most of the immigrants who have been here for five or more years (who are now in college) often immigrated prior to the completion of secondary school. Attempting to compare studies with such variation in the subjects' background is futile.

Linguistic Measures of L2 Writing

Fluency, Accuracy, and Grammatical Complexity

A critical variable in reviewing studies of L2 academic writing is the measurements of linguistic fluency, accuracy, and complexity that researchers utilize. If there are differences in the academic writing of NLE NNSs and SLE NNSs, at what level can we account for the differences? Can the differences be measured at the rhetorical, syntactical, morphological, and lexical levels? During the last three decades, research in linguistic measurements has uncovered a relationship between writing proficiency and syntactic, morphological, and lexical development. This section will focus on three measures used in the dissertation: measures of fluency, accuracy, and grammatical complexity.

Polio (1997) reviewed the literature on measures of linguistic accuracy in L2 writing research. She found that such research suffers from a lack of reporting reliabilities. Her study compared three measures of linguistic accuracy (holistic scale, error-free T-units, and an error classification scheme). She found the best interrater reliability with error-free T-units and error counts. However, with respect to holistic scales and error classification schemes, the reliability was lower. In the error classification scheme, disagreements between raters as to how to classify an error accounted for the lower interrater reliability. She concludes by arguing that L2 writing research needs to more accurately report the reliability of linguistic measures of accuracy in order to more effectively replicate studies. Additionally, the lack of reporting interrater reliability clouds the results of the study. In other words, nonsignificant results could be a factor of low interrater reliability rather than an assumption of nonsignificant group differences.

Polio (in press) presented a taxonomy of measures and analyses used in L2

writing. She argues that the problems with such measures are reliability concerns (how explicit is the reporting of the measure) and the difficulty of comparative analysis (whether they are measuring the same thing). Grammatical complexity is typically measured by average T-unit length, clauses per T-unit, and frequency counts of specific grammatical structures (e.g., passives). The problems encountered by researchers using these measures include reliability (e.g., disagreement on the definition of a clause) and validity (defining "complex structures" as a measure of complexity is less objective than the counting of error-free T-units in the accuracy category).

Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki, and Kim (1998) reviewed 100 measures of fluency, accuracy, and complexity in L2 writing across 39 second and foreign language research studies. The purpose of the review was to determine how L2 writing development is evaluated using various measures and which measures were the best indicators of such development. Their classification scheme of fluency (L2 learners write more in the same amount of time as they become more proficient), accuracy (L2 learners produce fewer errors as they become more proficient), and complexity (L2 learners write more grammatically and lexically complex sentences as they develop proficiency) attempted to provide clear categories for comparison of the measures used in the L2 studies. Wolfe-Quintero et al. contend that these three areas of development correspond to two different aspects of language processing: representation and access. Representation of language is considered competence in the L2, corresponding to accuracy and complexity; access is linked to performance, corresponding to fluency. Thus, the measures of accuracy, complexity, and fluency assist the L2 researcher in discovering a global picture of language development.

With respect to accuracy studies, Wolfe-Quintero et al. found some

significant results (but not in every study) in measuring L2 accuracy through the total number of error-free T-units. Those studies that compared learners at different proficiency levels on timed compositions showed the greatest difference in L2 accuracy using this measure; however, some studies also showed a non-linear relationship. Additionally, the researchers found that studies that utilized overall error count found a relationship with holistic ratings; studies that focused on a specific type of error, however, found no relationship with holistic ratings. The authors conclude their section on L2 accuracy measures with the finding that none of the frequently-used accuracy measures (error-free T-units, error-free T-units per T-unit, and errors per T-unit) are related to program or school level but are related to holistic ratings and short-term changes in intact classes. For example, in 6 out of 10 studies that looked at accuracy across schools levels, there was unexpectedly no linear relationship; however, in studies that used holistic ratings across multiple proficiency levels or within intact classes there does appear to be a linear relationship between the rating and the three accuracy measures listed above.

Finally, the Wolfe-Quintero et al. review of the measures of grammatical complexity (clauses per T-unit) focused on studies that looked at the variety and sophistication of the production of T-units. Essentially, there are two types of measurements: an analysis of clauses and T-units in terms of ratios and an analysis of a specific grammatical feature, such as passives per sentence. The problem of measuring clauses becomes compounded by the fact that sophisticated structures such as reduced clauses (e.g., the adverbial clause "because he helped her" being reduced to the phrase "having helped her") are often not counted in such measures because they are technically not clauses; however, L2 writers that use reduced clauses or phrases are arguably creating

at least as complex if not more complex grammar than those L2 writers do not use such structures. Overall, the researchers discovered a linear relationship between clauses per T-unit and proficiency level across studies. Unlike the measures of accuracy, the linear relationship was found in program or schools' levels, not in writing done in intact classes or over a short-term period.

The review of the research in the two previous studies suggests some linear relationship with respect to certain linguistic measures of accuracy and complexity; however, problems of reliability and validity persist. Some of the studies identified in the reviews are elaborated on in the following section. These measures are used in this dissertation.

Hunt (1977) was the first researcher (L1 research) to isolate T-units, including defining the measurement -- "a single main clause (or independent clause...) plus whatever other subordinate clauses or nonclauses are attached to, to embedded within, that one main clause" (p. 93). Thus, a T-unit is a single main clause plus whatever else is attached to it. A T-unit can be terminated with a period or other terminal punctuation mark, but it doesn't have to be. Two T-units attached by a coordinating conjunction are still considered two separate T-units even though they are in the same sentence boundary. In addition to defining the T-unit, Hunt also was the first researcher to isolate the s-node (or s-constituent in his transformational grammar) in order to measure the complexity of L1 writing. He writes, "An s-constituent is the abstract structure that underlies the simplest of sentences-- what used to be called kernel sentences" (p. 94). Thus, the s-constituent signals any clause (dependent or independent) in a sentence. Hunt examined 300 L1 writers from grades 4 to 12. He found that at every two-year interval there were significant differences in the number of t-units and in s-nodes per T-unit. Coordination between T-units was higher at the

lower levels than the higher levels, with the more mature writer subordinating ideas to the main argument of the sentence. He further argues that in cross-linguistic studies with Fijian, Indonesian, Korean, Laotian, and Marshallese, older L1 writers produce more T-units. For Japanese L1 writers, the number of s-nodes per T-units corresponds to the age and maturity of the writer. Thus, Hunt concludes that universally (i.e., cross-linguistically) T-units and s-nodes increase as the L1 writer matures.

Flahive and Snow (1980) examined 300 essays written by L2 adult learners evenly distributed in six levels of proficiency, ranging from beginning to advanced. The essays were initially rated holistically and then coded for T-unit length, clauses or s-nodes per T-unit, errors per T-unit, and an index of complexity in which a weighting scale is assigned to various clauses (e.g., a weight of 3 is assigned to noun clauses while a 2 would be assigned to relative clauses, passive sentences, embedded questions, possessives, and comparatives; derivational morphemes and individual adjectives receive weights of 1). Not surprisingly, the proficiency level was the significant predictor of the score on each of the linguistic measures with the exception of clauses per T-unit in levels 5 and 6 (level five scoring slightly higher); however, the researchers dismiss this difference due to variability between two advanced levels. The researchers further examined whether the linguistic measures alone could predict the level of proficiency. Only with respect to length of T-unit and clauses per T-unit was there any predictive power (individually). Finally, the researchers found significant correlations between holistic evaluations and certain linguistic features depending upon the level of proficiency: a) For the lower three levels, the correlations with the holistic evaluation increased as length of T-units increased; b) T-unit length alone could account for 50% of the

variability in the holistic evaluation at the most advanced levels. Thus, length of T-units and clauses or s-nodes per T-units do seem to increase as the level of proficiency increases in L2 writing and a correlation exists with a holistic evaluation of L2 writing and these two linguistic measures.

Bardovi-Harlig and Bofman (1989) examined the relationship between syntactic complexity (number of clauses per T-unit or s-nodes per T-unit) and overall accuracy (analysis of errors at the syntactic, morphological, and lexical-idiomatic level) in the writing of 30 adult L2 learners across 5 L1 groups. The compositions were taken from a standardized placement exam (including composition, listening comprehension, reading, and structure) at a Midwest university. The level of proficiency of the students ranged from 543-567 on the TOEFL, a score which is typically adequate for college level work. Students who passed the placement exam were separated from those who did not pass in order to determine if there were any differences in complexity or accuracy between the pass/non-pass groups. The results indicate no difference in syntactic complexity between the pass and non-pass groups; in fact, the non-pass group showed a higher degree of variability in their scores, which indicates that some of those learners had the highest complexity score -- yet still didn't pass. The two groups, however, were significantly different with respect to accuracy. The pass group made fewer errors overall; in addition, the non-pass group showed a higher concentration of errors in each of the accuracy categories. The greatest categorical difference was in lexical-idiomatic, with the non-pass group showing the most errors. The greatest frequency of error was article usage for the pass group and verb morphology for the non-pass group, although it should be noted again that there was no statistical difference in the overall distribution of the errors. The researchers conclude that the route to L2

writing proficiency appears to be the same for all learners with uneven development in the area of syntax and morphology. The researchers make no conclusions (nor comments) about the ability of students to pass (or not pass) placement exams despite the lack of variability in complexity or the correlation between accuracy and passing scores.

Kobayashi and Rinnert (1994) utilized T-units and s-nodes per T-unit to measure the syntactic complexity of essays written first in Japanese and then translated into English (n=48) compared with essays written directly in English (n=48) by 96 Japanese university students enrolled in college level English Composition I and II. Although the study focused on more than these two linguistic measurements, this summary will only focus on their findings as it relates to T-units and s-nodes. The researchers found that L2 writing produced **after** translations produced longer texts (more words per T-units) than those writing directly in English; furthermore, s-nodes per T-unit were higher after translations than in direct writing. Finally, when accounting for proficiency, the higher level students (Composition II students) increased their syntactic complexity after translations more than the lower level students. While the variable being analyzed was the use of translations to get into L1 writing, the additional significant finding was the increase in words per T-unit and s-nodes as an indicator of higher proficiency in the L2 even when accounting for writing from translations for both levels.

In summary the research on linguistic measurements as indicators of L2 writing proficiency yields mixed results. In some cases, grammatical complexity (clauses per T-unit) correlated with proficiency level (as determined by placement and exit testing) but not in others. Error counts tended to have a higher correlations with proficiency level. But overall, measures of linguistic

accuracy beyond holistic and analytical scores do not conclusively separate proficiency levels in L2 academic writing.

Sentence Transitions (Cohesion)

In the last ten years, research in the area of coherence and cohesion has attempted to isolate these discoursal features as possible predictors of L2 writing proficiency. Because of the relatively recent research in this area, L2 researchers are not consistent in their terminology. Polio (in press) reviewed the various measures of coherence and discoursal features, including scales for overall coherence or organization of a text, discoursal patterns, metadiscoursal features (e.g., hedges), and cohesive ties. Polio contends that validity is less of a problem with these measures because the studies do not claim to be measuring a construct. Their purpose is descriptive in nature, such as describing NNS writing to improve teaching. She does point out the problem that many of the coherence studies do not examine the effect of teaching; of all the measures of accuracy, complexity, and fluency, cohesive ties may be most affected by direct instruction.

A persistent problem in the coherence/cohesive category is consistent terminology. Although many texts (Richards, Platt, and Weber, 1985) distinguish between the notions of coherence (relationships which link meanings of utterances in a discourse; for example, a paragraph has coherence if it contains a series of sentences that develop a main idea) and cohesion (grammatical relationships or lexical ties, for example, the use of anaphora or transitional devices), researchers tend to use the two terms interchangeably. The problem becomes one of measurement where coherence is more subjective and thus could be more susceptible to problems with validity

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while cohesion is more objective. Additionally, confusing the two concepts creates problems when one attempts to compare studies.

Evola, Mamer, and Lentz (1980) analyzed the relationship between holistic ratings by writers in five program levels and the ratio of correct connectors to the total number of words. They found no significant relationship. Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998) identify this study as an accuracy measurement because of the emphasis on the correctness of the connectors. Evola et al., however, report no means for the measure used, underscoring Polio's (1997) concern about the lack of explicit reporting.

Reynolds (1995) compared NNSs' use of cohesive ties with NESs' use of such ties. The two groups were college level students: The NNSs were enrolled in the final level of an intensive English program and the NESs were enrolled in a developmental writing course (pre-Freshman English). Reynolds' measurements for cohesion focused on Halliday and Hasan's (1979) categories of cohesion. Essentially, these two researchers uncovered five linguistic mechanisms for texts to have cohesion or structure at the level of discourse: 1) Reference (e.g., The boy wanted a bike. One day he...); 2) Ellipsis (A: Who wrote the letter? B: Marty. Marty elliptically signals that he wrote the letter); 3) Substitution (I plan to enter college next year. If I do... Do substitutes for enter college.) 4) Conjunction (Peter needed some money. He, therefore, decided...); 5) Lexical repetition (He was grateful for the money he had been given. He slipped the coins into his pocket and hurried down the street.). Reynolds was specifically interested in lexical repetition, which does not necessarily involve the conjunction (or sentence transition) category that will be measured later in this dissertation. However, Reynolds' study is one of the few such studies on quantitative measures of cohesion in NNS writing. The

results indicate no significant difference between the 2 groups in lexical repetition, including frequency of link types, ratio of repetition to paraphrase, and use of bonds at paragraph boundaries. Interestingly, a qualitative comparison of the same data reveals significant differences between the 2 groups. Reynolds concludes the NESs more closely wed their use of repetition to the argument structure of the text; NNSs appear to employ such cohesive ties to simply highlight the thesis or a supporting reason.

Holistic/Analytic Measures of L2 Writing

One of the most researched areas in L2 academic writing has to do with holistic and analytic assessment. A holistic approach borrows on Gestalt theory in psychology, in which form is perceptually experienced as a Gestalt (from the German “form” or “entire figure”), a whole which is different from the sum of the parts (Gleitman, 1986). A holistic approach in writing is an overall measurement or score of writing proficiency based on a defined rubric (e.g., overall organization, development, and fluency). An analytic approach, similar to foreign language composition profiles, assesses in areas of competence and proficiency which are assigned individually weighted scores (e.g., a maximum score for content would be 20 points while usage would be 5). In both cases, the raters are determining the overall ability of the writer to communicate a message related to the argument or prompt. Because these measurements are well-established in writing programs across the country, researchers have had ample time and data to study the relationship between such measurements and proficiency, including the testing effect of the measurement itself.

Reliability and Validity

Perkins (1980) examined 29 final exam compositions in a university intensive English program (IEP) which had been evaluated holistically by trained ESL teachers as pass, pass minus, and fail in order to determine the correlation, if any, between their holistic evaluation and a linguistic analysis of the composition (which included an analysis of words per composition, sentences per composition, T-units, error-free T-units, clauses or s-nodes per T-unit, and total errors). The 29 subjects were enrolled in the most advanced level of the IEP with the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP) scores averaging 74.92. In addition, the 29 students were administered the Test of Standard Written English (TSWE). The results indicate no difference in the pass/non-pass groups and their TSWE score. There were, however, significant differences in error-free T-units (pass group showing a higher number), number of words in error-free T-units (pass group higher), errors per T-unit (non-pass group higher), and total errors (non-pass group higher). Additionally, there was little correlation between the TSWE score and the objective linguistic measures; however, the researcher speculates that this could be a problem with norming, in that the TSWE was designed and normed for NESs. There was, however, correlation with the MTELP and error-free T-units and number of words per error-free T-units, indicating a significant correlation with holistic evaluation and MTELP (an inference made here since error-free T-units and number of words per error-free T-unit significantly correlated with those passing holistically). Perkins concludes that objective measures of L2 writing which account for the absence of errors discriminate among holistic judgments of compositions from one level of proficiency. Thus, holistic evaluations do correlate with objective linguistic measures of writing fluency.

Patowski (1989) examined 5 essays written by ESL students that were officially scored for the City University of New York (CUNY) Writing Assessment Test. The model essays reflected the five levels of instruction in the ESL program. The essays were revised using a scoring procedure (scoring for conformity to correct prose) devised by Oller (1979). The procedure involves rewriting the compositions to adhere to correct usage. The score is derived by subtracting the number of errors from the number of error-free words in the original version and dividing the result by the number of words in the rewritten text (Patowski, p. 65). The results indicate that the number of error-free words in the original and the number of words in the revised version both increased along with the placement level while the number of errors in the original decreased as the placement level increased. Thus, the error counts tended to discriminate between levels of proficiency for holistically scored essays.

Hamp-Lyons (1995) argues that holistic scoring permits only quantitative research. Because "holistic scoring obscures the basis for scores, writers cannot be protected against the influence on raters' scores of features of writers' texts such as the use of 'ESL,' nonstandard, or 'feminized' forms" (p. 761). She argues for multiple trait assessment in which criteria are developed within a context by a detailed process, usually by a group method with fully specified descriptors similar to the composition profile method.

Research on Raters: What Goes on When Raters Rate

Santos (1988) investigated professors' reactions to the writing of NNSs at a university. Professors (n=178) from humanities/social sciences and the physical sciences were asked to evaluate two compositions written by NNSs (Chinese and Korean L1) with analytic ratings: content, language, and individual errors. After evaluating for content and language, the professors

were asked to go back and correct all of the individual errors, identifying those errors that were the most serious. The results were as follows: a) language was rated higher than content; b) lexical errors were the most serious; c) humanities/social science professors were more generous in their ratings. Santos concludes that professors outside of ESL seemed more willing to look beyond language or surface errors in evaluating L2 writing, given their significantly higher scores for language use. Even when identifying errors as linguistically unacceptable, the professors were able to evaluate content independent of the language problems. In effect, professors consistently made distinctions between content and language throughout their ratings, despite their discipline.

Cumming (1990) found differences in strategies that experienced and novice raters employ when holistically scoring ESL compositions. The two groups consisted of student-teachers in a Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) program and experienced ESL teachers in a college level program. Utilizing think-aloud protocols, Cumming videotaped, transcribed, and then coded comments teachers made aloud during their rating of the essays. The results indicate that experienced raters tended to envision the situation of the ESL writer, to direct their reading to specific features or analytic measurements, and to be more reflective of their own reading and writing processes throughout the scoring. Additionally, the expert raters tended to count main ideas to assess the student's output, to consider how well the topics were developed, and to scan the composition more for language use in order to better assess the level of proficiency of the writer. The novice group focused more on editing, filling in the gaps in the writing of the ESL writer in order to better assess the proficiency level. In contrast, the experts utilized these gaps to categorize the errors in

order to assess the language use. In addition, Cumming found that the analytic evaluations of the ESL compositions assessed language proficiency and writing expertise at the same time. In effect, raters subconsciously assessed the level of proficiency and then matched that mental construct with the language use and rhetorical devices in the composition as opposed to measuring the two separately.

Tyndall (1991) compared the results of linguistic analysis (including morphological, syntactic, semantic, and discursal features) of 30 students' compositions (Caribbean Creole) with the holistic ratings of 9 English teachers. The holistic ratings involved two categories -- more mature or less mature writing. The linguistic feature most predictive of the holistic score was the past tense morpheme, the absence of which is a consistent feature of Caribbean Creole. The author concludes that despite the emphasis among teachers in evaluating writing for organization, development, and maturity of expression, the fact remains that teachers are strongly influenced by grammatical correctness.

In an ethnographic study of 15 instructors rating 2000 essays at a Midwestern university, Campbell (1993) tape recorded conversations over a four day period. She found that raters, despite the training on an established rubric, often strayed far from the original model essays and rubric in order to work out the meaning of the scores assigned to various essays. Not surprisingly, essays with the most errors and problems in development and organization generated the most discussion, which often led to discussing the rubric and discussing assessment theory in general (p. 10). When the raters were in agreement, the discussions revolved around the objective criteria (e.g., word choice, sentence structure); when the raters disagreed, the discussion

turned to subjective criteria (e.g., essay structure, style). Campbell concludes that in general routine essays generate little discussion since instructors typically can sort good and bad writing; however, the problematic essays initiated discussions beyond the rubrics and model essays, eliciting a greater range of reader-response, including past experiences, knowledge of the department and program, and reconstructing the writer's intent.

Sweedler-Brown (1993) compared holistic and analytic scores on a set of 6 ESL essays written in a college developmental writing program. The 6 essays were corrected for sentence-level errors and then given to six developmental writing instructors with no prior ESL training. Half of the instructors rated the original set of essays and half the corrected essays. The results reveal significant differences in the holistic scores between the original and corrected essays, indicating that despite the emphasis in the developmental writing program on process, development, and organization, the raters assigned holistic scores based on sentence-level errors in the essay. Most disturbing was a correlation on the frequency of error and holistic score. Article errors were the most predictive of holistic scores, errors which account for perhaps the least amount of distortion in reading an essay.

The research consistently points to the fact that holistic and analytic rating tends to be influenced by grammatical correctness even when rubrics are designed to prevent such results. In addition, the research on raters not surprisingly finds that the more experienced the rater, the less likely he or she undermines the intent of holistic or analytic rating by focusing on correctness rather than communication. While training is critical for reliability and validity, equally critical is experienced raters with consistent use over a long period of time with the same rubric. Too often this is not the case in many instructional

programs.

SES and Family Education as Predictors of L2 Academic Proficiency

An often overlooked variable in the L2 writing literature is the argument from sociology, that is, the impact of SES or educational background of the parents and community on the development of L2 academic proficiency. In L2 writing research, this variable is almost universally ignored; in overall L2 proficiency, some researchers have identified the variable but offer little empirical evidence to test out the hypothesis that SES impacts L2 proficiency. Therefore, the majority of work has been done in L1 studies (mainly in the fields of sociology and education) although a number of L2 studies will be highlighted in this review. Because the purpose of this study is to determine the effect of L1 educational background on L2 academic writing proficiency, the variables of SES and parents' educational background are plausible variables to either hold constant or to attempt to account for the variation (if, indeed, differences can be found).

Numerous studies have identified SES as a significant predictor of academic achievement. In fact, the argument has practically become the standard introduction in many research journals devoted to the fields of sociology and education. A sample of the research, particularly from the 70s, which saw a dramatic increase of such studies, is as follows: Acosta (1971) found that parents' income level and educational aspirations for their children significantly impacted their children's reading achievement on standardized reading instruments. Seitz (1977) found that children from lower economic levels performed more poorly on measures of reading competence than do children from economically advantaged backgrounds. Segesta (1977)

concluded in her study of Mexican-American children that reading achievement was positively correlated with parents' income levels. Kyostio (1978) found cross-linguistic evidence of SES and reading achievement in a longitudinal study of Finnish children, supporting hypothesis of SES as a powerful predictor of reading achievement. Borges (1976) discovered a similar relationship in her study of 174 Puerto Rican first grade children. Holick (1976) examined the relationship between SES and reading achievement among bilingual Czech-English speakers, finding again significant correlations between the two variables. Simon (1983) in a review of the research on Raven's Colored Progressive Matrices Scale (an instrument touted as nonverbal and thus not susceptible to SES) found a significant correlation between a child's score on the scale and his or her SES. Thus, despite attempting to control for SES in testing to predict academic achievement, researchers in the 70s and early 80s continued to find a relationship between academic achievement as measured by standardized testing instruments and SES.

Given the range of studies in the 70s that explored this relationship, one could conclude that there is a definitive association between academic achievement (or at least reading achievement which is a powerful predictor of overall academic success) and SES. However, a meta-analysis of data from the 60s and 70s uncovered some surprising findings. White (1982) examined the relationship between SES and academic achievement through meta-analysis of over 200 studies that considered such a relationship. Meta-analysis involves locating all studies on a given topic or a sufficient representative sample and expressing the results on a common metric. The researcher then codes the characteristics of each study that affected the results, utilizing various statistics to draw conclusions about associations or relationships (p. 464). The

range of studies in the sample included research in Education Index, the Current Index to Journals in Education, ERIC documents, and Dissertation Abstracts International. The types of SES measures being evaluated as predictors included income of family, education of parents, occupation of head of household, home atmosphere (e.g., parents' attitude toward education), dwelling value, school resources, subjective judgment, and other variables (e.g., number of siblings). Academic achievement was determined by test scores broken down by major subject areas in elementary and secondary schools. The results indicate that the relationship between SES and academic achievement is much weaker than many researchers suspect or have claimed. Income is the highest single predictor of academic achievement; however, two or more indicators combined of SES are more highly correlated with academic achievement than any one indicator. Interestingly, home atmosphere correlated much higher with academic achievement than expected among traditional measures of SES. One major problem with the meta-analysis and subsequently the studies that were investigated is that over 75% of the variance can be accounted for by the characteristics coded for each study. In other words, those characteristics that are completely under the control of the researcher account for the results. The researcher concludes that while traditional SES indicators (income, parents' educational level) positively correlate with academic achievement, these indicators only explain 5% or less of the variance, seriously restricting its use in predicting academic achievement. What may be more important is looking at non-traditional SES indicators (e.g., home atmosphere) to better account for the relationship between SES and academic achievement.

Zhou and Bankston (1994) studied the effects of social capital as opposed

to human capital or SES background on academic achievement of children of immigrants. Social capital is defined as the “closed systems of social networks within a collectivity” (Coleman, 1990). Thus, the stability and strength of a community’s social structure can promote academic achievement where SES fails to do so. This capital allows parents to establish the norms and to direct conformity of those norms in their offspring. Among non-European children, Zhou and Bankston cite research showing the effect of social capital on Mexican-Americans, Punjabis, and Indochinese children and their subsequent academic achievement. This argument could easily build on Ogbu’s theory of the involuntary minority who fails to achieve academic and socioeconomic success because of the oppressiveness of being born into minority status, lacking the imported community structure of the voluntary minority. Zhou and Bankston examined a case study of a Vietnamese community in New Orleans, a group chosen for their low income or SES status but their high, visible numbers in being imported almost intact into a foreign community. The results indicate that immigrant students with strong traditional family values, commitment to work ethic, and ethnic involvement disproportionately have higher GPAs and higher educational goals than their immigrant counterparts with less social capital. In effect, the greater one identifies with the ethnic community and its values, the greater the academic achievement, regardless of SES.

Summary of the Literature Review

An analysis of the literature review on NLE and SLE NNSs reveals no definitive conclusions regarding the nature of L2 writing with these two populations. The problem of operational definition looms large in the review,

that is, exactly what constitutes a NLE NNS and a SLE NNS? A number of studies have examined various linguistic measures of accuracy (i.e., holistic evaluations, analytic assessment, word counts, error counts, percent of error-free T-units, s-nodes per T-unit, and cohesive ties) with varying populations of both NNSs and NESs; but again, no consistent definition of the two populations can be found, making any research difficult to compare. With respect to variables other than linguistic measurements, such as SES and family educational background, again no definitive research has concluded that any one such variable predicts more than 5% of one's academic achievement. Additionally, most of the studies have involved NESs.

The study I propose attempts to pull together the variables researched in the literature review and determine through a combination of quantitative and qualitative research if any or all of the variables explored in the review predict or explain a relationship between one's L1 educational background and L2 academic writing proficiency. In addition, I have added the study of teacher perception because of the applications section of this study, which will attempt to explore the curricular and instructional implications of such a relationship. I could find no research that has explored this aspect.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Research

As stated in the first chapter of this dissertation, the purpose of the study was to determine if there are differences in the academic writing of NLE and SLE NNSs at the college level. The design of the research involved six parts. Table 1 is a summary of the design. The research was conducted over a two-year period, beginning with a pilot study of a subset of the writing samples. This pilot study involved Parts I and II, interviewing experienced ESL teachers to determine if they perceived the writing of NLE and SLE NNSs as different and then asking the interviewees to read the samples and determine through characteristics in the writing which were written by NLE and SLE writers. Part III involved the same subset of essays which was given to a group of experienced ESL and basic writing teachers to rank order. Parts IV and V of the research involved adding more writing samples to the original sample, coding the essays with standardized measures of accuracy and complexity, and holistically and analytically rating the essays. Part VI involved qualitatively analyzing the sample.

Demographics and Variables Held Constant in the Present Study

Writing samples were obtained from over 500 NNSs of English at community colleges in Metro Detroit, Michigan and Dallas, Texas. Community colleges were chosen for two reasons: Community colleges typically attract immigrants and international students with limited English proficiency because of the

colleges' open admissions policies and affordable tuition. Secondly, I was more familiar with the community college system and could more easily hold constant the variables in the collection of the data. Data were drawn from one college system in the Midwest and one in the Southwest to ensure more diversity in the L1 groups since NNSs (particularly immigrant groups) typically cluster in regions of the country based on access to their own L1 groups and support systems (e.g., Arab immigrants in Detroit, Vietnamese immigrants in Dallas, Hmong in Minnesota).

The ESL programs from both college systems were similarly structured -- a four level EAP program with identical placement instruments and cut scores. The major difference in the two programs is the division of skill areas, with one program separating writing and reading and the other clustering writing/reading in one course. However, because the collection of data was done at the beginning of the class, the difference in curriculum was not relevant. All of the students were enrolled in an advanced level of ESL in EAP Programs. Courses were identified as either Advanced Writing (for the Dallas program) and Advanced Writing/Reading for Academic Purposes (for the Detroit program). Students enroll in these courses based on their score on the MTELP (a range of 50 to 79 for both programs) or on successful completion of the previous course.

Demographic information was collected from the students: a) age; b) age of arrival into the United States; c) number of years of education in the United States; d) number of years of education in their native country; e) country of origin; f) native language; g) income level; h) parents' educational level (see Appendix B). This information was critical to not only hold constant a number of variables that could account for the variation ultimately found between the two populations but to also clearly separate the two populations for the study.

The writing prompt (see Appendix A) used in the study was a retired prompt from the UCLA ESL placement exam. This prompt was chosen because it had been originally field tested on thousands of NNSs at UCLA, which typically enrolls similar L2 populations, particularly SLE NNSs. In addition, the prompt's graphical information requires some critical thinking about the task, and the teachers whose classes were selected to participate in the study were eager to also use the writing sample as a diagnostic tool for the class. The fact that the sample would be used diagnostically by the teachers ensured that students were more motivated to do their best on the writing sample. Even though the prompt was ultimately used by the teacher, the students were given the option of not completing the researcher's questionnaire and not submitting the essay to the researcher for analysis. Thus, their participation in the study was strictly voluntary. (All students chose to participate to varying degrees with some not fully completing the demographic information requested.)

Thirty-nine essays (see Appendix C) were selected for analysis out of over 500 collected. The final 39 were chosen based on the following variables: 1) The essay was written by a NLE NNS (a graduate of high school in his/her L1) or a SLE NNS (3 to 5 years of secondary school in the United States); 2) The writer was between the ages of 18 to 22; 3) All of the students had obtained MTELP scores between 50-79; 4) All of the students were enrolled in their first semester in a community college and held undergraduate status; 5) A variety of L1s were chosen for the final sample. All of the variables are identified below with more elaboration as to why they were chosen to be held constant:

1) The essay was written by a NLE NNS or a SLE NNS. As indicated earlier in the dissertation, a NLE NNS would be someone who graduated from high school in their L1 and has not completed any college in the

United States; a SLE NNS would be a student who has completed 3 to 5 years of secondary school in the United States. A number of essays collected were written by NNSs who had attended elementary school in the United States and graduated from U.S. high schools, yet these same students were still recommended for an ESL program upon entering college. Would length of residence account for the variation and not simply whether the student had been educated in his or her own L1? The literature as indicated in the review is mixed on this issue with one researcher finding a difference based on the length of residence and another finding no difference. Would 10 or 12 years of ESL in primary and secondary schooling signal issues beyond proficiency, such as learning problems? Because of these issues, I chose to hold constant the variable on number of years of residence (3 to 5) and focus on the **absence** of completion of high school in the L1.

2) The papers selected were written by students between the ages of 18 to 22. The age factor on the rate and process of L2 acquisition has been thoroughly researched although the findings are not necessarily definitive. Ellis (1994) in a review of the research on the age factor concludes that in general adults tend to learn faster initially than children but over time and exposure children typically will outperform adults; only child learners appear to be capable of acquiring a native-like accent with critical periods argued as anywhere from 6 to 10 years at the age of exposure; grammatical competence may also involve a critical period but much later (15 years) than for pronunciation; and the process of L2 acquisition does not seem to be affected by age. Ellis does, however, cite the Cummins and Nakajima (1997) study (discussed in Chapter 2's literature review) as noteworthy because it separates the acquisition of L2 academic literacy from other L2 proficiencies, concluding

that the older the age of exposure the greater the L2 academic literacy because of the longer exposure to L1 literacy. Given these arguments regarding the role of age in L2 acquisition, particularly L2 literacy, I chose to limit the range from 18 to 22. The mean age for NLE NNSs was 19.0455 and the mean age for SLE NNSs was 19 with $t = .12$ and $p = .903$, indicating no statistical difference in the average age of the two populations.

3) **All of the students had obtained MTELP scores between 50 and 79.** This range is considered by both programs from which data were collected to be the advanced reading/writing range for the ESL programs. The MTELP, although retired and no longer used for admissions purposes, is one of the most widely used placement instruments in community college ESL programs. It is a 75 minute multiple choice test of structure, vocabulary, and reading. It was used as one component of the official Michigan Test Battery by the English Language Institute Testing Service of the University of Michigan. Despite the problems associated with the format (discrete skill based) and the lack of any comprehensive norming since the early 70s, the test remains a viable instrument for determining overall academic proficiency needed to function at the college level. Original norming of the instrument included high correlations with the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) from .76 to .877 correlations over a period of two years (MTELP Manual, 1977). Finally, in a study I participated in at a college in Dallas, we administered MTELPs and writing samples to over 2000 students during their initial enrollment. We found correlations with MTELP and writing samples as high as .85. For this dissertation, only students who tested into an advanced level were chosen. Students who were placed into an advanced level of ESL from a previous level were excluded to hold constant the variable of newly placed versus continuing

students' differential in proficiency (Brown, 1980). Brown's study concluded that newly placed ESL students made greater gains in proficiency than continuing students in ESL classes. Finally, a t-test for independent samples was run on the MTELP scores of the final 35 of the 39 students whose essays were chosen for the study. Four scores were derived from tests which have correlated highly with MTELP -- TOEFL and CELT. However, these scores could not be used in the t-test of differences; thus, the t-test represents a subset ($n=35$) of the total sample ($n=39$). The mean MTELP score for the NLE NNS writing was 64.2857 and the mean for the SLE NNS writing was 62.2857 with $t = .89$ and $p = .381$, indicating no statistically significant mean difference between a subset of the two populations' MTELP scores.

4) Only undergraduate status was considered for participation in the study. Students who completed their college work in the L1 and are enrolled in graduate schools in the United States often are recommended to community colleges for ESL instruction, particularly if the university is small and cannot support its own intensive English program. Only undergraduates (freshman year in college with concurrent enrollment in the advanced level of ESL reading/writing or writing instruction) were considered.

5) A variety of L1s were chosen for the final sample. The participants in the NLE NNS category were speakers of Chinese, Portuguese, Indonesian (2 samples), Tegrina, Bengali, Arabic, Spanish (2 samples), Malayalam (Indian language), Ukrainian, Hindi (2 samples), German, Vietnamese, Albanian, Russian (2 samples), Fante (Ghanain language), Norwegian, Lithuanian, and French. The participants in the SLE NNS category were speakers of Arabic (2 samples), Russian, Polish, Albanian, Vietnamese (2 samples), Korean (2 samples), Farsi, Spanish (4 samples), Serbo-Croatian,

Rumanian, and Phillipine (Tongan). With the exception of Spanish (4 samples), no more than 2 speakers of any L1 were included. The exception for Spanish was due to the overwhelming number of Spanish L1 speakers in the data set (n=100), creating difficulty in holding constant not only the L1 variable but the other variables as well. The rationale for providing a range of L1s was to counter the possible effect of different linguistic L1 systems on L2 proficiency. In terms of L2 academic writing, the research on L1 transfer has been mixed. Hansen-Strain (1989) examined L1 group differences in 75 university ESL students enrolled in a reading class in an IEP. She found that learners from traditional oral cultures (Samoan and Tongan) tended to focus significantly more on interpersonal involvement in their ESL writing and to use more difficult structures more correctly in their speaking as opposed to writing than learners from more literate cultures (Japanese, Chinese, Korean). Reid (1992) studied the effect of L1 background on the use of cohesive devices. She examined the TOEFL writing sample corpus from one administration (n=638 and 3 major L1 groups). The results indicate significant differences based on the L1 background of the writer. For example, Arabic writers employed more coordinate conjunctions; Chinese writers used more subordinate conjunction openers. Ellis's (1994) review of the research on transfer or effect of L1 linguistic systems on L2 output concludes with the general principle that there is clear evidence that the "L1 acts as a major factor in L2 acquisition" (p. 343). Finally, the sociolinguistic evidence on social distance and acceptance/rejection by the host culture (as detailed in the literature review of this study) adds to the research on the link between one's L1 system and cultural identification and subsequent proficiency in the L2 and second culture.

Information on parents' educational level and household income was also

collected on a subset of the sample (n=18: 9 SLE NNSs, 9 NLE NNSs). This variable was not held constant in the original data collected but was used in the statistical analysis after the study was completed to determine if this variable could account for any of the differences in the writing proficiency of the 2 populations.

Of the 39 students in this study whose essays were chosen, 16 completed the writing sample in 1 hour, 1 student took less than 45 minutes, and 2 took 1 hour and 15 minutes (both in the SLE NNS category).

ESL Teacher Perceptions of NLE and SLE Writing (Part I)

The first part of the study examined experienced ESL teachers' perceptions of writing differences between the two populations. The purpose of this initial data collection was to assess through a sample of experienced ESL practitioners and researchers if the hypothesis of proposed differences between the two populations was shared by others in the field. Having taught ESL for fifteen years in community colleges, I noticed a pattern of consistent differences in writing (and other areas of proficiency) between the two populations, and in my conversations with other colleagues, I believed that others experienced a similar pattern with their students. The interviews for this study were an opportunity to formally document and collect evidence on teacher perceptions of differences; more importantly, I was interested in asking teachers to identify specific characteristics or aspects of writing proficiency that could be clustered around these two populations that would correlate with actual writing of the populations.

Nine experienced ESL writing teachers, ranging from 3 to 19 years of teaching in college ESL programs with a median of 8 years, were interviewed

regarding the variation in writing skills of the students. The teachers were from Michigan, California, and Texas. I wanted perceptions of teachers from different areas of the country (in this case, the West, Midwest, and Southwest) to ensure that my original experiences weren't simply the result of geographical location. I am unaware of any research that would suggest that geographical location would impact one's perception of L2 academic writing; however, given the clustering of L1 groups in specific regions of the country (Spanish speakers in Texas, Vietnamese in California, Arabic speakers in Detroit), I was concerned that one's perceptions of L2 writing were shaped by the dominant L1 group in the classroom. In addition, while the study would focus on differences in the two populations in higher education, I wanted to ensure that the two major avenues of post secondary education -- the community college and university -- were represented in the interviews since all of my experience had been at the community college level. Thus, five of the teachers were currently teaching at community colleges; four were currently teaching at universities.

With the exception of one teacher, they were not aware of the researcher's purpose. The teachers were initially asked to discuss any variation they had found in their writing classes (assuming that the students were appropriately placed). Because there are so many variables that could impact one's perceptions of student writing, I continued asking follow-up questions for clarification in order to separate out those students who teachers felt were superior or inferior writers due to initial placement (Did they enter from a previous course or with a cut-off score for that writing level?) or misplacement (Did the student come into the class with a lower cut score than the other students?), erratic attendance, failure to participate in tutorials, or any other variables that could account for the differences other than whether they were

NLE or SLE. Based on their answers to these questions (see Appendix D for the list of questions), follow-up questions were asked regarding the possible writing differences between NLE NNSs and SLE NNSs (if that seemed to be the most significant variable that could account for the differences). Finally, the teachers were questioned as to possible different teaching strategies or even separate writing classes for these two populations. The teachers were not specifically asked if NLE NNS writing or SLE NNS writing was better or worse; rather, the questions centered around perceived linguistic or rhetorical differences in the writing. All of the interviews were taped and transcribed. (See Appendix E for transcribed interviews.)

ESL Teacher Identification of NLE and SLE NNS Writing (Part II)

Part II of the study was to determine if experienced ESL writing teachers could identify the two populations from the sample essays. As discussed earlier, 39 essays were ultimately used for the data set in this study; however, this research, which took place over a period of two years, began with a pilot study involving 19 of the 39 essays. The 19 essays consisted of 10 NLE NNSs (1 Chinese speaker, 2 Portuguese speakers, 2 Indonesian speakers, 1 Tegrina speaker, 1 Bengali speaker, 1 Arabic speaker, 2 Spanish speakers, and 1 Malayalam speaker) and 9 SLE NNSs (1 Arabic speaker, 1 Russian speaker, 1 Polish speaker, 1 Albanian speaker, 1 Vietnamese speaker, 1 Korean speaker, 1 Farsi speaker, and 2 Spanish speakers). The samples came from the same sources as the final 39 (Metro Detroit and Dallas community colleges) from approximately 167 samples that were collected (as contrasted with the 500+ samples that had to be collected for the final 39). In addition, the same variables held constant for the final 39 were controlled in the original 19.

Regarding their MTELP scores (similar ranges of 50-79), a t-test of differences was run on the 19 scores. The mean MTELP score for the NLE NNS writing was 65.6 and the mean for the SLE NNS writing was 65.6 with $t = .18$ and $p = .857$, indicating no statistically significant mean differences between the two populations' MTELP scores.

Eight of the 9 faculty interviewed were asked to read the 19 essays, which were typed to avoid any possible bias in handwriting, to identify whether the essays were written by a NLE NNS or a SLE NNS. The purpose of this data collection was to first determine if the differences that teachers identified in the original interviews could be used to predict the background of the student who wrote the essay. One of the original 9 interviewed was not chosen because some of the essays were taken from her class. A ninth instructor who was not originally interviewed but was familiar with the researcher's question and design was asked to identify which population the essays were drawn from, making a total of 9. In addition to determining which essay the population was drawn from, the teachers were asked to indicate their degree of certainty of each identification based on a five-point scale with 1 being a "wild guess" to 5 being "very certain." The scale of degree of certainty would be used to correlate with their accuracy in identification of the essays in an attempt to eliminate "problem" essays, those where everyone agreed may not be truly representative of one of the two populations. Thus, if one essay consistently was rated as a wild guess by a majority of the teachers, then that essay would be problematic in the sample. Furthermore, if there was no agreement in the predictions and no significant differences in degrees of certainty (i.e., "wild guesses" were just as certain to be identified accurately or inaccurately as "very certain"), then again this could possibly underscore the teachers' misperception

of the writing differences in the two populations. Finally, the teachers were asked to give one or two reasons for choosing either NLE NNS or SLE NNS for each essay (see Appendix F for instructions to teachers). This part of the data collection was optional because of the time constraints on the teachers.

ESL and Native English Speaker (NES) Teacher Rank Ordering of NLE and SLE Student Writing (Part III)

The final part (Part III) of the first half of this study involved rank ordering of the 19 essays to determine if experienced college ESL writing teachers (who did not participate in the interview or prediction part of the study) and experienced college level basic writing teachers would separate the two populations based on three criteria: organization and development, usage, and fluency. The purpose of this part of the data collection was to either verify that there are holistic differences between the writing of the two populations that could be assessed with a rank ordering technique and to confirm or reject the original hypothesis and/or perceptions of ESL practitioners and researchers. Moreover, if the predictions could be made based on a teacher's perceived characteristics of the differences in the two populations, could a blind rating of the sample with no prior discussion of the two populations yield similar or different information about the sample? Basic writing teachers were included in the study because many NNSs in both categories typically enroll in either basic writing classes at the college or university level or freshman composition classes. No information about the essays was given to the instructors about the populations in the sample except that they were written by NNSs enrolled in an advanced level of ESL writing. Seven ESL writing teachers and 6 basic writing teachers participated in the rank ordering. The ESL writing teachers ranged

1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific requirements of the task.

2. The second step is to gather relevant information and data. This may involve research, consultation with experts, or collecting data from various sources.

3. The third step is to analyze the information and data collected. This involves identifying patterns, trends, and relationships that can help in understanding the problem.

4. The fourth step is to develop a solution or answer. This involves applying the analysis to the problem and proposing a course of action.

5. The fifth step is to implement the solution. This involves putting the proposed course of action into practice and monitoring the results.

6. The sixth step is to evaluate the results. This involves assessing the effectiveness of the solution and identifying any areas for improvement.

7. The seventh step is to communicate the results. This involves sharing the findings with the relevant stakeholders and providing recommendations for future action.

from 0 to 12 years of teaching experience at the college level with a median of 5 years while the basic writing teachers ranged from 8 to 15 years of teaching experience at the college level with a median of 10 years. The teachers were asked to rank order from 1 to 19, with 1 being the best and 19 the worst, based on the stated criteria (see Appendix G for instructions to teachers).

Although rank ordering can be problematic given the task of having to discriminate among 19 essays with a single overall rank order, the advantage would be information that would clearly separate or not separate the two populations with a gross score. Further analysis would be made in the second half of the study to quantify the rationale for such a score. For example, if the NLE NNS essays were ranked statistically higher than the SLE NNS essays then linguistic coding might be able to quantify what the students were doing in their writing that separated them. In addition, this coding could be correlated with the original characteristics from Part I of the study.

Coding the Writing Samples for Fluency, Accuracy, Complexity, and Cohesion (Part IV)

Part IV of the study involved coding for fluency, accuracy, complexity, and cohesion of the writing of the two populations. Twenty essays were added (which all conformed to the original variables). The new sample of 39 essays consisted of writing by 22 NLE NNSs and 17 SLE NNSs. The breakdown of L1s was already identified in this chapter in an earlier section on variables. As stated earlier, this research was conducted over a two-year period. Nineteen essays were originally collected for Parts I (interviews of teacher perception), II (accuracy of prediction), and III (rank ordering). Because statistically significant results were found with the original 19 essays (which will be detailed in Chapter 4), I chose not to repeat the procedures in Parts I, II, and III. Rather,

the focus of the second half would be on coding the 39 essays for fluency, accuracy, complexity, cohesion, and holistically analyzing the essays.

The 39 essays were independently coded. I was one of the coders because this part of the coding involved an objective counting of various linguistic units. (This would contrast with Part V in which I did not participate in the holistic or analytical rating because of the subjective nature of such a task.) A second coder was chosen for her background in both applied linguistics (an M. A. in TESOL) and years of teaching experience (n=15) similar to mine. Furthermore, she taught in the same program that I am involved in (a community college ESL program) so I have had numerous opportunities to work with her on various projects including rating exit essays. She was given no information about the essays except that they were part of a dissertation study on ESL writing in higher education. (This was critical since she also participated in the holistic and analytic analysis in Part V.) She was also paid an hourly rate of twenty dollars through a grant I received from Michigan State University for the purpose of completing the research.

Three measures of linguistic accuracy and complexity were used in the study: (a) overall counts of T-units, s-nodes, errors, and words; (b) classification system of all errors; (c) classification and count of cohesive ties. Polio's (1997) guidelines for T-units, s-nodes, and errors were employed for overall counts (see Appendix H). Word counts were obtained by the software program (ClarisWorks) used for the word processing of this study. The error classification system was Polio's (1997) adaption of Kroll's (1990) system (see Appendix I). The classification and count of cohesive ties is adapted from Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1998) (see Appendix J). The cohesive ties included adverbial subordinators, conjunctive adverbials, and coordinating

conjunctions. These ties were chosen as opposed to the more a comprehensive coding for cohesion from Halliday and Hasan (1979) because of the less subjective nature of the coding. For example, coding for adverbial subordinators would be more objective and less likely to encounter rater disagreement than coding for lexical repetition. The coders initially participated in a three hour session to review a sample of essays (not the original 39) in order to establish reliability in the coding. Additionally, after every 10 essays were coded independently, a discussion was held regarding the scoring to maintain reliability and validity.

Holistic/Analytic Rating of NLE and SLE NNS Writing (Part V)

The final part of the study involved holistic/analytic rating of the samples from both populations. This analysis would parallel the original rank ordering of the subset of the sample, but with one critical difference: Instead of assigning a gross score to a paper, the raters would be weighting each area of proficiency with a predetermined scale. Thus, if one population's writing was rated higher overall, this process would yield specific reasons where the rank ordering could not.

Two raters were asked to read all 39 essays. One of the raters was the same rater for the linguistic coding. Because of the subjective nature of holistic/analytical rating, I was not the second rater. The second rater had a background in TESOL and had taught ESL at the college level for the last five years, including coordinating an EAP program at a community college. The raters used Hedgcock and Lefkowitz's (1992) Foreign Language Composition Profile (see Appendix K) for the essay rating scale. This scale is an adaptation of a scale used by Valdes and Dvorak (1989). The initial design of the scale is

from Jacobs, Zinkgraf, Wormuth, Hartfiel, and Hughey (1981). Initially, they met for several hours to establish reliability with a sample of essays (not the 39 essays). Additionally, after every 10 essays, the raters reviewed each other's scoring to maintain reliability.

Qualitative Comparison of NLE and SLE NNS Writing (Part VI)

The final piece of data collection involved a qualitative analysis of a subset of the sample. Having attempted to determine differences in the writing of the two populations from perceptual differences to actual linguistic differences at the syntactic, morphological, and lexical level, I felt that one final look at the holistic assessment through the text itself would underscore the complex differences in the writing. The methodology involved an analysis of three contrasting sets of essays:

1. I compared a NLE NNS writing sample and a SLE NNS writing sample chosen because each was holistically scored at the mean for their respective group (a score of 83 for the NLE NNS writing sample and a score of 70 for the SLE NNS writing sample). If each represented the average essay for their group, what did that mean textually?
2. While the first comparison represented the average essay for each population, this could ultimately put the SLE NNS writing at a disadvantage given that their overall mean was significantly lower. I then chose one essay from each group with a similar mean (in this case, a mean of 83).
3. The third comparison involved two essays, one from each population, with low scores (both scored at 62).

Table 1 -- Design of the Research

Part I	Interviews with experienced ESL teachers
Part II	Reading of a sample of 19 essays (written by NLE and SLE writers) by interviewees to determine which essays were written by NLE and SLE writers
Part III	Rank ordering of the sample of 19 essays by experienced ESL and basic writing teachers
Part IV	Twenty essays added to the sample; Coding of all essays (n = 39) for accuracy and complexity by trained coders
Part V	Holistic and analytical scoring of all essays by trained raters
Part VI	Qualitative analysis of all essays

Chapter 4

RESULTS

ESL Teacher Perceptions of NLE and SLE NNSs (Part I)

The interviews with the 9 ESL teachers were conducted to determine if experienced writing teachers in higher education believed that there were differences between NLE NNS and SLE NNS writers. When asked if there were variations in writing among appropriately placed students in their writing classes (without direct reference to the two populations being researched), all 9 maintained that there was significant variation in writing ability. Surprisingly, 8 out of the 9 attributed the differences to L1 educational background (with later questions resulting in actual assessment of either group as better or worse writers), specifically separating NLE NNSs and SLE NNSs. (The ninth teacher attributed differences to graduate or undergraduate status since the majority of NLE NNSs in her college teaching experience were graduates and the majority of SLE NNSs were undergraduates.)

Although the hypothesis of the dissertation is that there *are* differences between the two populations in their writing that can be attributed to the NLE/SLE variable, it is surprising that ESL teachers would readily make this separation because the review of the research was mixed on the subject of writing differences between the two populations. I did not expect ESL practitioners (who typically are current on the latest L2 research) to consciously consider that such a variable would contribute to writing differences. Two teachers specifically commented on the low levels of literacy in the L1 prior to

studying an L2 as the critical variable. Thus, completion of high school in the U.S. for a NNS was only problematic because of the lack of completion of high school in the target language. No teacher specifically cited the failure of American secondary education as a reason; rather, it was the interrupted education in the L1 that was cited as the problem. Completion of high school in the United States was seen as a consequence of interrupted education in the L1.

Table 2 summarizes the differences from 8 of the 9 teachers interviewed. The differences between the two groups' writing clustered around grammatical complexity, fluency, grammatical accuracy, idiomatic usage, vocabulary and register, spelling, topic selection and rhetorical problems, progress, and learning strategies. I will elaborate on those clusters that elicited the most response, given that some of the clusters represent one or two comments from hours of transcribed interviews. In reference to grammatical complexity, the teachers commented on the more complex structure of NLE NNSs' writing contrasted with the less complex structure of SLE NNSs' writing. SLE NNS writing was viewed by 2 teachers as "written down speech" and one interviewee as "reflective of oral fossilization," which may well be the same characteristic. The number commenting on each characteristic is important. The coding of the comments reflect general trends in the comments, not quantified characteristics. Thus, only 1 teacher described NLE NNS writing as writing that contains "more complex structures," but no teacher described that same writing as "less complex" or "simplistic." Counting characteristics in an interview poses special problems because the interviewees are free to comment on any aspect of the issues presented. They were not prompted to reply "yes" or "no" to any predetermined language describing the writing. Therefore, when I report on the

comments on grammatical complexity (or any area) as contrastive, I am typically reporting one specific remark that represents a general trend among the interviewees.

The comments regarding grammatical accuracy tended to contrast NLE NNS writing as less accurate (with the exception of 1 interviewee who maintained that NLE NNSs actually had fewer sentence level errors) than SLE NNS writing but with one major difference: NLE NNSs were viewed as more metalinguistically aware (i.e., more conscious of differences as they move from their L1 to an L2), creating errors from their own "theory of grammar," employing more translation errors. In effect, the NLE NNS was seen as someone attempting more transfer from the L1 grammar. Although they make more mistakes, they are less likely to practice avoidance of certain grammatical forms than their SLE NNS counterparts. The SLE NNS was viewed as more fluent (which was never defined) but less creative with grammar. Not surprisingly, the SLE NNS writer was characterized as more idiomatic as opposed to the NLE NNS. This would be consistent with the notion of being less creative, one who relies more on the automaticity of certain forms.

With respect to lexical differences, the interviewees maintained that NLE NNSs produced more text with greater academic vocabulary than their SLE NNS counterparts. Although NLE NNSs produced more lexical errors, they tended to do so based on their own L1 academic background, underscoring the concept of translation or transfer errors. With a greater lexicon to draw from, the NLE NNS took more risks with language, overgeneralizing on cognates, employing a greater variety of writing styles. In contrast, the SLE NNS had a more limited academic vocabulary (3 teachers employing this expression) and subsequent problems with academic register. One teacher, however, felt that

13. The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various positions in the organization of the American Red Cross, as of the date of the last meeting of the Board of Directors, held on the 15th day of December, 1917.

the SLE NNS actually had a larger vocabulary (one of the few actual disagreements among the teachers).

Regarding topic selection and rhetorical problems, NLE NNSs tended to be assessed as superior in terms of the depth of their thinking despite some cultural problems that could stem from their own L1 rhetorical patterns of organization and topic development. They chose maturer topics. I'll infer here that the interviewees in general saw a contrastive difference with writers who wrote about more global issues (war, the economy, population control) as opposed to more personal issues (dating, homework, drugs). Again, not surprisingly, the NLE NNS (who had been in this country for less than a year) would be less likely to choose personal topics as opposed to a U.S. high school graduate who has been informed by a more Expressivist approach to composition pedagogy, with an emphasis on writing out of personal experiences.

Overall, there was more agreement (at least in terms of a specific characteristic) in describing the writing of SLE NNSs: more idiomatic, less academic, and less complex structurally. Except for one direct contradiction on the amount of vocabulary, none of the characteristics indicated any direct contradiction.

Assessment of the writing of the two populations naturally emerged in all of the interviews even though the question was never directly asked. Despite the clear differences that the teachers saw between the two populations in terms of characteristics of their writing, the teachers were evenly split in their overall evaluation of the two types of writing: Four maintained that SLE NNS writing was better overall and 4 felt that NLE NNS writing was superior. This was surprising given that none of the characteristics contradicted each other. The 4

who identified SLE NNS writing as better believed that SLE NNSs were more fluent in their writing and tended to look more like native-speaking basic writers. Some of the characteristics of this population included more colloquial use of language (which was perceived as better) and different types of grammatical errors (missing final consonants of participles, word forms, more agreement errors). Translation errors accounted for the majority of problems that NLE NNSs encounter in their L2 writing. Interestingly, these 4 teachers evaluated the writing of SLE NNSs as better even though their descriptors were quite similar to those teachers who felt that SLE NNSs were weaker writers. Thus, the 8 teachers similarly described the linguistic and rhetorical differences between the writing of the two populations of students but assessed the overall quality of one writing as better than the other. Reasons for this seeming contradiction (i.e., teachers would be evenly split on assessing the two populations as better or worse writers but remarkably consistent on identifying characteristics of their writing) will be explored in Chapter 5.

ESL Teacher Identification of NLE and SLE NNS Writing (Part II)

Table 3 summarizes the overall accuracy of the teachers in their identification of which essays were written by NLE and SLE NNSs. As stated in Chapter 3, this part of the research involved asking the interviewees to read a subset (n=19) of the final writing samples collected and determine based on their own perceptions which essays were written by NLE and SLE NNSs.

The majority of teachers could not accurately determine which essays were written by NLE or SLE NNS writers. The range of rate of accuracy was 7 correctly identified out of 19 essays to 15 correctly identified out of 19 essays, with the rest achieving only 8, 9, 10, and 13 correctly identified out of the

sample. Chi-square analysis of the overall accuracy indicates that only 1 teacher (who accurately identified 15 out of the 19 essays) identified with accuracy that was greater than chance ($p < .05$). Despite the certainty with which they identified the two populations as distinct writers complete with characteristics in the interview section of this study, the majority of teachers could not accurately determine which essays were written by which population.

In order to eliminate the possibility that the teachers simply were inaccurate in their identification with those essays they were the least certain of, the teachers were also asked to rate their choices on a 5-point scale of certainty (with 1 being a "wild guess"). An additional chi-square analysis of only those essays that they identified with 3 to 5 degrees of certainty was performed. The range of essays that the teachers identified as 3 to 5 degrees of certainty was from 6 to 17. However, their actual accuracy in identification ranged from 2 correctly identified to 12. This time only 2 teachers, 1 accurately choosing 11 out of 14 with 3 to 5 degrees of certainty and 1 accurately choosing 12 out of 16 with 3 to 5 degrees of certainty, identified with accuracy greater than chance ($p < .05$). Table 4 summarizes the accuracy with 3 to 5 degrees of certainty. Thus, the level of certainty on the teachers' part did not seem to impact to any great extent their level of accuracy. They were just as likely to be wrong in their identification when they were certain as when they were uncertain.

The final analysis of this part of the study examined teacher agreement since the lack of accuracy on what they agreed upon could have been yet another indicator of a problem with the sample. If all of the teachers showed a similar pattern of error (i.e., they all agreed that essays one, two, five, six, and seven were written by NLE NNSs and they were all wrong in their assumptions), then perhaps the sample did not truly reflect the two populations. However, Table 5

indicates that there was almost no agreement among the teachers in how they identified the essays.

A chi-square analysis of the 36 possible pairs indicates that only 2 pairs of teachers agreed greater than chance ($p < .05$). Thus, there was no agreement in their pattern of error, removing yet another reason to question whether the sample was representative of the two populations.

In summary, regarding the teachers' identification of the essays, I found the following:

1. The majority of teachers could not determine with any accuracy which essays were written by NLE NNSs or SLE NNSs.
2. The majority of teachers could not determine with any accuracy even when they were certain (3 to 5 degrees of certainty on a five-point scale) which essays were written by NLE NNSs or SLE NNSs.
3. The majority of teachers could not consistently determine (either accurately or inaccurately) among each other as to which essays were written by a NLE NNS or a SLE NNS.

Finally, the teachers were optionally asked to provide comments as to their choices. Less than half chose to write comments. An examination of those comments as to why they marked each essay as NLE or SLE indicates that while their comments were consistent with the characteristics the teachers identified in the interviews, their reasons for predicting which essay was written by a NLE or SLE NNS were less clear. For example, despite the fact that the majority of teachers commented that an essay by a SLE NNS was idiomatic and colloquial (which were descriptors in their interviews that also matched SLE NNS), only 2 out of 9 teachers correctly identified the essay as SLE NNS. However, in another essay in which the majority of the comments focused on

the idiomatic nature of the writing, 8 out of 9 teachers chose SLE NNS, even though they were incorrect. The 1 teacher who was accurate in her identification of the essay commented that the essay showed “clever reasoning” and was “witty,” thus causing her to choose NLE. In some cases, there was clear disagreement in the comments. In one essay written by a SLE NNS, the teachers were unevenly split as to whether the essay was idiomatic or conversational in tone. Overall, the teachers were consistent in how they commented on the essay (by focusing on syntax, vocabulary, or register) but not in how they classified it overall. This is a critical difference: The teachers focused on aspects of language that they perceived as characteristic of the two populations, and consistently maintained this stance from the interviews to the predictions to the comments. Despite this consistency of opinion, they were inconsistent throughout in their ability to actually determine which essays were from which population. This seeming contradiction will be explored more fully in Chapter 5.

ESL and NES Teacher Rank Ordering of NLE and SLE NNS Writing (Part III)

Two groups of teachers (ESL and basic writing teachers) rank ordered the 19 essays based on established criteria of organization, development, usage, and fluency. Interrater reliability utilizing a Pearson Correlation with a Fisher Z Transformation was .73 for the ESL teachers and .72 for the basic writing teachers. Although this is marginally acceptable in both cases, this might be expected given the lack of any calibration sessions and the fact that these teachers do not regularly rate with each other; rather, they were drawn from four different campuses in one community college system. Table 6 summarizes the

correlations of the rank ordering.

Table 7 details the rank sums for basic writing teachers' rank ordering of both groups of essays. The total rank sums for SLE NNS essays was 118 compared to 72 for NLE NNS essays, which initially indicates basic writing teachers rated NLE NNS writing as better since they gave them lower overall rankings (with a ranking of 1 being the best and 19 being the worst). A Mann Whitney U test was performed to compare the two groups on the basis of their ranks above and below the median. A z formula for rank sums on the basic teachers' ranking indicates a z of -2.29 ($p < .05$), which confirms the basic writing teachers' higher assessment for the NLE NNS essays. The total rank sums for SLE NNS essays was 118 compared to 72 for NLE NNS essays, which initially indicates basic writing teachers rated NLE NNS writing as better since they gave them lower overall rankings (with a ranking of 1 being the best and 19 being the worst). A Mann-Whitney U test was performed to compare the two groups on the basis of their ranks above and below the median. A z formula for rank sums on the basic teachers' ranking indicates a z of -2.29 ($p < .05$), which confirms the basic writing teachers' higher assessment for the NLE NNS essays.

Table 8 summarizes the rank sums for the ESL writing teachers' rank ordering of both groups of essays. The total rank sums for SLE NNS essays was 114 compared to 76 for NLE NNS essays, which also initially indicates that the ESL writing teachers rated NLE NNS writing as better since they gave them lower overall rankings. A Mann-Whitney U test was also performed to compare the two groups on the basis of their ranks above and below the median. A z formula for rank sums on the ESL writing teachers' ranking indicates a z of -1.96 ($p < .05$), which confirms the ESL writing teachers' higher assessment for the NLE NNS essays. Thus, both the ESL and basic writing teachers evaluated the

writing of NLE NNSs as better than SLE NNS writing at least in their rank order based on the stated criteria.

As I noted in Chapter 3, the rank ordering required only one overall assessment or rank order for each of the 19 essays. While teachers were given specific criteria, these criteria were not weighted nor were they separated in the final assessment. This gross assessment of writing will contrast with the final holistic and analytic scoring (Part V) of the complete sample in that teachers were asked to evaluate the essays by a rubric with defined scales for each criterion. I did receive through personal communication some feedback from 2 of the teachers that they were somewhat frustrated in the process, particularly with assigning a different number to every essay. For example, 1 of the instructors felt that several of the essays were equal, yet an arbitrary number had to be assigned. The advantage of this process is its ability to separate general differences (if there were some to be found) in writing between the two populations. The disadvantage is the lack of information as to what constitutes the differences: Did 1 group of essays receive better overall rankings because of the organization or development or fluency or usage? Or was it a combination of 2 of the 4 criteria? Furthermore, even this knowledge is incomplete without further analysis of each essay through some process of linguistic coding.

Parts IV, V, and VI of the research attempted to quantify the results found Parts I, II, and III. The goal of Parts IV, V, and VI was to more specifically determine why NLE NNS writing was rated better overall than SLE NNSs and to discover the accuracy of the original teacher perceptions and offer reasons as to why they were unable to accurately determine which essays were written by the two populations.

Coding of Writing Samples for
Fluency, Accuracy, Complexity, and Cohesion (Part IV)

Interrater reliabilities

As described in Chapter 3, the coding involved using measures of accuracy, complexity and cohesion: error-free T-units and error classification, s-nodes per T-unit, and cohesive ties. While interrater reliability was achieved through several norming and calibration sessions with the coders, it's important to note each of the reliabilities. Too often researchers do not report this information or they understate the claims by reporting the reliability as "good" or "excellent" (Polio, 1997). The Pearson correlation for interrater reliability of the coding of T-units was .99 but drops to .82 with the coding of error-free t-units. More than likely this was due to the nature of coding T-units as opposed to coding errors. A T-unit or independent clause is an objective claim (it is or it isn't) with little room for discussion; however, an error-free T-unit forces the coder to make subjective decisions about what constitutes an error. This is more clearly demonstrated in the percentages reported in the error classification agreement between the coders.

With respect to s-nodes per T-unit, the Pearson correlation was similar to the numbers reported for T-units, .99. Again, the objective nature of an s-node or clause (dependent or independent) per T-unit doesn't allow for much disagreement. With respect to error counts and classifications, the problematic nature of the research is much more obvious when reporting the interrater reliabilities. The percentage of the coders' number of error count agreements (i.e., How often did the two coders agree on what word or phrase was in error) was .75. This is a significant drop from the objective descriptions of T-units and

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s-nodes per T-unit. The percentage drops down to .68 when calculating the percentage of the coders' number of error classification agreements (i.e., When the two coders did agree that a word or phrase was in error, how often were they in agreement as to the classification of the error?). Error classification is much more problematic than any of the tasks asked of the coders. In a study using the same classification scheme, Polio (1997) obtained somewhat higher agreement percentages of .81 and .74 respectively for error counts and error classification. Her interrater reliabilities for T-units was similar at .99. Thus, I was comfortable with the interrater reliabilities overall, in that they tended to conform with acceptable research practices for reliability. The problem of error classification remains given that over 1/4 of the errors could not be accounted for because of disagreement between the raters.

The final interrater reliabilities involved the coding for cohesive ties. There were strong correlations for adverbial subordinators (.85), conjunctive adverbials (.94), and coordinating conjunctions (.97). All correlations were significant at .0001. It's not surprising that coordinating conjunctions posted the highest interrater reliability given the small number of coordinating conjunctions in English.

T-tests of differences in Measures of Fluency, Accuracy, Complexity, and Cohesion

The overall findings from the linguistic coding of the 39 essays in the sample indicate no significant differences in the 2 populations in measures of fluency, accuracy, complexity, and cohesion. This was surprising given the hypothesis that initiated this study coupled with the pilot study of a subset of the sample which revealed significant differences in the rank sums between the 2

1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific requirements of the task.

populations. T-tests of independent samples were run on each linguistic variable. Averages of the two coders' count for each linguistic variable were used in the data for the t-tests. Table 9 summarizes the t-tests of differences for measures of fluency, complexity, and accuracy. None of the differences is significant.

In addition to exploring measures of accuracy and complexity to see if there were any differences in the writing of the two populations, I was also interested in whether the pattern of error was different. Once again, I found no significant differences in the frequency of errors (e.g., comparing the number of article errors for NLE NNS essays with SLE NNS essays). Table 10 summarizes the comparison of frequency of errors between the two groups. Note that t and p values are given for only the top four errors because the n values become too small for statistical analysis (e.g., two errors in all 39 essays with respect to wrong case for SLE NNSs and no errors with wrong case for NLE NNSs). Additionally, only errors that both raters agreed during the classification were counted in this frequency table.

In addition to determining whether the distribution of errors was different for the two populations (it was not), I was also interested in whether the order of frequency of errors (i.e., a comparison of the most frequent error for SLE NNSs contrasted with the most frequent error for NLE NNSs) was different or similar. Table 11 summarizes the order of frequency for both groups. Again, only those errors that both raters agreed on during the coding were computed in this analysis. An analysis of Table 11 indicates that there are some slight differences in the order. Of the top five errors, both groups show a high frequency of errors for articles, subject-verb agreement, and verb formation with only minimal differences in the actual order. The errors for SLE writers that

were unique to their top five were run-ons and fragments; for NLE writers, the errors that were unique to their top five were preposition errors and plural/singular errors. Again, the n values were quite small for many of these errors; therefore, it's difficult to see significant differences much beyond the top five errors.

With respect to cohesive ties, the results show no significant differences in the use of cohesive ties (adverbial subordinators, conjunctive adverbials, and coordinating conjunctions). Note that the method for determining the number of cohesive ties per essay involved averaging the two coders' numbers and then dividing that average by the total word count of the essay. Table 12 summarizes the t-test of differences between the means. None of the differences is significant. I could not run any statistics on correlative conjunctions because the n was too low.

A summary of the results of the linguistic coding indicates no significant differences between NLE NNSs and SLE NNSs for any of the measures of fluency, accuracy, complexity, and cohesion. As stated in Chapter 2, clauses per T-unit or s-nodes per T-unit often correlate with grammatical complexity; in addition, error-free T-units often indicate accuracy in L2 writing. Despite the significant differences found in the first three parts of this study of NLE NNSs and SLE NNSs which concentrated on teacher perception of differences and rank sum ordering with a subset of the sample, the results of linguistic coding indicate that if there are differences, it's not due to fluency, accuracy, complexity, or cohesion.

Holistic/Analytic Rating of NLE and SLE NNS Writing (Part V)

In many ways, Part V of the research is an expansion of Part III, in which

teachers were asked to holistically assess the essays through a rank order. This part, however, corrects the limitation of Part III through an analytic rating, in which the raters were asked to weigh each of the criteria in the rubric. Five criteria were weighted in the rubric: grammar, content, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics. A total overall score was also computed based on the sum of the weighted scores.

Interrater Reliability

The two raters achieved satisfactory interrater reliability on each of the weighted scores and total score. Table 13 summarizes the correlations for each of the scores. It's important to note that the higher correlations for the total score, grammar, content, and organization are due to the larger numbers that are being correlated and the greater range. For example, the content score ranged from 13 points to 30 points. The range for vocabulary was slightly lower, and the range for mechanics was significantly restricted at only 1 to 5 points. This could account for the lower correlations.

T-test of Differences of Holistic/Analytic Ratings

What the linguistic coding could not reveal about statistically significant differences in the writing of the two populations, the holistic/analytic analysis does. Essentially, this analysis points to significant differences in the assessment of the two populations: NLE NNSs are judged superior writers to SLE NNSs when assessing holistically the content, organization, grammar, and vocabulary of the writing. More importantly, when total overall scores are computed for all 39 essays, NLE NNSs are judged superior writers to SLE NNSs. Only with respect to mechanics do no differences emerge. In effect, this part of the study confirms the first half of the study which examined a subset of the sample and judged NLE NNS writing to be better than SLE NNS writing.

While more analysis will be given in Chapter 5, preliminary assessment of the study indicates that the parts do not equal the whole: NLE NNSs are better writers at a global level but not at a local level. While their writing may mirror a similar pattern of accuracy, fluency, and complexity, NLE NNSs are still judged to be better writers, better thinkers, better developers of ideas.

The t-test of independent samples for each of the scores is summarized in Table 14. A similar pattern that was found through the statistical analysis of the linguistic coding also emerged with respect to mechanics: NLE NNS essays were actually judged higher overall, but the score was statistically insignificant in a t-test of independent samples.

SES and Parents' Educational Background

A final variable that was analyzed in the statistical analysis but held constant throughout the data collection was SES and parents' educational background. With a subset of the sample ($n = 18$ reporting SES and parents' educational background evenly divided between the two populations), a t-test of independent samples indicates no statistical differences in the distribution of SES and parents' educational background in the two populations. Using the following numerical indicators of income (1=10-20k, 2=20-30k, 3=30-40k, 4=40-50k, etc...), the SLE NNS mean for SES was 1.777 and the NLE NNS mean was 2.444 with $t = 2.03$ and $p = .06$. The t-test of independent samples for parents' educational background with 1 indicating one or both parents having attended college and 2 indicating neither parent attended college, the SLE NNS mean was 1.333 and the NLE NNS mean was 1.222 with $t=.5$ and $p=.624$. Neither difference was statistically significant.

Qualitative Analysis of NLE and SLE Student Writing (Part VI)

The final piece of data collection involved a qualitative analysis of a subset (n=6) of the sample. As I discussed in Chapter 3, this analysis focused on qualitative differences among three sets of NLE and SLE NNS writing: Using the total average score from the holistic rating, I compared a set of essays (one from each population which represented the mean for the group), a set of essays with equal but high holistic ratings, and a set of essays with equal but low holistic ratings. The essays were chosen at random.

The results confirmed the holistic assessment with one important difference. NLE NNS writing, even with similar holistic scores, is more complex in its development, less reliant on personal information to advance the argument, more purposeful in its structure, and more contextualized. Consider the “average” essay from a NLE writer, Essay Code #28-2 (Appendix C, p. 184) contrasted with the “average” essay from a SLE writer, Essay Code #6-37 (Appendix C, p. 139). The NLE writer opens with an assessment of the problem that the prompt proposes: “Having been offered jobs in three cities: A, B, C, I need to choose carefully.” The writer then goes on to identify the most important criterion that influences his/her choice, the environment. The argument is clearly established. Contrast this opening with the SLE writer. No information is given as to the problem posed by the prompt. No specific reason is given as to why city A is chosen except that the opportunities are better. The inexperience of the writer is evident from the irrelevant information he/she gives us as to the reason city A was chosen: “...after I had a close look at it.”

Another critical difference between the two writers is the detail and support for their arguments. The NLE writer expounds on the living conditions of the city he has chosen, offering rich detail to support (“the city is pure with many green

trees along the streets"). The writer has an eye on the reader, constantly pulling him or her into the text with the use of the first person plural pronoun ("We can have fresh water..."), as if he/she is attempting to convince the reader of the argument. In addition to the detailed advantages, the writer gives clear disadvantages, detailing the lack of hospitals ("a few small hospitals dispersing somewhere in the urban"). The writer closes with a summary conclusion that reinforces to the reader his/her reasons for choosing this city. Again, contrast the detail of the NLE essay with the SLE essay. In the latter, the simplistic reasons offered as advantages amount to little more than restating the original characteristics of the city: "The advantages of city A is schools...you could get a higher education and have a best opportunity for work." And the advantage of good water is that "if you want to live, you supposed to have water and if you want to have a healthy life." Ultimately the best reason the writer can find to choose City A comes in the conclusion: City A is "much better than the other cities presented." The strategy throughout is repetition of the prompt and a simplistic use of transitional devices to signal new reasons (first, second, third), which is typical of inexperienced L2 writers.

Although the two essays compared were representative of the average NLE and SLE writer, a comparison is always problematic given that we're dealing with two different holistic scores. The NLE essay would have the distinct advantage given its higher mean. However, a comparison of two essays with identical rankings (83.5) reveal some similar contrasting differences in the writing (NLE NNS Essay #15-144, Appendix C, p. 157, and SLE NNS Essay #17-111, Appendix C, p. 150). Although the differences are not as stark as in the first comparison, the NLE NNS essay attempts more development of the argument. The opening reveals little differences, except that the SLE NNS

essay has some of the idiomatic fluency (“guy like myself”) that the teacher interviewees spoke about . There’s a heavier reliance on personal reasons for supporting choices in SLE NNS writing as opposed to NLE NNS use of global reasons for supporting their arguments. The paragraph development in the SLE NNS essay tends to be more mechanical (opening transitional device, topic sentence, one reason, one example) while the NLE NNS essay uses more elaboration in each paragraph to support the reason. In effect, the NLE writer seems to have more to say about a subject and uses more non-personal information to develop the argument.

The final comparison involves two essays (NLE NNS Essay #50-2, Appendix C, p. 192, and SLE NNS Essay #33-2, Appendix C, p. 181) with similar low holistic/analytic scores (62). Again, despite similar scores, the NLE writer attempts more development, more complexity of argument, and more organizational structure. Despite the global errors which cause the reader to reconstruct the sentence or argument (“Study-working programs is essential in today’s lifestyle”), the NLE NNS essay is clearly attempting to introduce an argument with a introduction that tends to move from the general to the specific. In contrast, the SLE NNS essay simply opens with frustration at the difficulty of the writing task: “It’s is hard to make a decision on something.” There’s little attempt to engage the reader (despite the fact that the SLE writer seems to be more fluent than the NLE writer) and no development of the reasons for his/her choice. There’s no conclusion; in fact, it appears that the writer stopped in the middle of his/her thinking. While it’s difficult to infer process from product, I wonder if he or she simply ran out of time. Anecdotally, I’ve noticed that SLE NNS writers tend to write quickly, finish before their NLE NNS peers, and are restless to do something else when given a timed writing assignment. NLE

NNS writers, at least in the case of Essay #50-2, Appendix C, p. 192, elaborate more even when he or she has little information to give: "It is scientific proven that air and water causes most of diseases." The writer attempts academic register even at a low proficiency level.

Summary of Results

1. Teachers perceive NLE writers to be better writers than SLE writers.
2. Despite their perceptions, teachers are unable to accurately identify which essays are written by NLE or SLE writers. There is additionally no agreement in their inability to determine which population the essays were drawn from.
3. Rank ordering of a subset of NLE and SLE essays (n=19) by ESL teachers and basic writing teachers indicate significant differences in the rank ordering, with NLE essays being ranked higher overall.
4. Linguistic analysis of the 39 essays (17 SLE and 22 NLE) reveal no differences at the sentence level (number of T-units, s-nodes per T-unit, error-free T-units, word count, and cohesive ties).
5. Holistic/analytic scoring indicate significant differences in total score, content, organization, grammar, and vocabulary between the two populations, with NLE essays being ranked higher holistically in these five categories. There are no significant differences in mechanics.
6. Analysis of SES data with a subset of the sample (n= 18; 9 SLE & 9 NLE) indicates no statistical difference in SES and NLE or SLE.
7. Analysis of parents' education with a subset of the sample (n=18; 9 SLE & 9 NLE) indicates no statistical difference in parents' educational level (first generation in college) with NLE or SLE status.
8. A qualitative analysis of a subset of the sample (n=6) of both essays

confirmed that NLE NNS writing was superior; in fact, the qualitative analysis revealed a more complex, richer writing than the SLE NNS essays.

The general discussion of these findings, including implications and recommendations, will be addressed in the next chapter.

Table 2 -- Teachers' Perceptions of Differences in NLE and SLE NNS Writing

NLE NNS Writing	SLE NNS Writing
Grammatical Complexity	
More complex structures (1)a	Less complex, shorter sentences (2)
Metalanguage for grammar (1)	Less creative with grammar (1)
<hr/>	
Fluency	
Problems with fluency (1)	More fluent (1)
More text produced (1)	
<hr/>	
Accuracy	
Translation errors (1)	
Errors from a theory of grammar (1)	
Fewer sentence level errors (1)	Reflective of oral fossilization (1)
<hr/>	
Idiomatic Usage	
Problems with idiomatic usage (1)	More idiomatic expressions (4)
<hr/>	
Vocabulary and Register	
More accuracy in words used (1)	Limited academic vocabulary (3)
More lexical errors (2)	Larger vocabulary (1)
Greater variety of writing styles (1)	Problems with academic register (2)
	Written down speech (2)
<hr/>	

Spelling

Phonetic spellings (2)

Topic Selection and Rhetorical Problems

Maturer choices in topic selection (1) Lack of depth in topic selection (1)

Cultural problems in writing (1)

Progress

Faster progress in ESL classes (1)

Learning Strategies

Sophisticated learning strategies (2)

^a() Indicates number of teachers who identified the characteristic.

Table 3 Rate of Accuracy of Teacher Identification of NLE and SLE NNS Writing

Teacher	Rate of Accuracy (x/n)	χ^2	p
a	9/19	.0526	.8185
b	13/19	2.5789	.1083
c	8/19	.4737	.4913
d	10/19	.0526	.8185
e	10/19	.0526	.8185
f	8/19	.4737	.4913
g	9/19	.0526	.8185
h	15/19	6.3684	.0116*
i	7/19	1.3158	.2513

Note: X represents the number of times each teacher correctly identified which population the essays were drawn from and n represents the total number of essays.

***p < .05**

Table 4 Rate of Accuracy with 3-5 Degrees of Certainty of Teacher Identification

Teacher	Rate of Accuracy (x/n)	χ^2	p
a	3/8	.5	.4795
b	11/14	4.5714	.0325*
c	2/8	2.0	.1573
d	5/12	.3333	.5637
e	7/15	.0667	.7963
f	8/19	.4737	.4913
g	2/6	.6667	.4142
h	12/16	4.	.0455*
i	7/17	.5294	.4669

Note: X represents the total number of times each teacher correctly identified with 3-5 degrees of certainty which population the essays were drawn from and n represents the total number of essays.

***p < .05**

Table 5 Teacher Agreement in Identification of NLE and SLE NNS Writing

Teacher Pairs	Agreements	Disagreements	χ^2	p
a/b	10	9	.0526	.8185
a/c	8	11	.4737	.4913
a/d	8	11	.4737	.4913
a/e	9	10	.0526	.8185
a/f	6	3	.120	.728
a/g	11	8	.4737	.4913
a/h	10	9	.0526	.8185
a/i	14	5	4.2632	0389*
b/c	11	8	.4737	.4913
b/d	12	7	1.3158	.2513
b/e	12	7	1.3158	.2513
b/f	9	10	.0526	.8185
b/g	6	13	2.5789	.1083
b/h	13	6	2.5789	.1083
b/i	7	12	1.358	.2513
c/d	9	10	.0526	.8185
c/e	10	9	.0526	.8185
c/f	8	11	.4737	.4913
c/g	10	9	.0526	.8185
c/h	8	11	.4737	.4913
c/i	9	10	.0526	.8185

d/e	12	7	1.3158	.2513
d/f	8	11	.4737	.4913
d/g	8	11	.4737	.4913
d/h	11	8	.4737	.4913
d/i	12	7	1.3158	.2513
e/f	10	9	.0526	.8185
e/g	8	11	.4737	.4913
e/h	12	7	1.3158	.2513
e/i	9	10	.0526	.8185
f/g	10	9	.0526	.8185
f/h	7	12	1.3158	.2513
f/i	7	12	1.3158	.2513
g/h	8	11	.4737	.4913
g/i	10	9	.0526	.8185
h/i	14	5	4.2632	.0389*

Note. The numbers in columns two and three respectively represent the total number of agreements when both teachers marked the essay as either NLE or SLE NNS and the total number of disagreements between both teachers.

* $p < .05$

Table 6 Pearson Correlations of Teachers' Rank Ordering of NLE and SLE
NNS Writing

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
a		.3	.58*	.62*	.68*	.52*	.71*
b			.1	.42	.47*	.32	.53*
c				.38	.46*	.5*	.56*
d					.71*	.75*	.8*
e						.58*	.73*
f							.73*

*p < .05

Table 7 Basic Writing Teachers' Rank Sums of NLE and SLE NNS Writing

Rank	Group	NLE NNS	SLE NNS
Sums		Rank Order	Rank Order
10	NLE	1	
25	NLE	2	
27	NLE	3	
30	NLE	4	
40	NLE	5	
51	NLE	6	
52	NLE	7	
54	SLE		8
57	SLE		9
59	SLE		10
60	SLE		11
63	NLE	12	
69	NLE	13	
82	SLE		14.5
82	SLE		14.5
84	SLE		16
89	SLE		17
95	SLE		18
111	NLE	19	
Total Rank Sums		72	118

Table 8 ESL Teachers' Rank Sums of NLE and SLE NNS Writing

Rank	Group	NLE NNS	SLE NNS
Sums		Rank Order	Rank Order
18	NLE	1	
24	NLE	2	
25	NLE	3	
44	NLE	4	
47	SLE		5
52	NLE	6	
60	NLE	7	
62	NLE	8.5	
62	SLE		8.5
65	NLE	10	
81	SLE		11.5
81	SLE		11.5
87	SLE		13.5
87	SLE		13.5
97	NLE	15.5	
97	SLE		15.5
107	SLE		17
108	SLE		18
120	NLE	19	
Total Rank Sums		76	114

Table 9 -- T-test of Differences in Measures of Fluency, Complexity and Accuracy

	NLE	SLE	t	p
Fluency				
Number of words	366.27	327.88	1.25	.22
Number of T-units	26.113	22.382	1.32	.195
Mean T-unit length	14.768	14.329	.44	.661
Number of s-nodes	41.954	35.73	1.37	.179
Complexity				
S-nodes per T-unit	1.6545	1.6706	.18	.859
Accuracy				
Error-free T-units	13.0227	10.3824	1.25	.22
Errors per T-unit	.5941	.77	1.97	.057
% of Error-free T-units	.5095	.4224	1.89	.066

Table 10 -- Frequency of Errors for NLE and SLE NNS Writing

Error	SLE	NLE n=200err	Mean/SLE n=251err	Mean/NLE	t	p
article	.155/n=31	.219/n=55	1.7059	2.4545	.91	.368
S-V agree	.08/n=16	.116/n=29	.9412	1.3182	.8	.431
prep	.045/n=9	.08/n=20	.5294	.9091	1.19	.241
sing. for pl	.04/n=8	.072/n=18	.4706	.6818	.59	.557
v form	.095/n=19	.064/n=16				
lexical ch.	.06/n=12	.048/n=16				
pl. for sing.	.03/n=6	.044/n=11				
subj form	.035/n=7	.04/n=10				
wd form	.015/n=3	.036/n=9				
tense	.03/n=14	.032/n=8				
run-ons	.07/n=14	.032/n=8				
pl. for sing	.03/n=6	.044/n=11				
frag	.08/n=16	.032/n=8				
missng wd	.025/n=5	.028/n=7				
punc	.015/n=3	.024/n=6				
wd order	.05/n=2	.002/n=5				
comp form	.015/n=3	.016/n=4				
v missng	.04/n=8	.016/n=4				
ambig ref	0/n=0	.016/n=4				

n-pro agree	.01/n=2	.012/n=3
extra wds	.01/n=2	.008/n=2
genitive	.05/n=10	.008/n=2
whole clau	0/n=0	.008/n=2
2-wd vb	0/n=0	.004/n=1
v comp	0/n=0	.004/n=1
deixis	.005/n=1	.004/n=1
dang part	.005/n=1	.004/n=1
quan wds	.02/n=4	.004/n=1
quan.-n agr	.01/n=2	.004/n=1
parall struc	.015/n=3	.004/n=1
negation	0/n=0	.004/n=1
pro copy	.025/n=5	.004/n=1
wrong case	.01/n=2	0/n=0
gapping err	.005/n=1	0/n=0

Table 11 -- Comparison of Order of Frequency of NLE and SLE NNS Errors

SLE Error Frequency		NLE Error Frequency	
article	16%	article	22%
V formation	10%	s-v agree	12%
S-V agree	8%	prep	8%
frag	7%	sing for pl	7%
run-ons	6%	v form	6%
lexical	6%	lexical	5%
genitive	5%	pl for sing	4%
prep	5%	subj form	4%
v missing	4%	wd form	4%
sing for pl	4%	tense	3%
subj form	4%	run-on	3%
tense	3%	frag	3%
pl for sing	3%	missing wd	3%
pro copy	3%	punc	2%
missing wd	3%	wd order	2%
quan wds	2%	wrong comp	2%
wrong comp	2%	v missing	2%
parall struc	2%	ambig ref	1%
wd form	2%	n-pro agree	1%

punc	2%
quant-n agr	1%
n-pro agree	1%
extra wds	1%
wrong case	1%
deixis prob	less than 1%
wd order	less than 1%
dang part	less than 1%
gapping err	less than 1%

extra wds	1%
genitive	1%
whole clau	1%
2 wd vbs	less than 1%
v comp	less than 1%
deixis prob	less than 1%
dang part	less than 1%
quan. wds	less than 1%
quant-n agr	less than 1%
parall struc	less than 1%
negation	less than 1%
pro copy	less than 1%

Table 12 -- Cohesive Ties in NLE and SLE NNS Writing

	NLE Mean	SLE Mean	t	p
Adverbial Subordinators	.0176	.0198	.8	.427
Conjunctive Adverbials	.0191	.0168	.71	.481
Coordinating Conjunctions	.0133	.0119	.45	.659

Table 13 -- Interrater Reliabilities for Holistic/Analytic Ratings

Criterion	Score
Total	.74*
Grammar	.73*
Content	.71*
Organization	.70*
Vocabulary	.61*
Mechanics	.61*
p < .0001	

Table 14 -- T-test of Mean Differences for Holistic/Analytic Ratings

	SLE NNS	NLE NNS	t	p
Total Score	70.1765	83.3158	5.57	.000*
Content	22.6176	26.5	4.47	.000*
Organization	14.97	17.1	2.8	.01*
Grammar	15.2647	19.1579	3.84	.001*
Vocabulary	13.9706	16.3421	4.54	.000*
Mechanics	3.2353	4.8158	1.4	.169

***p<.05**

CHAPTER 5
GENERAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
General Findings

Based on the results of the study we can conclude that there are differences between NLE NNS writing and SLE NNS writing on the basis of teacher perception, rank ordering of a subset of the writing samples, and holistic/analytic ratings of the 39 essays in the sample. Furthermore, the rank ordering of the subset of the sample and the holistic/analytic rating of the entire sample point to the conclusion that NLE NNS writing is evaluated higher than SLE NNS writing. Why? The linguistic coding of the samples proved that the parts do not equal the whole: There were no differences in complexity, accuracy, or fluency as measured by error-free T-units, s-nodes per T-unit, error analysis, and cohesive ties despite the fact that there were significant differences at the holistic/analytic level, particularly with overall rating, organization, development, grammar, and vocabulary. In effect, the results confirm that at a global level, NLE NNS writing is judged superior to SLE NNS writing even when there are no significant differences at a local level.

Because this study held a number of variables constant in the sample, the variable that primarily accounts for the difference in the writing is the effect of being educated through secondary school in one's native country and native language. Completion of high school in the L1, therefore, represents a threshold of L1 academic literacy that accounts for some of the success in L2 academic literacy, particularly when measured against those NNSs who completed high school in an L2. This does not mean that SLE NNSs cannot

achieve L2 academic literacy; indeed, the writing samples clearly indicate that SLE NNSs are capable of some success in academic literacy in an L2. More importantly, many of these students do go on to pursue college degrees after completion of their ESL. What this finding suggests is that their interruption of education in the L1 prior to completion of high school will force them to lag behind their NLE NNS peers in L2 academic writing. This study makes no claims for other types of L2 proficiency, such as speaking, listening, and reading. However, given the prominence academic writing is given in post-secondary education, any disadvantage becomes a potential obstacle to degree completion. More specific implications of this finding with reference to assessment, intake, placement, curriculum development, teaching strategies, and teacher training will be explored in this chapter.

Perceptions and Contradictions

The results of the interview and subsequent identification of which population the essays were drawn from reveal that while teachers maintain there are linguistic differences in the writing of the two populations, they were unable to accurately identify between the two groups. Furthermore, they exhibited no pattern of agreement in their identification of the essays. The results would appear to be contradictory. If there are true qualitative and quantitative differences in the writing between the two populations as exhibited in the rank ordering of a subset of the sample and holistic/analytic rating of the complete sample, shouldn't experienced ESL writing teachers be able to accurately determine in the essays based on their own intuition what was apparent in the interviews? One possibility could be that the subset of the sample may not have been representative of the population since there were only 19 essays in

the sample; therefore, the teachers simply did not have an opportunity to make clear distinctions between the two groups. If the teachers were given all 39 essays and asked to make predictions, would the results be different?

If there were problems in sample size then this would have been reflected in their pattern of agreement. The teachers were not in agreement on what they inaccurately identified. I'll have to infer process from product to analyze what I think the teachers were doing given that there were no data collected on what the teachers thought when making their selections. I believe that they were searching for confirmation of their own preconceived notions of what was better writing. For example, if a teacher believed that SLE NNSs were better writers because they sounded more like native speakers, particularly in their errors and use of idioms, then instead of searching for examples of such characteristics, the teachers instead looked for what they would judge as better writing overall and determine the paper was written by a SLE NNS. The problem is that often the better writing was written by a NLE NNS. If the teachers were evenly split as to which writing they believed was better, then any accurate or even consistent agreement in the identification becomes problematic.

Why would some teachers believe intuitively (since no teacher quoted any research in the interviews) that one type of writing is better than another? The answer to this lies in how teachers view fluency and academic proficiency. Some ESL teachers strongly favor writing that is more nativelike in its development, organization, and even errors with a strong personal voice throughout; others prefer a more academic register, favoring lexical development (and even risk-taking in vocabulary use) over the "chattiness" of typical freshman writing. Both groups of teachers would believe that their rationale for favoring such writing is predictive of a student's success in post-

secondary education. Therefore, if a student spent 4 or 5 years in a U.S. high school, then assumptions would be made by teachers who prefer a more idiomatic writing that such a student would have an advantage. This concept of length of exposure equals fluency gets applied to academic writing proficiency, not just to communicative competence. However, too often the SLE NNS doesn't match the expectation of the teacher in terms of writing fluency. The problem is compounded by a lack of empirical research in this area which creates a vacuum, forcing teachers to overgeneralize (e.g., more exposure in the L2 means more L2 academic writing proficiency).

The lack of awareness of the true writing differences in these populations becomes a challenge when teachers work with these groups in the classroom. We've seen in the predictions that intuition doesn't work because of the lack of information and research on the differences in the population. Thus, when the SLE NNS doesn't meet the expectation of writing fluency, then teachers assume that the student is either developmentally delayed or because of his/her often oral fluency should be referred to a developmental reading and writing class for native speakers. In either case, the SLE NNS often doesn't make the same progress as his/her NLE NNS counterpart because of the lack of appropriate instructional intervention. The second half of this chapter proposes some instructional recommendations to remedy this problem.

Rank Ordering. Linguistic Coding. Holistic/Analytic Rating: Why the Parts Don't Equal the Whole

Based on my hypothesis that NLE NNS writing would be rated higher than SLE NNS writing, I did not expect the linguistic coding to yield such inconclusive data. The research on linguistic coding or measures of accuracy

and complexity is mixed. In some cases, a significant linear relationship exists between proficiency level and overall accuracy, fluency, and complexity. However, as Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998) maintain in their review of over 100 measures across 39 second and foreign language research studies, such a linear relationship often depends upon the type of study. They argue that their in their review of studies that used accuracy measures (error-free T-units, error-free T-units per T-unit, and errors per T-unit) the results were mixed: Some studies found a linear relationship between program or school level and accuracy while others did not. With respect to grammatical complexity indices, they found non-significant results when correlated with holistic scores in the same proficiency level. They did find, however, that *across* levels, there appeared to be some linear relationship. This may initially explain my results in the linguistic coding: 1) The students were all in the same level of ESL, an advanced course for reading and writing based on an MTELP cut score; 2) The measures of accuracy and complexity did not correlate with the holistic/analytic scores since no significant differences were found between SLE and NLE NNSs with respect to accuracy/complexity measures but significant differences were found with respect to holistic/analytic ratings (i.e., organization, development, and grammar).

These were essentially the same conditions that Wolfe-Quintero et al. found in their review of complexity measures: No significant results within intact classes and no significant results when correlated with holistic scores. Thus, such measures of accuracy, fluency, and complexity are more evident *across* greater ranges of proficiency (e.g., from a beginning to an intermediate level of proficiency) not within intact levels.

Another explanation that may account for the fact that there were no

differences in measures of accuracy and complexity yet there were significant differences in the holistic evaluation could be in the types of errors within each category of error. Table 9 (in Chapter 4) summarizes the frequency of errors in each set of essays. The results clearly indicated no significant differences with respect to number of errors in each category analyzed; however, within each category exists types of errors that could possibly be considered more severe or less severe. For example, in the category of verb tense error there were no significant differences in the total number, even though the SLE essays contained more errors (n=14) than the NLE essays (n=8). This isn't surprising given the total number of essays and number of errors analyzed. Wolfe-Quintero et al. would argue that the lack of significant difference was due to the fact that both sets of essays were drawn from the same overall level of proficiency. We would need to have a greater range of levels to begin to see a greater difference in errors. The problem is that verb tense errors can be everything from misuse of the simple future ("I have realized that to enjoy the life you need to have the conditions. This is one of the reasons why I WILL CHOOSE the second city, which has an excellent entertainment characteristic." Essay #29-2, Appendix C, p. 181) to failure to signal the past perfect ("I just turned in the application and I left. It past a week and I haven't heard from them yet." Essay #43-2, Appendix C, p. 176). Both were categorized as verb tense errors. The verb tense error in the first example clearly does not interfere with meaning. The sentence could easily be fixed with a substitute modal or even present perfect: "This is one of the reasons why I would choose (or have chosen) the second city." The verb tense error in the second example, however, is more severe. The failure to signal past perfect in the middle of a brief narrative forces the reader to misinterpret the sequence of time. The use of

present perfect indicates that the writer is still waiting to hear from the prospective employers (to whom he turned in the applications). Yet two sentences later the writer informs us that he had heard from the employers and began making decisions about the best city to live in. The reader is then forced to return to the sentence with the verb tense error and reinterpret the time sequence to fit the rest of the paragraph.

In both cases the error was appropriately categorized as an error in verb tense. The less severe error was taken from an essay written by a NLE NNS while the more severe error was taken from an essay written by a SLE NNS. Where the measures of linguistic accuracy would not yield any difference in the type of error, the holistic measure did. Could the severity of the type of error have influenced the overall rating of an essay? Possibly. This may explain why the raters evaluated NLE NNSs as higher overall in the grammar category of the holistic/analytic evaluation despite the lack of difference in the coding of the errors. Intuitively, it would seem that a simple correction is to go back and recode each error to determine if the more severe types of errors *within* one category would yield any statistical difference; however, given the small number of errors that already exist in each category (for example, only 22 total verb tense errors in all 39 essays), there's little chance that any further coding would yield significant differences. This may well be the limitation of linguistic coding.

A final explanation is that the parts simply do not equal the whole. While there may well be differences in error categories that could account for the final holistic evaluation of the essays, one could easily argue that the truth of the differences lies in the global way a text is organized, developed, supported, and elaborated upon. Coding cannot capture the SLE writer struggling to fill the page with simplistic reasons to defend his or her choice of cities while the NLE

writer at times overwhelms the reader with the seriousness of the choice. What about the qualitative differences in the vocabulary? Consider the difference between the writer who prefers to live in a “clean society” as opposed to a writer who longs “to wake up in the morning and breathe fresh air.” Clearly, both value the quality of the environment as a reason to support their choice of cities. But a rater has to be influenced by the imagery of the latter writer. As was pointed out in the qualitative comparison in Chapter 4, the elaboration of ideas clearly distinguished the two types of essays. (It’s interesting to note that there were analytic differences in the vocabulary category with NLE NNSs judged superior to SLE NNSs.)

In holistic evaluation readers are urged to read past the local errors for ideas and content. If done properly, holistic evaluation should not simply be an evaluation of papers based on the overall error count unless those errors consistently interfere with meaning. In this case, the raters did what good holistic evaluators should do. They read and listened to the voice of the writer, ultimately judging the NLE NNS as a better writer. If that’s the best conclusion that can be formed from this study (and I think it is), then the next question is why this occurs. Why do NLE NNS write better than their SLE NNS counterparts?

The answer to this question is beyond the scope of this study given that the initial purpose was twofold: (a) To determine if there are differences in the two populations; (b) If differences do exist, what are the implications for language policy/planning and curriculum development in college ESL programs? However, the question should be addressed as an issue of future research. With that in mind, I propose three reasons why NLE NNS are better writers. These reasons are purely speculative. The first reason is a developmental lag

in the L2 due to the interruption of education in the L1. In Chapter 2, I cited numerous studies that implicated L1 literacy as a predictor of L2 literacy and proficiency. These studies were primarily investigating young children. In fact, these studies have become the bases for support of bilingual education.

But what about the those who begin their L2 after the onset of puberty? Is there a threshold of L1 literacy that is needed for L2 proficiency? I believe that this threshold ultimately depends on what type of L2 proficiency is being measured. If one is measuring the effect of L1 development on L2 communicative competence, then perhaps the threshold L1 literacy level would be quite low. But if one is measuring the effect of L1 development on L2 academic literacy (as measured by college level writing proficiency), then the threshold L1 literacy level would be much higher. Here's where the completion of high school in the L1 becomes the critical variable. The coursework is more rigorous than in the primary grades and the ideas are more abstract. This is where our critical thinking skills become sharpened. Can we empirically verify this cross-linguistically? Perhaps. But given the range of L1s in this study, it would prove a formidable task. It seems reasonable to speculate that lack of high school completion in the L1 (at least the last three years) is enough to impact the development of L2 academic writing.

It's important to note that while SLE NNS writers may be judged less proficient than their NLE NNS counterparts, they do not necessarily achieve less success academically. I know of no study that has concluded this. I would assume that this lag in academic writing does have some impact on the rate of their success in post-secondary education (i.e., repeating ESL writing courses, lower grades in freshman composition courses), but I cannot speculate on how this keeps them from achieving their ultimate academic goals.

The second reason to explain the difference in writing proficiency could be due to the inconsistent programming for NNSs in U.S. high schools. This is one area where future empirical research could yield some definitive conclusions. The review of the literature in Chapter 2 indicated that some research (John Hopkins University, 1992) has uncovered problems in how students are initially assessed and placed in U.S. high schools. Anecdotally, I found when I visited high school ESL programs (both in Texas and Michigan) that too often ESL students were grouped in ESL classes based on age not on L2 proficiency (thus creating classrooms with both beginning and advanced students) or were mainstreamed into regular content classes based on L2 oral assessment. ESL students were often placed in English classes designed for remedial native speakers because of a lack of funding for separate ESL classes. In one high school class that I visited, I observed a teacher's aide who was bilingual (Arabic and English) sitting in the back of the room shouting out the Arabic translation as the teacher was lecturing (on a topic in history), despite the fact that at least a quarter of the students were clearly not Arabic. I later learned that the funding was limited to tutorials or teacher's aides and was based on the majority of L1s in the school. Thus, because the majority was Arabic, the funding would only cover an Arabic-English bilingual aide. The aide had not received no training except for an in-service at the beginning of the year and had no coursework in bilingual or ESL methodology.

The danger of any anecdotal information is the attempt to generalize the finding. Therefore, I can only speculate that this may well be a factor in lack of L2 academic proficiency when SLE NNS graduate U.S. high schools. However, I would be doing a great disservice to the public education system if I did not emphasize the need for empirical research to verify this hypothesis.

The final reason for the discrepancy in writing proficiency between the 2 populations can be found in the nature of adolescent development. Cummins (1986) has maintained that immigrant children typically acquire oral proficiency within 2 years (sometimes less) of their arrival in an L2 environment. He describes the typical young immigrant ESL learner: "ESL children's rapid acquisition of facility in understanding and producing appropriate language in meaningful interpersonal contexts is not surprising. Add to this facility a near-native accent and the use of stock peer-group expressions and the surface manifestations of the ESL background have disappeared" (p. 202). Their acquisition of academic proficiency (or CALP) may well take seven years to achieve nativelike norms. Given the natural psychological adjustments of adolescence coupled with the "burden" of an L1 different from one's peers, it's not unreasonable to assume that the energy (and motivation) for L2 proficiency is directed at communicative competence, not at academic proficiency. Thus, their failure in secondary school or the marginal literacy skills they graduate with is not surprising.

I would suspect that the reason for the discrepancy in writing proficiency in my study is a combination of all of the reasons offered: developmental, programmatic, and sociolinguistic. Language learners are complex, and the variables that account for learner differences are varied. The reasons offered here (and perhaps others) play a critical role in L2 development. But the greater issue is what happens to these students once they have completed their secondary education. As I pointed out in the introduction, the community college is often the point of entry for post-secondary education. The fact that SLE NNSs are judged as less experienced writers is important enough to warrant intervention in the areas of language planning/policy and curriculum

development.

Recommendations

The rest of this chapter will focus on recommendations in post-secondary education. I have chosen to focus on post-secondary education (or more specifically, community colleges) because of my experience in this area; however, there is no reason that these recommendations could not apply to secondary schools with some modifications. Additionally, the recommendations will exclusively target SLE NNSs, given that this is the group that suffers in the proficiency gap with NLE NNSs.

Intake, Assessment, and Placement of SLE NNSs in ESL Programs

Intake

The typical scenario that SLE NNSs encounter when they first step foot on many community college campuses across the country usually begins with their misidentification as a NES on the application. At a previous community college system where I worked, the application simply asked if the student had “problems with English.” This self-report item eliminated many NNSs who genuinely felt they were fluent in the L2 (some with near-nativelike accents). Many applications ask if “English is your primary language.” Again, many SLE NNSs (and even students from African, Asian, and Indian countries where an indigenous variety of English is the first language) indicate affirmatively. Although ostensibly the goal of the application is to initially admit a student, its use is typically to direct a student for assessment and placement. Because community colleges have open admission policies, many systems use the

application as the primary tool for collection of data and referral for testing and counseling. SLE NNSs are routinely misidentified as NES and referred for assessment tests designed and normed for NESs. At the college where I currently work, NNSs were often administered a test of reading and writing skills exclusively normed on NESs, with extensive reading comprehension sections that focused on such topics (presumably high-interest for college age NESs) as sports (a long narrative on a boy and his father attending a baseball game). The implications for scoring poorly on such a test at community colleges are twofold: The student can often elect to enroll in any college level course with the exception of English or enroll in a developmental reading and writing program designed for NESs. (If a NNS is appropriately identified prior to testing the implications are similar with the exception of enrolling in an ESL program as opposed to a developmental program.)

SLE NNSs often either enroll for a brief period of time in a developmental program and make little progress or they elect to enroll in college level courses (often reading intensive courses such as history, psychology, or political science) with the false assumption that the content and expectations in such courses will be similar to their experience in U. S. high schools. Often they are encouraged by the college counselors who assume that their oral proficiency is indicative of their L2 literacy skills. It is not until they begin the cycle of failure in these classes because of their lower proficiency that they withdraw entirely. At that point, a recommendation to ESL is met with resistance. Here is a student who has spent 3 to 5 years of his secondary education in U. S. schools and possibly another 1 or even 2 years in a post-secondary institution in the U. S. and is now being assigned to a beginning or intermediate level of ESL reading and writing.

The remedy to such a scenario is early identification. Applications should be constructed to distinguish not only NNSs but the various types of NNSs (SLE and NLE and true bilinguals). For example, a series of questions that would encompass bilinguals, indigenous speakers of English, SLE NNSs, and NLE NNSs would be the following:

- a. Did you grow up speaking only English?
- b. Did you grow up speaking only a language other than English?
- c. Did you grow up speaking English and another language?
- d. Did you complete high school outside of the United States?
- e. Did you complete high school in the United States?

The advantage to these questions is early identification for appropriate assessment and placement. (While true bilinguals are not addressed in this study, I do believe that many of them suffer a similar fate as SLE NNSs. These are students who often are born in the United States and attend all 12 years of their education in this country. Like SLE NNSs, they often are recommended for ESL in community college ESL programs yet encounter the same scenario of failure and withdrawal described above for SLE NNSs. Thus, question “c” attempts to distinguish this group in the application.)

But the identification should not end here. If a SLE NNS is recommended based on assessment for an ESL program, the instructor should be informed of those students who graduated from U.S. high schools. While teacher training and awareness will be addressed at the conclusion of this chapter, it’s critical that classroom teachers have access to this information at the beginning of the semester, not when the student is failing. If it’s not logistically possible for such data to be given to the classroom teacher, then ESL program administrators should require that instructors incorporate an intake form that elicits this

information on the first day of classes. In the program I currently teach, we incorporate these questions in the diagnostic writing and reading assessment given on the first day of class.

Assessment

Effective language policy/planning in college ESL programs begins with assessment. Assessment typically focuses on proficiency. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) distinguishes proficiency from other purposes of testing (e.g., achievement, diagnostic) as testing concerned with both the past and the future; thus, proficiency testing draws on prior learning and predicts the language skills for a particular purpose (Byrnes and Canale, 1987). The testing of English language proficiency in community college ESL programs is challenging given their open admissions policies. The assessment must often determine a student's placement in both ESL and college level coursework. Furthermore, such assessment must occur frequently throughout the academic year since students are routinely admitted immediately after turning in an application. This is in sharp contrast to universities which typically use a cut score on such tests as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) for general admission. Students who fail to achieve a cut score on TOEFL often enroll in intensive English programs, which require extensive placement testing.

The critical problem in assessment in community college ESL programs becomes the selection of an instrument that can discriminate at the highest levels for placement in college academic programs and at the lowest levels for placement in beginning level ESL classes. In addition, the test must be administered efficiently, for unlike university intensive programs, the students in community colleges typically arrive daily throughout the semester for testing.

Henning (1987) maintains that the following information should be considered in the selection or development for language tests: validity, difficulty, reliability, applicability, relevance, replicability, interpretability, economy, availability, and acceptability. Finding an instrument that satisfactorily meets all of the considerations that Henning outlines is difficult.

These considerations are compounded by the large numbers of SLE NNSs in community colleges. Assuming that they are correctly identified as a NNS (and this typically is where the problems begin for SLE NNSs as outlined earlier) and are not sent for testing designed for NESs, proficiency testing for this population is problematic since most of the standard L2 proficiency tests were not originally normed on this population, including TOEFL and MTELP. Until such instruments are available, the best recommendation is to use standard L2 proficiency tests for initial placement and then during the first week of classes instructors should administer more comprehensive testing (e.g., writing samples, reading samples to summarize information, oral/aural tests) to ensure proper placement and for diagnostic purposes.

New tests, however, are currently being developed specifically targeted at this new population. A recent letter from the John Anderson (personal communication, December 30, 1998) to college and university admissions officers on behalf of the TOEFL Policy Council highlights the English Language Placement Test (ELPT) as a alternative to the TOEFL for NNSs who attended U.S. high schools for two years or more. Interestingly, the ELPT tests only reading comprehension and listening with the emphasis on practical English language skills, not on language structure or writing skills. The American College of Testing (ACT) is currently piloting sections of an as yet unpublished computerized adaptive test (CAT), in which test takers receive different sets of

test items tailored to an individual's ability. Like the ELPT, this new instrument is designed for community colleges to better assess the proficiency of SLE NNSs. The advantage to not only being normed on these populations (the college where I currently teach, which has large numbers of SLE NNS, is one of the many pilot sites for the norming of this new instrument) is the ability to predict one's overall L2 proficiency and simultaneously place a student in the beginning level of ESL or in college level academic programs.

Placement

When asked if in an ideal world the two populations should be separated in college ESL programs, the interviewees for this study were evenly split in their responses. Of the 4 affirmative responses, 1 questioned whether any program had the financial ability to offer yet more courses and the other 3 wavered if it were the right path to take. Financial considerations aside, the question is whether it benefits the SLE NNSs to be in separate classes (assuming that a program believes there are unique writing differences that need to be addressed). Of the 4 who disagreed, 2 clearly favored the concept of collaborative learning in the ESL curriculum; thus, NLE NNSs, who the interviewees felt were stronger in grammar, worked well in groups with SLE NNSs, who the interviewees felt were more fluent overall. The logic of this argument, however, could be applied to the placement of NESs and NNSs in the same class, eliminating the need for ESL classes altogether.

A secondary issue related to placement, which hasn't been addressed in the research, is the problem of resistance to ESL. Harklau (1999) conducted a qualitative study of 4 SLE NNSs' experience in a community college ESL writing class. She concludes that one of the reasons SLE NNSs resist ESL is the representation of culture in the typical ESL classroom: SLE NNSs feel

alienated from a curriculum that often asks them to compare their L1 culture with the United States when many of them have little memory or background knowledge to draw from. From my own experience over the last 15 years in community college ESL programs, I found a recurring pattern with SLE NNSs when confronted with their assessment scores, which often indicated a need for college ESL writing and reading classes: The students would argue that because they graduated from U.S. high schools and spent at least the last two years in regular English classes, they were beyond ESL. They resented the implication that their English skills were on the same level as NLE NNSs who recently arrived, many with less oral proficiency. Wouldn't yet another special program cause even more resentment?

If carefully designed, a separate ESL reading and writing class would solve both the problem of having groups with different writing proficiency in the same class and the problem of resistance to ESL. (The issue of whether of SLE NNSs should be in separate listening or speaking classes isn't addressed in this recommendation given the scope of the present study.) There are few advantages to having multiple levels of proficiency in one ESL class, particularly in an EAP reading and writing class. The more focused an instructor can be on the linguistic needs of the class, the more focused the intervention can be. Curriculum and materials could be developed with the assumption that the group would probably have high oral proficiency and low literacy skills, and more importantly, the materials would reflect a population with a high degree of familiarity with U.S. culture.

The problem of psychological resistance to ESL because of the length of residence in the United States could be mitigated by a careful design of the course names, course descriptions, and textbooks. If ESL courses were

identified for NLE NNSs, then a program might identify the special pull-out courses as EAP only or College English Skills; thus, the SLE NNSs would not feel that he or she was being placed in ESL as much as in an English preparatory program for enrichment purposes. The course descriptions would identify the design of the courses for NNSs who have either graduated from U.S. high schools or have experienced a considerable amount of time in this country. The textbooks would emphasize the college experience in both the title and in the Table of Contents. Certainly, students would recognize early in the program that these cosmetic differences are really ESL classes. But the initial psychological resistance would be lessened. In time, if the courses were meeting the students' needs and they clearly identified with the other NNSs in the class, then their affective filter and their motivation for learning would be raised. Many SLE NNSs cannot get beyond the initial shock of ESL placement when they first enter a community college. This transition would enable them to positively confront their own limitations in L2 writing proficiency.

There are two critical limitations of this recommendation: The logistics of implementing such a placement process could be daunting, particularly in community college programs that do not offer multiple sections of ESL or have small numbers of SLE NNSs. Reserving special sections for one population might not be practical. Worse, the program could be a dumping ground for ESL students who aren't successful in the traditional college ESL program. Another limitation is the lack of interaction with the two groups. One of the teacher interviewees in this study pointed out that she often grouped NLE NNSs with SLE NNSs in her writing classes. Because they each had different strengths and weaknesses, the grouping often allowed for collaborative learning: Thus, the NLE NNS could often help the SLE NNS brainstorm substantive ideas and

arguments during peer review and the SLE NNS could assist in orally leading the small groups.

Whether a program decides to implement separate sections for SLE NNS, the greater issue remains teacher awareness of the individual differences due to the L1 educational background. This issue will be discussed in the final section of this chapter.

Curriculum/Materials Development for SLE Writers

Few textbooks currently used for college ESL writing classes directly address the issue of the SLE writer. Designing such materials should require extensive field testing with such a population to determine their effectiveness. In this section I will propose a sample of objectives and activities, some of which have been used in various courses I have taught or other instructors have used with this population. However, no empirical studies have been performed with any of these materials to my knowledge; therefore, the claims for effectiveness of the activities are based on anecdotal evidence from experienced ESL practitioners.

I will focus on two broad-based objectives (one for reading and writing) with integrated activities for a high intermediate to advanced (most SLE writers tend to place at the intermediate or advanced levels) EAP writing and reading class: Students apply reading and writing as an interactive process: reading including prereading, reading and rereading; writing including prewriting, drafting, revision, and editing. While these objectives are common to many college level EAP and L1 developmental writing and reading programs, the activities will focus on particular challenges facing SLE writers based on the research in this study and the evidence offered from ESL practitioners.

Readings

College ESL writing textbooks tend to be divided into chapters that focus on various rhetorical modes (comparison/contrast, process, and definition as described in Chapter 2 with reference to the Current-Traditional approach to teaching writing) with model essays by professional and ESL student writers. The essays often focus on topics more suited to traditional ESL students (i.e., NLE NNSs): arranged marriages, political turmoil, population control, living alone in a foreign country. Over the last decade there has been a shift toward a collection of readings that are thematically linked; in addition, some programs use only one work of fiction or nonfiction as the reading text. The use of thematically linked readings helps build background knowledge and encourages more substantive writing about various topics associated with the theme. My recommendation would be thematically linked readings with high interest material for SLE writers. An example would be a set of readings associated with linguistic/cultural identity. Although this issue was not focused on in this study (either in the literature review or the research design), linguistic/cultural identity has been documented by numerous first and second generation writers as a constant source of frustration and anxiety as the sons and daughters of immigrants and even early arrivals wrestle with the often opposing cultural forces of their home culture and the target culture they so desperately want to be part of. Some of the texts that would be easily accessible and relevant for SLE writers include Richard Rodriguez's Hunger for Memory (1982) and his essays on acculturation and identity in the Latino community or Amy Tan's The Joy Luck Club (1989) focusing on the generational divide in the Asian-American community. A collection of shorter pieces entitled Crossing Cultures: Readings for Composition (1991) offers a

wide range of nonfiction on the issue of cultural identity, including such writers as Maya Angelou, Elizabeth Wong, Jack Agueros, Countee Cullen, Toni Morrison, and Malcolm X. Lesser known writers such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Dwight Okita, and Yi-Fu Tuan round out the collection of diverse voices speaking out on the issue of cultural identity. In addition, essays on bilingual education, English Only versus English Plus, and U. S. immigration policies would frame the personal discussions of linguistic/cultural identity within the national debate of linguistic rights and language policy/planning.

The readings would be informed by a Social-Epistemic perspective or a socioliterate framework (discussed in Chapter 2) that Johns (1999) initiated in her classroom with SLE writers.

Activities

The focus of the course would be to integrate reading and writing through a variety of activities that build on prior knowledge and strengths that the SLE writer brings to the classroom. As much as possible, the activities should be structured in a way that individual tasks are broken down into steps and are monitored for comprehension and accuracy. Too often ESL teachers assume that SLE writers, because of their oral/aural proficiency, understand an activity as soon as it's presented. The often native-like spoken proficiency coupled with the experienced nonverbal communication of the SLE writer masks their need for multiple forms of input. In addition, the tasks should be regularly monitored and checked. SLE writers need lots of feedback on their performance on a task.

Some activities that would build on their oral/aural proficiency would be interviews or surveys with other students and family members, class presentations utilizing multimedia (e.g., Powerpoint software for presentations), group projects, structured peer reviews, dictations, reading aloud their own

writing. Writing activities should focus on developing academic register through substitutions that force them to produce more formal language, summaries and paraphrasing activities, sentence combining activities that focus on subordination, brainstorming and outlining techniques to assist in the development of their ideas, cloze tests that focus on specific structures.

Given that organization and development were rated lower in SLE writing, the goal of the readings and activities should be to target these critical elements of academic writing. Grammar should be de-emphasized in this program. According to the interviewees in this study and my own observations, SLE writers often lack metalinguistic awareness or even interest in grammar, unlike their NLE counterparts. Moreover, although the holistic/analytic rating indicated a lower overall score for grammar for SLE writers, the linguistic coding indicated no statistical difference in the number and type of errors. More research is needed to determine if the coding needs to be more further refined to account for differences within types of errors (as was discussed earlier) or that there is no difference in the grammars of the two populations. Until that research uncovers true differences in grammar, then the approach with SLE writers should focus more on activities that lead to the organization and development of content and ideas, logic, evidence/exemplification, contextualization, and coherence.

Teacher Training and Teacher Perceptions of NLE and SLE Writers

Application of research begins with the classroom teacher. The research must be relevant, accessible, and replicable. Because this issue is not addressed in ESL college texts nor in teacher training programs (due to the lack

of empirical research), the training of teachers needs to begin in the college ESL departments that run intensive English programs or credit ESL classes. The training would serve two purposes: 1) To raise awareness of the writing differences between the 2 populations; 2) To formulate strategies and develop curriculum/materials that will target the SLE writer. In addition, the awareness of the differences should extend to counselors who often are the first point of contact for many SLE NNSs when they first arrive on college campuses, especially in community colleges. The problem of identification of this population for appropriate testing was addressed earlier; however, the point must be underscored that counselors are critical decision-makers for this population, often determining their assessment, placement, and ultimately the academic career of SLE NNSs based on their success or failure in college level classes.

The training of ESL teachers could be easily effected in one or two workshops that introduce the issues, offer case studies of various SLE and NLE NNSs, and brainstorm possible curricular modifications to target the SLE writer. The use of reading material is especially significant given the length of exposure to U. S. culture for this population. Therefore, writing strategies alone will not compensate for the writing gap with this population. Reading strategies should be incorporated into the training and curriculum that focus on the process of reading, including prereading, vocabulary, skimming, scanning, summary. Inexperienced ESL teachers in college ESL programs make assumptions that SLE writers and readers, like NLE NNSs, can draw from and transfer from their L1 academic reading and writing experience. However, given the interrupted education and the lack of completion of L1 secondary education, such assumptions should be suspect. SLE writers need to become

active readers. Experienced ESL teachers, especially from community college programs, will immediately recognize this population. The findings would not be surprising to this group, having struggled with these students in their EAP writing classes.

Conclusion

This initial purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between L1 educational background and L2 academic writing proficiency both in perception by ESL practitioners and in reality based on a research design involving two populations of NNSs. Having interviewed a number of ESL practitioners and L2 researchers, I was able to determine a gap between the perception of the L2 writers and the professionals' ability to accurately identify which population the essays were drawn from. This established that if there were differences between the writing of the two populations, then there would be clear implications for teacher training in the areas of awareness and strategies/curriculum development. I then determined through linguistic coding and holistic/analytic rating that NLE NNSs are judged better writers than SLE NNSs. This analysis indicated that the primary weakness in the writing of SLE writers was in development, organization, grammar, and vocabulary (through holistic rating); however, the linguistic coding showed no statistical difference in the amount nor type of L2 errors between the two populations. I then outlined a number of recommendations for assessment, placement, curriculum/materials, and teacher training in order to target the SLE writer in a community college ESL program, which in the introduction and background research to this study I referenced as the most likely route for higher education for this population.

Limitations of the Current Study

I have identified three limitations of the current study: 1) The original sample included 39 essays unevenly divided between the two populations. For the linguistic coding, I would have liked more essays, possibly as many as 60 evenly divided between the two groups. Because so many of the errors that were analyzed in the coding for fluency, accuracy, complexity, and cohesion contained such small numbers, it was difficult to determine if the lack of significance was simply due to the lack of sufficient data. However, I do not believe that more essays would have affected the outcome of the holistic/analytic ratings given the strong significant differences in organization and development. At some level, I intuitively believe that the grammar is distinctly different despite the lack of significance. This leads to the second limitation. 2) The linguistic coding with certain types of errors should have been expanded to include a range of one error type from local to global. As I identified earlier, some verb errors are more severe than others. 3) A rank order for the first part of the research design involving a subset of the 39 essays may not have been the appropriate method given that there were 19 essays to rank order. While I did not collect extensive data on the raters' perception of the task, I do believe that the raters were somewhat frustrated in having to decide 19 different levels of writing for the subset of data

Future Research

Replication of this study would be the primary piece of future research that needs to be conducted in order to validate the claims made. While every effort was made to hold constant other variables that could account for the writing differences that emerged in the analysis, a replication study would underscore

the urgent need for curricular reform in college EAP programs which enroll SLE writers.

Moreover, if such research yields similar results, then empirical research in the types of curriculum, materials, and strategies that work with this population should be explored. This would ultimately force textbook publishers to begin targeting this population. Teacher training could then be more consistently undertaken.

Finally, this study focused on writing differences and curricular implications. What has been left unanswered is why this gap in L2 writing occurs and if it does extend to any other aspect of L2 proficiency. I attempted to offer a number of possible explanations; however, an explanatory theory was clearly beyond the scope of this study. But the issue remains: Is there a developmental lag caused by the interrupted L1 education? Or is the gap explained by the sociolinguistic issues that face a young teenage immigrant? Is the SLE writer writing out of his or her socially constructed literacy experience that Crowley (1998) and Berlin (1997) argue for in the writing classroom? Or is this simply (and tragically) the case of the failure of U.S. public education? Future research should include an attempt to discover the causes of these diverging proficiencies and the extent to which it impacts the goals of the L2 learner.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

Cities to Live in: Characteristics

	Schools	Hospitals	Entertainment	Air & Water
City A	***	**	*	****
City B	*	***	****	***
City C	****	**	***	*
****Excellent	***Good	**Fair	*Poor	

—

Imagine that you have been offered jobs in three different cities. The chart above describes some of the characteristics of the different cities. In which city would you prefer to live and work? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of your choice and how it will affect your quality of life.

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For the Student:

CONSENT FORM

Writing samples and personal information regarding your educational and family background will be collected for the purposes of research in a doctoral program at Michigan State University. Your participation is voluntary. You may withdraw your participation at any time without penalty or consequences. Your answers will remain confidential (known only to the researcher and supervising faculty). Any information collected about you will not be used to personally identify you when the results are written up. I consent to the release of any information collected in this project to be used by the researcher. Any information about me will remain anonymous.

Signature:_____

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name_____

Social Security Number_____

Country of Birth/Origin_____

Native Language_____

Age_____

Age of Arrival into the U. S._____

Number of years of education in native language/native country_____

Number of years of education in the United States:

(indicate ALL that apply by the number of years in each school setting)

A. Number of years of education in U. S. college_____

B. Number of years of education in U. S. high school_____

C. Number of years of education in U. S. middle school_____

D. Number of years of education in U. S. elementary school_____

What is the best estimate of your family's total income for last year?

(Mark one)

a. 0 - 10,000 _____

b. 10,001 - 20,000_____

c. 20,001 - 30,000_____

d. 30,001 - 40,000_____

e. 40,001 - 50,000_____

f. 50,001 - 70,000_____

g. 70,001 - 90,000_____

h. over 90,000 _____

Do either or both of your parents have a college degree? ____Yes ____No

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For the Teacher:

1. Was the student placed in this class from a recommendation from a previous writing class or a recently taken MTELP (within the last semester)?_____

2. If the student was placed from a recently taken MTELP, please indicate the raw score: _____

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C
Thirty-Nine Essays in Sample

Essay #11-21 (NLE)

If I have to choose one of the three cities above, I will prefer City A. I think **City A** is the best city among the three because of the advantages of City A are **more** than its disadvantages. I think I will live happily in City A.

The most important things for my life are air and water. Without air and **water**, I am sure that I will die. In City A, the quality of air is excellent, and there **is** clear water. Because the water is clear and there is no air pollution, I think I **will** be very healthy, and will not be sick easily. With a healthy body, I can live **longer**. Since the possibility for me from getting sick is smaller, I can do my **work** more efficiently and the chance of promotion become greater; therefore, **city A** is a good place for me to live and work.

The second advantage of City A is that the schools there are good. If I **am** going to live there for a long time I will probibly get marry and have children. **Since** there are many good schools, my children can recieve good education; **furthermore**, if there are good education system, people live there will be all **well-educated**. They will know how to respect each other and obey the laws; **therefore**, they will take care their neighborhood and it is peaceful to live there. **The** crime rate will also decreas, and it will be a safety city for me to life in.

Although there are many advantages, there are some disadvantages. First, the hospitals there are just fair. That means they are not good, but there are not so bad. the medical treatments in those hospitals may not be so good,

but I think it is all right. It was because there are clean air and clean water, we **will** not get sick so easily, and it means that we do not need to go to hospital so **often**. Since the quality of hospitals there is fair, I think they will be able to **handle** emergency situations, and will not cause great problem.

The last thing is entertainment. The entertainment there is poor. It will be bored **to** live there. There may be just a few cinemas and concerts. For some people, **it is** a great problem, but for me I don't think it is a problem. Since the **entertainment** is poor, I can pay more attention on my work or studying; **therefore**, it is beneficial for me.

In conclusion, city A is the best city that I can choose from that 3 cities. In **City** A, the air and water are clean and clear. The schools there are good. The **hospitals** are fair. Although the entertainment is poor I can concentrate on my **work**; therefore, living in City A, I can live more healthier, and the change of **promotion** is greater. I will live happily in City A.

Essay #12-25 (NLE)

Some people say that there is no place like home. Personally, I agree **with** these people. The place where we were born is always special, with or **without** the problems. Therefore, when we have to move, we get much more **exhigeh**t, we surely want a place better than the one we are leaving. Maybe **that's** why it is so hard to move.

The city B looks the most attractive and also the one that suits my wants **better**. To begin with, the hospitals are considered good ones. As my husband **has** some heart problems, we must look for a city with nice hospitals. I would **never** live in a city where the medical background isn't good enough, like city A or C.

Also, I don't have any children. Consequently, I won't need the schools, **at** least not right now. However, as we surely want kids in the future, I will have **to** worry about this. City C has excellent schools, but the hospitals are just fair, **so** I couldn't live there, even though I think that a good school is a priority for my **future** children.

In addition, the city B has good air and water. Since I live in a city where **air** and water conditions are very poor, it will be an improvement in our lives, **specially** for my husband, who has health problems. Once again, City C **wouldn't** be a good choice because we already live near bad water and air conditions, so if we have to move, we must look for something better.

And finally, the city B is our choice because of the entertainment. My husband and I love to go out, go to restaurants and so on. It would be very hard for us to live somewhere where the entertainment isn't good. For example, just

last week our car broke down, so we had to stay at home the whole weekend. **We** didn't know what to do to let our tension from our work go. Then, we **realized** how important entertainment is for us.

In conclusion, city B is definitely our choice since it suits very well what **we** need. It's always tough to move, but at the same time if the place is able to **attend** most of your needs, it can be a wonderful experience. Knowing different **people** and plans can be a good thing, the most worst part maybe is to choose **the** place. Well, even if you don't find any good place, don't worry, we always **have** the place where we were born to go just in case.

Essay #6-37 (SLE)

I personally like and prefer to live and work in City A because the **opportunities** in City A is more better than the other cities after I had a close look **at it**.

The advantages of city A is schools is schools has been grades as Good **(three stars)** which is good because by going to school, you could get a higher **education** and have a best opportunity for work. For example, I have went to **school** and then ended up being a doctor as I planned, I could get more money **for** living and support myself too.

And the second advantage is the air and water which was graded as **Excellent** (four stars) which is good too because if you want to live, you **supposed** to have water and if you want to have a healthy life, you should have **a** healthy air to breath. in Fact, you can work at the Air and water companies **too**.

And the third advantage in City A is the hospitals, which was graded as **fair** (two stars) which is least than good to city B, but same as City C, but it is ok **for** my choice, it stands with my opinion, it's ok as long as there is a hospital.

The disadvantage in city A is the Entertainment, which was graded as **Poor** (one star), but it's ok for me becaus entertainment it's not that important for **me** as living and working. As long as there is a good life and a good job, I'm ok, it will suit my needs.

At last My choice for a city A because is much better than the other cities presented.

Essay #8-39 (SLE)

I would probably prefer to live in city A. Why you would ask? There are **several** reasons for it. Education is one of the most important things in your life, **so** schools must have good teachers, good environment to study in, high level **of** education, so you can maintain the highest level of education as possible.

Hospitals must be at least Fair, because if you are sick they should be **able** to help you, at least to make you feel better and give you proper medicine.

Good entertainment is always nice to have, but it's not the most important **thing** in life, you don't have to have the best schools or the best actors in your **city**, just get a video tape or audio tape, and you'll see and hear the same **people** or movies just not in live. As long as you have good health you'll survive **without** the best entertainment. Talking about health, where do a lot of **sicknesses** and diseases come from? Air and water, you get to try to live in the **best** air and water environment, you possibly can. The air and water must be as **fresh** and clean as possible, because it will improve your health and how long **you** live tremendously.

So in my opinion city A is the best choice, because of the reasons like **health**, hospitals, and education and in City A they give you the best of **everything** in the following three things that are important to me.

Essay #9-40 (SLE)

Being offered a new job in three different cities, there are a lot of choices and decisions I have to make. I always like to take time and think about which city would be better for me and my family. Having to pick a totally new city there is research to be done. I always look at the schools, hospitals, Entertainment, air, and water. After all the research that I have done, I decided to move to city A. These are some of the reasons that I decided to pick city A.

One of the reasons I decided to pick city A is because the schools and the system the schools have are good. I always wanted my children to get a good education and this city has all the necessary materials, style, and teachers that care for the children to get a good education and to be able to become someone in life.

Some other reasons that I picked city A is because I want them to have a descent hospitals. I want my family to be healthy and to have good treatments in case of emergency. Other reasons are entertainment, air, and water, because its good to have a little bit of fun, and healthy air and water is necessary for us. We want to be able to experience a healthy and good life even if we have to move to a totally new city.

These are some of the reasons I picked city A. If you would be in my Place i think city A is a good city for you and your family to live and spend you life.

Essay #13-71 (SLE)

The city I prefer to live and work would be city A. The reason I choosed city A is because it has everything a person needs to live by.

When I choose to live somewhere, I want to live and work with people who have an education. City A provides good schools. Later in life when I decide to have a family of my own, I want my kids to have a good education. People cannot liv a comfortable life if they do not have education.

Hospitals are very important to a family. Any emergency that happens to you or a family member, a hospital is important to be close. City A has a fair amount of hospitals.

What really got my attention about city A was water & air. Clean water and fresh air is the most important thing in life. Sometimes because of water & air people get sick and can't even go to work.

One disadvantage about city A was entertainment. When people work hard all day they want to go out and enjoy themselves. I think entertainment is needed in life. It makes you happy when you feel sad. For example, Friday is the day students and people who work are happy for. They get to go out with friends and family and be happy for the following week.

I chose City A because it had everthing I needed to have in life. Maybe it had a small amount of entertainment but we all have to sacrifice something. Many times people think entertainment is the main thing but when you don't have good schools, hospitals, and excellent water and air. Then you can't have even a small amount of entertainment in your life.

Essay #7-72 (NLE)

Everyone wants to have a good and decent life. There is no question about it that I feel the same way too. My opinion for a person who wants to have a good and decent life, he/she should have a good job and lives in a healthy environment. This environment could be a village, small town or city. If I have to choose where to live and work, I would choose to live and work in city A.

The facilities that's being offered in those 3 cities are schools, hospitals, entertainment, air, and water. The city that has excellent school is city C. However, in city A the quality of the school is good. The advantage of having either excellent or good school in city where I live is that I can gain more knowledge. If a person has a strong will to gain knowledge, he/she will have it no matter he/she enter either excellent or good school.

Another advantages I can get in city A is the city has excellent air and water. With excellent air I can live more healthy compare if I live in city C. Water is very important, that's why with excellent water I can decrease my chances for getting sick.

The quality of the hospitals in city B is much better than in city A and C. Having good hospital is a necessity nowadays. Therefore, the quality of every hospital must be increase. When unexpected things happen, I can go to the hospital and get some help. A good hospital also gives me some security that someone will help me if I health problems.

There is one disadvantage living in city A. The entertainment is not very good. Consequently, I have to look for entertainment in other city. Once in a while we have to relax from the stress that we get from work. So entertainment really helps me relax. In contrast to city A, the entertainment in city B and C is

much better.

Compare with the four aspects that 3 cities offer, city A has excellent quality of air and water. And city A also has both good schools and good hospitals. Nevertheless, the entertainment in city A is much far behind city B and C.

Essay #10-74 (NLE)

According to my choice, I would prefer city B because city B has good hospitals, excellent entertainment and pure air and water. These days the basic requirements of a city are the above four features mentioned.

Anybody who is willing to or being placed by their jobs in a different city tend to know about what are the qualities of the city. A city should definitely have many hospitals because you never know when a family member can meet with an accident.

There should be clean air and water because a family with horrible diseases and bacteria. Also, a city should have a good background in education i.e. it should have quite a few number of schools which I find is the only disadvantage in this city, i.e. city B which I have chosen.

I feel that in this city there would be a lack of educational qualities because there being only one or two schools, the number of students in a class will be more because of which the teachers will concentrate less on the weakest.

But according to me, I will still prefer moving to city B because it has other good qualities which are not present in either of the cities. And also studying all the time and having no fun or drinking bad water and breathing bad air is just not my cup of tea.

Therefore, city B, in my point of view is the city which I would like to move into or recommend someone to.

Essay #2-94 (SLE)

To have a perfect place to work is very difficult. Every places have it own little good and little bad about its places. I have been offered job in three different cities, these three cities are mostly the same. But I choose city B, because of its excillent entertainment, good hospitals, and air and water. Although its schools quality is poor. This is sure the best place for me to work.

Every places have it own good. In other words, the advantages. The advantages of excillent entertainment are that I can go out in the weekend after the whole week of works. I can go out to take out the machenical brain that I had been using for the whole week. However, as a single man working, I'm sure that I want to meet other people. Also, this place has good hospitals. This is mean that I don't worry about my health any more, because they have good doctors, nurses, also clean. Unlike the last place I lived. One time I went to a hospital to visit my ant. Because I never been there before my life so I looking for the room, when I found it. I noticed that the room next door was smell very badly. I don't know what in there but I'm sure the patients will never get well if the smell always next to them. Another good thing that I chose was good environmental, air and water is good. This is a best place for me, because there, they don't have many industrious company. So the air is very clean. Since the air is clean, water is clean, I don't have to worry about diseases I could have later in my life anymore. Throughout these advantages of the place I living, I think thise is a perfect place for me to work at, and start a family later.

On the other hand, there is one part that I don't like is the poor of schools. education is very important to us. If there was no education I would not be in this place today. These poor schools is not going to effect my life much, but it

will be big decision for me on my children later in their life.

In conclusion, every places they will have a advantages and disadvantages. But to choose a place to work at is very important. In these case, the place I chose had three advantages and one disadvantages. So I'm sure I chose the right thing. This place is not effect on me much, but it will effect my children later in their life.

Essay #5-98 (NLE)

Today is the best day in my life. I just get my mail and you can't believe I get a pretty good job offer in mail from one of the best companies as its computer engineer. I have been waiting for three years to get a job like this...I am so happy that now every single thing in this world seems perfect to me. But still I've a problem. The company who offers me the job wants to choose me one city among three city as a job location. Each city has some advantages and disadvantages at the same time. After thinking a whole day, I just decide that I'll be in city A for my job purpose for several reason.

First of all city A has excellent air and water. Air and water are two important things in human life. Fresh air and clean water helps people to keep their body perfect. Now in which city I live it is an industrial and crowded city. The smoke which comes from both industries and from a number of automobiles, pollutes the air, and as it is a industrial city, the water contains many chemical. The air in this city makes me feel always sick and I am loosing my hair because of polluted water. So when I will go in city A I will be able to take fresh deep breath all the time and my hair will be fine. At the same time I will cut hospital expenses for fresh air and water because I won't go there very much. Though city A has the poor entertainment it will not be a great factor. I'll find my own way to entertain myself. I like to read and listen music so when I'll get free time I'll read and I'll listen music. The more I read, the more I'll learn. The more I'll learn, the more I'll adjust myself with this changing world. The most important reason of choosing city A is that city A has excellent schools. In this city there is also an excellent university. So if I would go in city A, I could have an opportunity to finish my masters degree. As a result, it would help me

to build my future life. I am sure when I would finish my masters degree I would be able to find another best job or it would help me to raise my position in that company.

Though all these cities have some advantages and disadvantages, city A seems for me besides its disadvantages. Its excellent air and water would keep me fresh and would help me to lead a healthy life. Also, its school would advance me to build a brighter life in future. So I think it is a wise decision to choose city A for my job location.

Essay #16-107 (SLE)

I would prefer to live and work in city B because this city has the characteristics that I can work with.

First of all if I had to choose a city where I planned to live for a while. I would choose the city with good environments, good place to relax, and a place where I can stay healthy.

City B has excellent enteratinment system, good hospitals, good air and water sources, but has poor school system. The advantages of living in city B are that I'll be enjoying my job, and I'll stay healthier in this city than others. I believe that if I can be free from stresses and frustrations, then I could really enjoy working. The city which has excellent entertainment system such as city B can relax me much more than the others. This city also carries good air and water sources which are very important to my health. Good environment is everyone's concern. According to the chart, city B contains good hospitals also. This means that I don't have to worry about my health so much because I'll get a good treatment from the hospital whether I'm ill or for a important health check ups.

In other hand, there would be disadvantages for living in city B. One would be that it has a poor school system. I know that schools are not needed for person who out of school and have a job, but it is needed for a city. I also believe in advancing my knowledge. I would try to stay in school as long as possible, so a poor school system would not be helpful for a person like me whos willing to be educated more. This city will great effect on my life not just because of all the good sources but because of few disadvantages I have to face.

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Essay #17-111 (SLE)

Out of all the jobs above, I would pick City B. I think City B is the perfect city for a guy like myself. This city attracts my interests for many reasons.

First, city B has a good environment for living, meaning it has good air and water. These days clean air in a city is almost impossible to have, yet city B provides a good, if not excellent, community beginners like me. For example, cities that have a lot of people and lots of traffic tend to cause more health problems for its local residents but in city B that's not an issue.

Next, city B has the best hospitals, which is very important to me, since I just starting to work and live; This city would be perfect for me and my spouse. For instance, since me and spouse have graduated from college, we don't need a city with good schools. Moreover, we need a city that we can feel safe in, and not worry if an emergency comes.

Finally, city B offers a lot of entertainment, which I like best. I think entertainment happiness is the key to a healthier and a more successful life. For example, according to a poll taken last year, it showed that 80% of people prefer to live in cities that offer relaxations, theme park, and resorts. City B offers almost of three and much more.

In my conclusion I want to say that city B would be an excellent choice, not only for me, but for my graduate, who is just starting this life. By choosing city you not only will fulfill your dreams, you can actually turn them into reality.

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Essay #18-112 (SLE)

If I have to choose between city A, B, or C to live and work, the most adequate to my needs and wants is city A. City A has excellent quality in air and water, good schools, and a fair Hospital system, the only disadvantage is not enough entertainment or poor entertainment.

The quality of air and water is very important for me; the health of a person depends upon the quality of life he or she takes, If any person lives in a city with poor air and water supplies the body feels the needs for a better environment, therefore the visits to the doctor or even the hospital will increase gradually for sickness related to the poor environment.

Education is the other great advantage of city A. A good education system will provide me and my family with good chance of getting a good education, within the city saving money in far away from home schools.

A city with a good school system, has citizens well prepared for different kinds of problems that the city might have also. there are few ignorant persons and few social problems.

Hospitals in city A have a fair system, with good possibilities of increasing the quality of the system. all those educated people and schools will prepare good doctors or nurses increasing the chance of having an excellent division of hospitals. Since the air and water quality are excellent, there will be less cases of citizens visiting the hospitals.

In the other hand, the only disadvantage is the entertainment fact. Every human being needs some kind of entertainment in every day of their life. the city doesn't provide full satisfactory recreations centers, leading to a very boring and mechanical life in the future the only people that cares about

education and quality of the environment will stay. Also, if I or another person decides to have a very fund weekend we will spend large amount of money to leave the city get accommodations in another city and pay whatever bills to reach a fun and diferent place that our city does not have.

City A still the best choice of all three. It offers a great deal of oportunity's and a peaceful environment. It covers most of my needs and small part of my wants that are less important. in the future my kids could appreciate my decision of living in a well prepare city.

Essay #1-114 (SLE)

If I had a job where my boss offers me an opportunity of choosing from three different cities, where I could go and work. Of course there will be advantages and disadvantages of moving to another city. For me it will be an excellent opportunity. Having the go to another place and work in what you like the most. But they may exist advantages and disadvantages. One advantage that I would like is having to move to a city where the schools system is better. One disadvantage is having to leave all your family. And one advantage and disadvantage that exist is having to start all over again in my new life.

First of all, one of the advantage that I will like is having the opportunity to continue education in a better schools. If I decide to move to another city. I will have the necessary, to have a better education. Where I could study with the most sophisticated equipment from today's technology. If I get a good education, it will help my future career, also it will help me in today's society. Having an education, people can provide to their country a better future.

Secondly, one disadvantage that may exist is having to leave my family. I will have to move alone to a new city. I will have to call them every weekend and to remind them that I love them and miss them. Of course it will be difficult for them and for me to leave separated. I will have on my conscious that I didn't care enough for them, and that I choose to leave everything for a new job.

Finally, the advantage and disadvantage that may exist is to start all over again in my new life and job. A reason why I don't like to move to another city is because I have to find a new friends and since my old friends are going to be far from me I would start to forget them. Also I will have to sell all of my properties. I would have to sell my house, my old furniture and my car. I will have to buy a

new car, a new house, and also my new furniture.

It is reall difficult having to choose a new city to live. But having to choose from a better education or continue in the same position where I am, I decide that a better life and a better education takes effort and etusiastim.

Essay #3-135 (NLE)

Sometimes in our life, we have to make decisions about the city where we would like to live. I had to make such a decision, year ago, in order to pursue my high education. However, if I have been offered a job in three different cities I would rather choose the city that present high quality of life (hospitals, entertainment, and air and water) than a city with excellent schools. Although city B presents poor schools, it has good quality of life which will have consequences on my quality of living and working.

City B presents poor schools. This means poor education of its citizens. It can be a disadvantage for people who are married and have children because they want the best education for their children. Moreover, a poor education can lead to a bad development of the children's growth. Also, a city with bad schools often characterized itself by high rates of delinquency, drugs, and robberies. No safety and security are, therefore, present in this kind of city.

However, city B presents a good quality of life. Presence of hospitals gives a warranty of health and security. It's important to live in a city where you can get a good medical service. I think health is the most part of human preoccupation nowadays; therefore, good hospitals give serenity and safety to their citizens. Also, presence entertainment is an important factor of living and working in a city. A hard work need to be balanced by enteratinment. Excellent entertainment involves physical, intellectual and social activities. Physical activities are the possibility to exercise sport that you like (tennis, diving, fitness). Intellectual and social activities involve presence of theatre, operas, social meetings, concerts, etc.... Moreover, air and water make a difference in quality of life. How would you live with a poor environment involving pollution and

deficiency of water? Also, characteristics of a good air and water lead to a safe environment with abundance of nature.

All of these qualities have strong consequences on the quality of living and working. Good hospitals, entertainment, and air and water give to a person the possibility to escape the work environment and stress. In fact, they give a person the opportunity to profit and enjoy his/her life. That's why some big companies as IBM, Apple, and others move their companies to places where the environment and nature are abundant. This phenomena is called delocalization. Companies delocalized their agencies to places, as Silicon Valley, where the industrialization is absent. Also, good quality of life and less stress gives people less preoccupation and affect positively their mood.

Definitely, City B presents for me the qualities that will satisfy my expectations. It will also allowed me to enjoy my life and work without stress. What do you want more?

Essay #15-144 (NLE)

After looking at the 3 different cities, I have decided to choose City C because it has excellent schools, Good Entertainment eventhough it has poor air and water.

City C has excellent schools and that is why I chose it. School is very important to me. City C would be a good alternative for me because it has good schools. City C has very good schools and this fact is attractive for young people. City C has probably a lot of young population. In my particular case, with all of these young people living in City C, I will have good relations. This would give me the opportunity to make new friends and meet new people.

Another reason I chose city C for is that it has good entertainment. Not everything in life is going to school and working. For me, entertainment is important because it decreases your stress level. Entertainment also creates new jobs for everyone. City C has good entertainment and consequently it has always job opportunities available. It would be very easy for me to get a job there in case I got fired or I did not like my initial job. The entertainment industry generates a lot of money which helps the city in all aspects. What I'm trying to say is that City C will always be a good economical position.

I chose City C because it has bad water and air quality. City C would be the best city for me because I am planning to work on air and water devices to help the environment. In future everyone will need one of my devices and then I will become very rich and famous. For my future plans, City C is the best choice. With bad air and water quality people who study about these problems are very in-demand. Chosing City C is the best alternative for me because I would have a lot of job opportunities. Everyone will want to hire me!

Essay #4-152 (NLE)

I prefer to live and work in city A. There are advantages and disadvantages for every city. People looks for advantages. I prefer city A eventhough it has advantages and disadvantages and the way it affects my quality of life.

First of all when we discuss the advantages of the city, it has an excellent atmosphere. Water and air are two of the most important factors in man's life. People are more healthy when they have fresh air to breath and pure water to drink. I don't have to worry about running to hospitals everytime. When people move to another place, they always look for good schools. We want our children to behave well. Schools play an important role in building up their characters.

Secondly some of the disadvantages are about hospitals and entertainments. Most of us have gone to hospitals a number of times. Nobody likes to live in a city without a hospital. We need to get good treatment for our disease as nobody likes to risk their lives. Another factor is that we need a break from our busy life. Some people finds impossible to live without any entertainments. For instance, I know a person who has mental illness due to the strain of life without any entertainments.

Last of all, how all these affect my way of life. Well, as everybody likes to live in a place with good atmosphere, I prefer City A. I want my children to develop good characters. Good schools do take care of them without giving them any trouble. Hospitals are not bad in the city. I see that the city is poor in entertainments. I believe that entertainments can be made ourselves. So I can find my own ways to get a break. When I see advantages are more than

disadvantages, I hardly think about entertainments.

As a conclusion, all of the above factors have to be given importance before moving to any place. We need to look for more advantages. It is not possible to get all of the happiness of life, we need some sacrifices too.

Essay #14-156

If I choosed to live in city A is because it has good schools and public services like air and water, so my children could have a good education and a pleasant place to live in. But City A has got some limitations when it comes to hospitals. That is also very important. And it's good lack of entertainment.

City B I would definetty not choose this city. It's a city just for people who are planning not to have children. Because it's got a poor educational system, and I'm planning to have children. Finally, city A it's got excellent schools and lots of entertainment. But in the case of services is an unpleasant place to live in. Its water and air systems are poor and the hospitals are not so good, so I wouldn't think of moving there.

In conclusion, I'm definetty make the decision to move into City A because is the most promising place of the three for my future children. And I have to look forward for them and not for me because I've already had what I needed.

Essay #19-73 (NLE)

Being offered jobs in three different cities really need some serious consideration. The decision that is made will somehow affect one's life. For me, I would choose city A.

From the characteristics above, city A seems to be a considerable place to live and work. Unlike City C, where the schools are excellent, the schools in city A are just good. Nonetheless, it is made better than city B with poor schools. Just as well all know, schools are very important, especially good schools because they provide education for my children.

Other than schools, the hospitals in city A are fair which are similar to city C. However, the hospitals in city B are good. Even though the quality of the hospitals are not good, it should be enough for treating not so serious illness because most hospitals have the same standard procedures.

In contrast to the quality of the hospitals, the air and water in city A are excellent. That is the most important thing. Both the air and water really affect the human life because they are strongly related to one's health. Without fresh air and clean water, no one will feel healthy enough to go to work or go to school.

Besides the hospitals, schools, air, and water, the disadvantages in city A is in its entertainment. Whereas the entertainment in city B is excellent, the entertainment in city A is poor. Everybody know that we all need entertainment once in a while for enjoyment. In this situation, we should be more involved in city social life as an exchange of the poor entertainment.

Despite the fact that one aspect is the disadvantage in choosing city A, I'm pleased with the other three aspects which are important to me. Because

those three aspects are considered the basic need to human life, it is better that their standard are from fair to excellent.

Essay #30-2 (SLE)

I been offered jobs in Three diffrent cities. Each citie describes some charactristics about the city. For example, ----- . The kind of schools, hospitals, Entertainment.

Air and water. They have. I been told about the three cities by me studying the cities. I decided to live in city A.

The Reason why I picked City A, is Because City A had good schools., Education is a very Important Thing in life. Because without Education I would of never knew how to read, write, and understand what life is all about. I would also Think about My future when I get Married, I would want My kids to Attend good schools to get good Education.

In City A, Three hospitals are fair enough. If I ever get sick in the Future I could always to go the hospitals and They will take care of me Because I heard that ----hospitals are fair so that's all I need. Although the city is poor in entertainment but life is not all about fun. If they don't have any entertainment then just by me going to good schools and making sure my health is good I will enjoy my life this way.

Another good thing they have in City A is excellent air and water. That is something that's also very important. Air and water is clear in the city that keeps me away from sickness, unpolluted air and clear water makes you feel healthy also.

I believe that picking City A, was the right choise. I am glad that the schools are good, hospitals are fair, even though the city is poor of entertainment wich is not very important to me. But they have excellent air and water. As long as live smart, educated and healty I could bring happiness in my life.

Essay #26-2 (NLE)

Every human being has preferences of where he wants to live, where he wants to work, what kind of people he wants to be surrounded by. I have been offered 3 jobs in three different cities that all interest me in terms of my career. In the following I will try to explain why not or why I choose or choose not to live in city A, B, or C.

My personal preference is city A because since I don't know how long I'm going to be staying there, I want to make sure that my family and I stay healthy. There is nothing more important to me than fresh air and good water condition. There are other important factors that may be more important to others like schools, hospitals, or entertainment.

For every person there is a different reasoning for the choices they make. For example, if a person knows he doesn't want children and that person would be more happy in city C, which has a lot of entertainment, then it is his personal choice of where to live and there is nothing wrong with that.

City B is probably the best choice for a person without children in my view. My reasoning not to move to City B is the lack of education which is important to me because I consider to have a family in my later life. Besides speaking I'm trying to be reasonable not only for myself but for the people I care.

Individual freedom is very important issue to me, but if you ever get in a similar situation as I, I would like to consider the above listed thoughts of mine so you can make a reasonable decision.

I hope you received the main idea of mind: to be happy but to double-check your choice to be responsible as well.

Essay # 24-2 (NLE)

All the cities offered to me to work , have some good points and some bad points. After looking at all of them, I would prefer to live in City A. I chose City A because it almost fulfills everything which I would like to have in a city, I want to live in. First of all city A has an excellent atmosphere. It has less pollution so you can get good fresh air and fresh, free of germs water in that city. This provides you better health and less diseases. So if we think deeply it gives longer life. On the other hand if you look you don't get that good air and water in other two cities. City A has good schools, so you can provide your children good education and help them giving good shape to their future. But if you look the schools in City B, you will find out that in the long run your children will have to suffer for that. Your children's future can be ruined by that. Schools in City C are excellent but looking at some other things, I would still prefer City A. Talking about the hospitals, City A doesn't have that advanced or good hospitals but you don't get emergencies so often. In case you are in emergency, you can be taken to some other city nearby. As you are getting good, clean and pollution free environment, so you will not get sick so often. In city B you have little better hospitals than in city A. If you take entertainment in consideration, you will see that City A doesn't have really good means of entertainment. On the other hand if you see City B and C, you will find that they have really good places to entertain yourself. At least City A will have a movie rental place, so you can rent a movie and entertain yourself. Moreover after whole day's hard work you are too tired to go out to some place. On weekends, of course, you can go out to some picnics or visit some other town to have a change. So considering everything in

1. The first part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various offices of the city.

2. The second part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various offices of the city.

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mind, I think I will go for City A. I hope I made a right choice but even if I didn't I have to deal with it, somehow or the other.

Essay Code #23-2 (NLE)

I have very happy since I have been offered a job. But now I have a headache because I have to choose a city where I'm going to work. It's hard to me to make a decision because these cities are different and I don't know which one I would prefer. I'll try to compare three cities and then I will decide which is the best for me.

I have to decide what is more important for me among four things such as schools, hospitals, entertainment, and air and water condition. I think all these things are important for every person. Everybody needs good schools and healthcare, excellent live conditions like air and water, and entertainment. May be entertainment is not such important thing but it makes our life more interesting, especially when we are young. I consider myself like a young person who needs entertainment. But I am not so young to need schools because I have a job now. So now I know a factor priority. At first I need entertainment and good condition of air and water.

Now I take a look at my priorities in city A. Probably this city is not a large metropolis because of its excellent air and water condition and this is very good. But I see that this city doesn't suits me because of lack of entertainment. Although its schools and hospitals are very good I would choose city A.

Now I have only two cities to choose. As I said, I think air and water is very important for me. City C seems to be very big industrial city. It has all what people need but it has bad atmosphere and bad water. So this city isn't the best for me.

There is only one city in my list which I should choose because I don't like

others. This one is city B. It has all what I need except of good schools and I am probably going to live and to work there. Because now I don't need any schools. But if I will get a family in this city, then it will be a big problem to find a good school for my children. But now I don't have children, but I have a job. And I am going to City B. And I hope I will not be sorry about my decision.

Essay Code #22-2 (NLE)

In our times people become more thoughtful about the place they are living in. While choosing the right city they consider numerous pros and cons, the most important of which I guess are the quality of education provided, advancement of medical services, entertainment services and the rate of pollution. The last factor is becoming more and more important for people, what is very interesting tendency.

Nevertheless as long as there is no ideal place people have to choose certain advantages as well as certain disadvantages. Very often the decision is imposed by the fact of having or having not children. If a couple has children it certainly should think about the place with the best educational and ecology conditions. If it has not, those become less important but still that's a lot of think of. As for me, while I'm young and energetic the very important is an appropriate job and wide diversity of entertainment opportunities which include sport and recreation. Nevertheless I pay much attention to the ecology problems as I'm sure it's not normal for a human being consciously to expose himself by industrial pollution. Such neglect to one's health as a rule turns out in severe and painful diseases. The most common are: asthma, high blood pressure, migraine, and so on. From this point of view the best choice to me seems to be city B which is highly rated in entertainment services, and at the same time assures good ecology conditions.

Choosing the right place to live can be a very difficult decision but people should seriously consider it as because it will strongly influence their lives.

Essay Code #54-2 (NLE)

One of the most important thing in your life is to feel good, confident and safe in the city, you are going to live for a big part of your life. Today I am going to make a decision between three cities with have been described to me with the following points: Schools, Hospitals, Entertainment, and air & water.

I already made my choice, and I would choose City A. City A has a very good environment, good schools, few hospitals and not very much entertainment.

My priority would be to fell healthy, to be able to breathe when I open my window in the morning. Maybe I wouldn't choose an excellent environment, if I wasn't thinking about having children someday. Also, I think that when you have good air and water, you don't have as many medical problems as you would in a city with high polution, I'm sure I would feel weak in that kind of city.

The schools are very important too. Cities that have good schools usually are rich in a lot of good things, knowledge. That means children and even adults have the gift of learning, and everyone on () deserves it.

Having not very good hospitals doesn't not make me happy, but I think that before I make my definitive desision, I'd look around to find maybe a close city that would have some good hospitals. I knows from some of my friends that you can go even to some other sates to do medical tests. Minesota or Ohio. So I try to not worry to much about it.

Entertainment is of course important to me but I don't think you can't live without it. Anywhere in the world if you meet friends, you can make your own activities. Organizing basket ball games or riding bicycle, even just playing cards, rents some movies and going out eating. There are a lot of things you can do if you have good friends and a little of immagination.

Essay Code #53-2 (NLE)

In my opinion, preferring city B over cities A & C is a good choice. Since I'm already out of school, it really doesn't matter much to me that the city's school system is pretty poor. Although, it would make sense to think that such educational environment would be a cause for not having too many bright and educated people in this area. But it's just my guess, anyways. Some people might say something fairly smart about the future, kids and their education. First off, I'm really not planning on having a family anytime soon. Or I might even lose this job I just got, maybe even soon (God forbid) and move somewhere else (again). I'm taking the risk of being not too original, but one thing is for sure-- nothing is for sure. And speaking from my experience, focusing too much on the future might cause you stress!

Having good hospitals in the city is a pretty important thing for me. Even though, I'm hoping not to be using their services too often or anytime soon! Having health problems in the past makes a good hospital system count for me. And, I think, for anyone else, not depending on their health condition.

I really like the fact that the city is famous for excellent entertainment. In my opinion, good relaxation and being able to do that make a difference in a person's life (or in mine, at least.) The only disadvantage I see would be spending too much money on it (that is, of course, always my choice.)

No matter how excellent the city's entertainment is, you can't exactly live on that. I really think that fairly good air & water are essential. It's a big advantage. I don't think people care enough about thing like that, I mean, basically, they don't care about their health, and that is not a very smart thing to do. I think, the

health issue is the main reason why I appreciate the city's good air & water a lot.
At this point, the city makes a pretty good impression on me. I hope it's
everything and a little bit more I expect.

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Essay Code #52-2 (NLE)

If I had the opportunity to choose one of these cities to live in I would have chosen City A. Mostly because of the excellent environment with fresh air and water without any pollution. A good environment is important to me, and I don't think I could have lived constantly in polluted air.

It is also important to think about if there are any good schools nearby. This is maybe more important to think about if you have kids. Since I don't have any, you will maybe ask, so why would you choose a city with good schools? My reason also looked into the educational opportunities when I decided what city to move to because of things can change, and if they do, it is important to be ready for them.

I would of course prefer that the hospitals would have been better in case of illnesses and accidents, but to live in a place with fresh air and water without any pollution is so important to me that I would look for the place with the best air.

Since the entertainment is poor, it might be boring without the same opportunity to entertainment, but I think it is possible to think of something else to do, than to go out to a movie theater or go to a restaurant. For example invite your friends over to your house for dinner instead of going out.

So again City A is the best city for me. I can live anywhere without entertainment, excellent hospitals and good schools, but I can't live without having the chance to breathe in fresh air.

Essay Coded #51-2 (NLE)

In the past years education, health care, save drinking water and fresh air as well as entertainment has become important things for most people. From the time we are little till the time we grow up, these things become essential to most people but I also believe these previlages has made people less motivative and from being more responsible.

Schools are however important for me to since I believe in continuing education am a young person who is still learning to gain knowledge and improve the quality of life. Every city with schools have less people educated and less people uneducated. And when people are educated they are more creative their self esteem are higher and I will be able to learn a lot. On the other hand, adequate schools means more people educated and that can bring about lack of job.

Furthermore, hospitals has alway been concern issue for most people. Adequate health care save people's live because there always help for emergencies with hospitals, diseases can prevented or be cured and it create job for the community as well.

For these reason, it can also make the people or the community less motivated to improve upon their own live and also face responsibility for the city. People without enough hospital forcfull and working hard to bring about adequate hospitals.

Nevertheless, entertain has been part of our activities for our daily lives. It helps you relax, and interaction with people, and imagining which create entertainment for oneself.

In addition, it's a dream for most people and cities to live in an environment where the air and water are fresh and clean without pollution, communities and cities with save drinking water and clean air can be able to prevent a lot of diseases, which bring about responsibility but at the same time it can also bring about carelessness.

In conclusion, I believe all that I have stated above are all important in the live of every community or city in order to improve upon the quality of life but it can also make people less motivated improve upon their quality of life.

Essay Code #44-2 (SLE)

Getting to choose which cities to live in is a very difficult decision to make. There are different kinds of characteristics in every city. Choosing the right characteristic is very important to you because it can change your way of life.

If I were to choose what city to live in, I would prefer to live in a nice society, excellent education, good hospitals, and excellent air and water. Why this city? Well, to me excellent education, good hospitals and excellent air and water are characteristics that are very important to me. If you have excellent schools, you'll have good education, and you'll achieve more goals in your life. If you have good air and water, you be less sick. You don't have to worry about getting thirsty and the air that you breath. If you have good hospitals, you don't have to worry about your health that much because they are going to take care of you.

Entertainment is not really important to me because you can always entertain yourself. You can always have fun with your friends. You don't really need some machine to entertain you.

The most important characteristics in a city are excellent schools, good hospitals and excellent air and water. Because it affect you quality of life and your way of living. And the best city of live in would be City A.

Essay Code #43-2 (SLE)

When I first moved to the city of Detroit I applied for some jobs in three places. One company was in Livonia, the other was in Detroit and also applied in Saint Clare Shores, as a salesman at some auto dealer. I just turned in the application and I left. It past a week and I haven't heard from them yet. At the moment I was living in rent temporarily. One day after I got home from wandering around I had three messages on my answering machine. The messages were from the 3 places were I applied for a job and they all wanted to hire me. Then I started searching the areas to see were it would be better for me and my family that is going to be here soon from Europe. I first went to see how the area of Detroit looks and what was around the place were I planed to work and it didn't look really bad, but I went to see where my children would go to school and after I seen the school I just kept on driving along the river to Saint Clare Shores to my second obtion. It was in the middle of November and the trees were naked, and the wind was blowing real hard. Finaly I stoped in front of the car dealer after an half an hour drive.

The place looked a lot better than the dealer in Detroit so I went into the dealer where I was welcome and in my head I was already thinking "this is where I going to be working" but I still had to go and look for house to move in and see how the schools look around here and the shopping center etc. I found a house for sale but it was to close to the lake and it was smeling funny plus the miskidos in the summer time they kill you. I was realy curious how Livonia looked like so I went to see how things are there and if not I'm going to drive back to S.C.S. and look for some different houses a little bite more away from

the shore. Livonia seemed really peaceful and not a lot of traffic when I got there and the people were being nice by letting me get in the lane that I wanted to get in. The air was also not too polluted but it was the nicest so I went and got hired in and started looking for a house to move in without even looking at the schools or to see what's around because I seen a nice mall on the way to the dealer and it looked like I could fit in the neighborhoods. So I moved in Livonia because it was a nicer city than the other ones that I been through.

Essay Code #38-2 (SLE)

The city I would prefer to live and work in is city A. The first reason I chose this city is because of the good schools. I would like to raise my children and provide them with a good education. A city with good schools will allow me to concentrate on work while my children are in school. I won't have to worry about my child skipping classes or getting beat up. In a good school my child will be able to talk to his or her teacher about a problem they're having, whereas in a bad school a teacher would refuse to listen. For example I went to a school where no one cared what you do. When you go to a school like this, you feel as if this will never change, but it does and you are the one that suffers most. Especially when going to college and everyone in biology knows the metric system but you.

The second reason I chose City A is because of its excellent air and water. When a city has polluted air and water usually means that there is a lot of people living there. I prefer smaller cities because you don't have to drink bottled water. When I wake up in the morning I'd like to be able to see the sun instead of all the fog from the factories. When you live in a city with polluted air you feel like you're going to suffocate. When I find that the air and water are clean I feel relieved to be in such a place. Clean air and water, to me bring a picture of beautiful streams and a lot of mountains and forests.

The last reason I chose city A is because of its fine hospitals. In case of an emergency you want to be sure that you'll be offered the best help possible. For example you don't want to wait to live while you're bleeding from a gunshot wound. This kind of picture always appears to me when I hear that a hospital is

poorly organized. Another thing you dont want to worry about is how clean you're bed will be and the bathroom that you'll be using. A good hospital is always important not only for you, but also for those living in the city. If a tornado hits you're city you better pray for a good, clean, and organized hospital.

Essay Code #33-2 (SLE)

It is hard to make a decision on something; however, if I have to choose one of the three different cities where they offer some good job, I would choose City A. Well, there are advantages and disadvantages in each city but to me personally I prefer the place with enough fresh air and water. In my opinion, the fresh place is a guideline for everything. Schools and hospitals are also important not only for myself but also for my future generations too, because school is path of success in everything. Entertainment sometimes is needed but it depends on circumstances and what each individual thinks. To me entertainment is quite not important.

Essay Code #29-2 (NLE)

People have different tastes and expectations from life. There is one thing, everyone tries within their possibilities, to live where they can meet these expectations. As I said everyone has his own lifestyle, and I am a very outgoing person, who likes good natural conditions and wants to be secured. Imagine that I have a choice of living in 3 cities, that differ from each other by four characteristics like: school, hospitals, entertainment, air and water. The first city A has good air, water and schools but no hospitals and entertainment. The second city, city B, has good water, air, entertainment, and hospitals but no good schools. The third city, C, has good entertainment and schools but no air, water and hospitals. My choice would have been to live in the second city. City B has excellent entertainment, good air and water, good hospitals but no good schools.

First the life is one and we need to enjoy it. I have realized that to enjoy the life you need to have the conditions. This is one of the reasons why I will choose the second city, which has an excellent entertainment characteristic. A city that has that characteristic should have a lot of places to visit, good restaurants and bars, beautiful theatres and a noisy night life. I think that's all I need to be entertained.

Second I will choose second city because has good air and water. Having good air and water you have the elements of a good nature and healthy life. Who doesn't like to wake up in the morning and breathe fresh air? Who doesn't like the freshness that a lake, sea, or river bring to a city? That is why I think that this two elements are to be considered before choosing the city where to live.

Third, in a city that has good hospitals, people feel secure or better say I feel secure. I think so because if something bad might happen at least you have the hope of going in a hospital where good doctors work, and they know how to take care of you. It is really bad if a person lives in a city where he or she has to drive for miles to reach a hospital. What about if there is an emergency and you have to be close to a hospital? Time is not always with you so that is why I feel secure to live close to a hospital.

In addition, I know that a good school system is necessary but is not for a long time, or when a person is through with the school he doesn't need it anymore. If I was in school myself, I wouldn't mind driving a while to go to school. When the kids grow up it will be better for them to go in their own and live by the school. If the other elements of the city are ok I wouldn't worry about the school too much. In conclusion if a city has good entertainment, good air and water, and good hospitals that is almost perfect for my lifestyle. As an outgoing person I like the entertaining atmosphere, in a city. I like a city to have a nice air and water environment. In my opinion is very important to have good hospitals in the city. If I am not in the school and I don't have kids to send in school, schools have no importance to me. I am sure that cities like this exist somewhere in the country, and all I have to do is find it.

Essay Code #28-2 (NLE)

Having been offered jobs in three cities: A, B, C, I need to choose carefully. Since the environment where we live is the most important thing and the entertainment is the least, I decide to live and work in city A.

The advantages of city A are air, water conditions and its school system. The atmosphere of the city is pure with many green trees along the streets. Pollution is not a big problem of the city because most of the industrial factories are located somewhere in its vicinity and its outskirts. Also, the water condition is really good. We can have fresh water in every household and do not be worried about its qualities. These good air and water conditions make us healthy and active. In addition, the school system is also an advantage. The great amount of famous schools are in this cities. Their facilities are really wonderful for studying and researching. In fact, city A has many advantages that I need.

However, alongside many advantages listed above, city A has the disadvantages which consist of health services and entertainment. There are just a few small hospitals dispersing somewhere in the urban. It is very hard to confront with the big accidents as well as take care the health of the entire population. Besides, there are just two theatres and one small stadium for sport activities. Somehow it cannot satisfy the demands of its people. Moreover, the broadcasting system is very weak. It has only five local channels for us to entertain. Their contents are very simple and not interesting. Thus, the city really has the disadvantages for us to live.

In conclusion, although city A has some disadvantages in health services

and entertainment, I decide to choose it to live and work because its advantages in air, water conditions and school system still overweigh its weak aspects. I hope I will get accustomed to it soon and have a better life in this city.

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Essay Code #27-2 (NLE)

One of the major characteristics that are usually given to a person that is being described is the place that person lives in. It is definitely reasonable because the city that you live in dictates a person his/her habits, forms some personal qualities and an entire life-style. I've already developed my life-style and I would prefer to keep it. So, in order to choose a city that would fit my personal requirements I would make an emphasis on a good system of educational establishments and a variety of places to go for fun, while I could ignore the lack of a good ecological environment.

The presence of good schools in the city is my first priority because I am still a student and good education means a lot for me in terms of my present and future. It is very convenient when a school you go to is located close to your house. You do not have to tolerate long drives and waste your precious time that could be spent on studies. Besides great schedule advantages school located in your district provides, it also gives you a better chance to participate in extra activities within the district, such as competitions, unplanned meetings and others. Also, if you go to a good school nearby it almost guarantees you that all your school-friends live in a reachable distance range from you, so you can always get help quick if you need it.

If there is a lot of places to go and see in the city it is always great for a person who is still developing an outlook on the world and a personal taste. Entertainment is what gives you the ideas for how the world that surrounds you is and how do you want to see yourself within it. That is something that plays an important role for me, so that is another criteria in my choice of a city.

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Very often in big cities with a lot of schools, entertainment and, as a consequence, industry the natural resources are on the edge. Of course the lack of a good quality water and air is harmful for a human, however, I could compensate it with healthy diet and my day-schedule.

Choosing a city to live in is not an easy task. Every place on the earth has it's own advantages and disadvantages. You always have to sacrifice something. To me, the presence of good schools and good entertainment in a city overweighs poor ecological conditions.

Essay Code #32-2 (SLE)

If I have been offered jobs in three different cities, I prefer to live and work in city A. Because of my children's education and my family's health.

The education system is really important, because of our children and country's future. The good education means bright future. It is good to live in the city where school system is good and entertainment is poor, because children are easily influence by culture. If the city has lots of bar and clubs. It will make bad surroundings for our children to study. Well if the entertainment is poor, it's going to be bore. But if I concern about our kids and country's future, the entertainment is not important.

The family's health is really important. I prefer to live in the City A, because the city A has excellent air and water. The excellent air and water mean fresh and clean. If the air and water are fresh and clean, it best for our health. The bad air and water causes diseases. Long as we live in a City A, our family can have healthy life, and the fair condition hospital will be good enough to take care of our health.

The good school system and the excellent air and water is the important things that city has to provide. The City A provides both conditions well. It is good for our kids and country's future, and the good health for our family. The city A is the good place to live and raise our kids.

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Essay Code #34-2 (SLE)

The world is extremely extense because it is formed by three different homogenous continents, which are Europe, Australia and America. There are different people, cultures, and ways of living in every country. Entities might even vary from city to city. There are advantages and disadvantages of living in certain cities. I was offered three jobs in different cities, but finally came up with the conclusion of moving to City C to live and work. In order to make such decision I took into consideration the quality of schools, entertainment and hospitals situated in city A, B, and C.

Schools are very important in my life. They make me grow in knowledge and help me be a better person. Even though I will have a good job awaiting for me, I will still take courses in college to upgrade my knowledge. Therefore it is very important for me to be aware of the city school's quality. It is so convinient to have a good education available close or in the town I decide to live in. Moreover if I decide to get married and have children, city C is the gratest choice because education for my children will be extrimily important.

Entertainment is qualified as good in city C. Therefore that cought my attention. Entertainment would really affect my quality of life. I am a workaholic and if good entertainment is not available I would only think "work" not "fun". Also, good entertainment keeps me from getting bored and end up calling my family back home, which could be very expensive.

Moreover, hospitals play an important role in my life and city C provides quality hospitals. One never knows when an accident may occur and it could be necessary to be taken to a hospital. The worst thing that would occur, I think,

is if I die in consequence of lack of technology and equipment in a hospital. Therefore hospitals in City C are clasified as good hospitals. My children will also enjoy the advantage of having desent hospitals in the city where we will be living at.

There are also some disadvantages that I will have to deal with. These are related with poor air and water available in city C. Due to the air pollution in city C, I will probably have to deal with allergies all the time. Therefore I will be forced to spend a lot of money in medicine to prevent myself from getting sick. Another disadvantage is the poor water found in such city. I will be expoused to stomach disorders and maybe infections. As a consequence, I could even lose my appetite.

Making a decision such as moving to a different city is not easy. There are so many things that have to be taken into consideration. A final decision could really affect ones life. After my research I decided to make my final move to city C, because of the grate advantages such as good schools, entertainment, and hospitals available in these city.

Essay Code #35-2 (SLE)

I understand that I have been offered three choices to pick on. These three choices are based on a job and in which city to live on. These three choices have a problem, the job will be the same job for every city, but each city has different thing to offer me. For example each city has a different high level of education, hospital, entertainment, and air and water. For me in order to choose one place, I'm going to compare each city.

First of all, city A has all the expectation that I want to compare with the others two cities. City A has a good level of education based on the chart. With having a good level of education I feel comfortable because having a good education level of education I wont have to worry about my children's education. The chart also shows that the hospital and air and water resource level are fairly good, but the level of the entertainment is very low. I'm satisfy with this city prety fair, because it shows that the most important resources in other for the humans to live well it has shown a good level.

Going now into comparing City B the chart on this city has change a lot. The level on the education has dropt to a poor level. The hospital and the air and water level its on a good level, but the level of the entertainment has gone a long way up to an excellent level. I really don't like this city because it has shown that the education is poor. I want a city for it to have a good or an excellent level of education in order for me to live there. It is very important to me because I want the best education for my children.

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Essay Code #50-2 (NLE)

Study-working programs is essential in today's lifestyle. Students who are studying have to work as well. In other words we need a good job to study further. If I have been offered a good job in three different cities listed above, I would prefer city A to the live and work. I would choose City A for some advantages and disadvantages.

First advantage is that in city A the schools are good. My purpose is to get good education as well as a good job, so I would choose city A.

Another advantage is that in city A hospitals are fair. As we know that good health services are important for our lives. But we are young and there is excellent air and water system, so I think the fair hospitals are good enough to live and work in city A. The most important advantage of living in city A is that is excellent air & water system. As a matter of fact air and water are vital parts of our lives. In fact it is scitific proven that air and water causes most of diseases. In other words they play an extensive part in our health. We can study very well with the good job since we are in a good health because of excellent air and water system.

Also there is a disadvantage of living in city A is the poor entertainment system. As a fact entertainment is good for our lives. But there is a solution to this problem. We can produce a good entertainment by ourselves. For example, we can bring some good movies at home and can have entertainment watching them with the help of VCR.

In conclusion, I prefer city A to live and work as it has many advantages in comparison of few disadvantages.

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

Questions for Interviewees

- 1. Tell me about your experience teaching ESL writing at the college level.**
- 2. In your experience teaching writing to ESL students at the college level, have you ever noticed any differences in writing ability, assuming that the students were correctly placed? If so, explain.**
- 3. (If differences were noted, then ask the following): Can you give specific characteristics of the different writing groups that you identified in question #2?**
- 4. In an ideal world, should these groups be taught separately? If yes, how would you change your methodology or strategies?**

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E
TRANSCRIPTS OF TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Transcript of Teacher A (M= Mike; T= Teacher)

M: Tell me about your ESL teaching experience at the college level...age range, language background/educational background, location, grad/undergrad.

T: Most of it has been at UCLA and an intensive program...at UCLA for ten years. I teach two multi-skills classes that are predominantly undergrad and speaking classes that are sometimes predominantly graduate...our population is mostly Asian (Chinese and Korean, more than Japanese)...18-35, average would be 18-25...educational backgrounds include community college or students who came here at 14 or 18 with a little high school here; that's increasingly the profile...some who came from school at home and only did community college.

M: Concentrating on writing classes at the college level and assuring students were placed appropriately, have you found variation in the writing levels of students? And if so, what accounts for it?

T: Yeah. Some have more pervasive language problems than others. I teach multiskills classes and they're placed on reading, listening, and writing...not just writing. They come in with multi-skills. Some are more fluent writers, some are less risk-taking writers...

M: Would you guess that anything is related to first language, educational background, age range?

T: The biggest factor is students who've gone to high school tend to have a better command and those who have only gone to community college tend to do much worse...the high school grads are more idiomatic, bigger vocabulary, and write more complexly, better writers...the graduate students are a different population...the transfer students who came at 18 and were too old for high school and went to community college, sometimes they have huge language problems...although the Vietnamese that we get who don't have the same educational background and are struggling more...and they may or may not have went to high schools here...but I attribute that to their refugee situation that

may account for that and their educational system was destroyed.

M: In the best of all possible worlds would you separate out the U.S. high schoolers and those are aren't?

T: I don't know whether to separate them out. We feel that students with pervasive problems need an extra program but they still have good ideas...sometimes their ideas are more interesting and complex...one wishes you could offer them a separate grammar course in addition to the writing course...

M: So something supplemental?

T: Probably, but who has the money to offer more courses and programs?

Transcript of Interview with Teacher B (M= Mike; T=Teacher)

M: Tell me about your ESL teaching experience at the college level. Be specific about the ages of students you taught, the language groups, where you taught, what parts of the country, grad/undergrad, adult ed, etc....

T: I began my ESL teaching experience in 1973. My first students were servicemen in the Army from all over the world...I did that for eight months...After that I taught for two years in Dallas, adult education and was involved with refugee resettlement in 1975 as well as with Jewish Refugee Resettlement...For two years I taught as a teaching assistant in a teacher training program for Saudi Arabian students, all male, grad students...Worked in Navarro College, in Corsicana, Texas and taught Micronesian students for two years...For the last ten years I've been teaching full-time at Richland College...where we now have about 1200 students enrolled each semester in ESL...in any one course I can have ten-twelve languages represented...about fifty percent Vietnamese with others being Hispanics, Chinese, Ethiopian, Kurdish, Russian, and other groups...In the past we've had adult students but are seeing more and more students who have graduated from our area high schools...Our trend is changing and we're having more students who have been influenced by the American school system and I believe we'll be attending to those students more and more.

M: In your writing classes at the college level, have you found variation in the writing skills of the students you have been working with assuming they're in the same level based on the assessment you've been using?

T: Can you tell me what you mean by variation?

M: Within specific levels have you founds different levels -- skilled and unskilled writers?

T: Definitely.

M: What do you think accounts for this despite the fact that they've all scored in a certain range on your assessment?

T: Some could be attributed to misplacement. But let's say they all fall within a certain swatch of proficiency levels. Certainly their L1 makes a huge difference. When you talk about writing and language and the cognitive piece of it, the students who come from educated backgrounds are much more able to pick up on what we're teaching. That could be in part due to the fact that we're

teaching academic English as opposed to conversational English. I think that part of this variety in a writing class is that we're trying to prepare them to enter an academic community through writing.

M: Have you found a threshold of literacy that makes it easier for students to be competitive? You mentioned years of education in the L1. Have you found that there's a certain number of years that's more appropriate than other students who come in with less education in their country?

T: ...I would agree with that. However, having taught the 041s (beginning level of reading) and the 054s (advanced level of writing), I would have to say that a person who comes in at the 041 level with little English, the student who is more apt in their first language, moves through the levels more quickly.

M: Can you define "more apt"? How much in that L1 would be predictive?

T: I had one student...who glided through our program coming in at the beginning level...especially study skills...her academic skills in her L1 made the difference.

M: What level in L1 did she come with?

T: She graduated from high school in her country...Students who just got through the sixth grade in their L1, they struggle constantly to try to get through. If they don't have good reading or writing skills in their L1, it's a real struggle in their writing program...

M: The high school group you were talking about, you were talking about those who were having trouble and can't pass the TASS (state assessment test for high school graduates)...

T: They pass the TASS, but they still need ESL when they come to college. How they pass the TASS, I have no idea.

M: Are they different than the 041 student who just glided through the program by having university level education...as opposed to those who graduated from high school?

T: What I've found...with students who have gone through our high schools, they too are bright, they have learned a lot in high school because much of what we're teaching them about the rhetorical level, they know...what they still have problems with is the nagging syntactical problems...but I find this with all students whether they've graduated from high school in the U.S..

M: So you don't see real differences in how they perform in your writing class

whether they graduated from a U.S. high school or not.

T: No. But there are differences in socialization. They act like American students.

M: The high school graduates do?

T: Yes.

M: Are there issues with that?

T: Yes, but they don't get addressed in my classroom. But they've become Americanized and so in the long run they are probably better off down the line, perhaps, because they've gone through the high schools, if they've picked up good habits...if they've picked up crummy habits, then they're going down a socioeconomic path that won't be good for them...especially if they fall in with the wrong groups...for students with the sixth grade education, they have less literacy...what Cummins talks about with CALP, less experience with print, so they're less able to think academically, their strategies are different...I think it's really important to recognize that if someone doesn't have academic strategies that they have other strategies that they've acquired in their L1....

M: But these are students who have six years of education in the L1 but didn't go to school in the U.S?

T: They came as adults and are less able to handle analytical information....less able to be analytical in their writing...now what we're talking about is language acquisition and analytical writing so the task at hand in teaching writing is both.

Transcript of Interview with Teacher C (M=Mike; T=Teacher)

M: Can you start out by telling me about your ESL teaching experience at the college level and in that discussion if you could talk about age ranges, educational background, grad/undergrad, and where...

T: I've taught pre-academic ESL classes in each of the skill areas to students who probably have ranged from 17 - 60 in various times over a period of 13 years...Language groups...the most predominant language groups include Vietnamese, the Middle Eastern primarily speakers of Farsi from Iran, Indian who have spoken various Indian languages, African students from Ethiopia and Eritrea, and Spanish- speaking students from Mexico and Central America. Educational backgrounds range from professional graduate degrees in their country and students who have partial schooling in the U.S. or complete schooling in the U.S....

M: In Texas?

T: Yes, all in the Dallas area.

M: All undergrads?

T: Yes.

M: Have you found variation in the writing skills of your students assuming they were placed within a range on the MTELP?

T: Yes.

M: Can you talk about that?

T: Why it happens? What it looks like? The variation can be accounted for several reasons, the educational background and cultural background, the language background itself and how close it is to English and the alphabet, and the student's innate ability.

M: How does educational background influence their writing ability?

T: Specifically it's real evident with students who were partially educated in the U.S. compared to students with a strong education in their own country. The students with a strong education in their own country and then came here are more able to write with more complexity in their sentence structure...they seem

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to make grammatical errors that have to do with their own interpretation of a theory of grammar, something they've learned and are trying to apply...as opposed to students schooled in the U.S. who tend to write more like written down speech. They tend to have a lot of their writing which is reflective of their oral fossilization. Their sentence structure tends to be much less complex and it's much shorter. They tend to write with idiomatic expressions and tend to be less adventuresome with the grammar...with students who tend to be educated in their L1, they are trying the rules and trying to experiment and make a rule fit a new situation. The students educated in the U.S. tend to be less adventuresome and less creative and tend to write down more what they say and what their friends have said.

M: In the best of all possible worlds, should these groups be taught separately?

T: Maybe. They certainly do have a lot of similar problems. The grammar instruction might be different. The students who graduated from U.S. schools tend to need more oral input, perhaps because of how they initially learned grammar. So you might do more things with songs, movies, and reading books aloud, and more dictation and cloze exercises where you get that kind of input that appeals to their oral and social needs. Other students seem to need the typical ESL which is multiple modes of input, lots of visual, oral, tactile. The high school students very strongly need the oral input. So you might have advantages separating them. Both groups need lots of extensive reading so that would be similar except in the choice of reading.

Transcript of Interview with Teacher D (M=Mike; T=Teacher)

M: Tell me about your ESL teaching experience at the college level. Talk about the ages, language groups, educational backgrounds of the students, undergrad/grad, and location.

T: I taught EFL in China in a high school for one year. I taught in East LA, language minority students, for one year. At UCLA I taught both undergrad and grad students intermediate/advanced ESL and composition...mixed language groups at UCLA, Korean, Hong Kong, Japan. The immigrants tended to be more Filipino, Latino, and Vietnamese.

M: You're currently at Santa Monica College.

T: After one year at UCLA, I taught part-time at Santa Monica for several years. In 1992 I started teaching ESL full-time. This is a unique community college. The program was initially set up for immigrants living in the area. The school had budget problems and they encouraged more international students. We have had a large number of international students (2000 each year), all undergrad...For the international students, we get lots of Koreans, Chinese, Indonesians...In terms of immigrant students, we have large numbers of Iranians, Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipinos. For international students, the ages tend to be 19-21; for the immigrant students, they tend to be older, 24-25...in the past few years many of the immigrants have been from Eastern Europe...Our ESL program was born out of the English dept. throwing up their hands and asking us to teach them. All of our classes are geared toward academic skills, toward writing.

M: Within your levels in your writing classes, have you found variation in the writing skill, assuming that they are placed appropriately.

T: Yes, there really is, even when we have placement testing. We'll find somebody who is placed in our intermediate level as opposed to someone who has come up through the ranks, that person tends to be stronger than the one who has come up through the levels...there's also a big difference between day students and night students. Day students tend to be younger, less mature; night students are working people, serious, goal-oriented, older, or they're in a job and working to get their English stronger to advance in their career. Whereas the day students are here to enjoy themselves while they're in school.

M: Other than age and placement, are there any other factors?

T: Language backgrounds make a big difference. For example, the European students tend to have stronger writing skills than the Asian students...it takes a long take to get a Japanese student to take a risk and make a thesis statement.

M: What about educational backgrounds in the L1?

T: They vary a great deal. Many of the Mexicans have a lower educational background than the European students. That makes a huge difference in their reading proficiency. For example, if you have a group of students placed in an intermediate level and the placement is multiple choice (CELSA), this whole group of students are placed on a multiple choice test. Some will have less trouble doing the reading because of their experience in their L1 background...Cognates in the language may make it easier.

M: Do you have a lot of students who went to high school in the U.S?

T: We have some. But the problem we have faced is that our community college has more language minority than native speaker, so our classes are at a premium. They get filled up by the international students. Because the international students are required to take 12 hours, we hold space available for them. And then an immigrant student is given a choice, an ESL or a regular class and the ESL is filled. Another problem is someone who has come to this country at 15 and had a year of ESL in high school and then are mainstreamed. By the time they come to college, they see ESL as something they've escaped from. We have two different placement test. The regular English test wouldn't catch or separate out the difference between the ESL and regular student.

M: Of those who manage to get in your ESL classes, is there anything about their writing skills that are different.

T: They're much stronger students...they have a lot more vocabulary, a lot more facility with reading...their writing, their style is chattier, more colloquial, but much more fluent...not the same kind of language errors., verb tense, sometimes they drop off participial endings or they'll use the wrong word because they're trying to sound academic, but it's not the same type of translation error problems I get from my international students.

M: In the best of all possible worlds, should we separate them?

T: When I was teaching at UCLA I had a mix that worked in a lovely way. It was a neat balance. What was interesting was that the international students knew the grammar which the immigrant students didn't know; but the immigrant students had the fluency, cultural background, idioms, so in terms of collaborative learning, it worked very well. But the level in general at UCLA was a bit higher than what I get. I often get students with low study skills.

Transcript of Interview with Teacher E (M=Mike; T=Teacher)

M: Tell me about your ESL teaching experience at the college level and indicate any information about ages, students, language groups, educational backgrounds, graduate, undergraduate.

T: For the last three years, I've taught at RLC, Dallas County C. C. The students are mostly undergraduate students preparing to enter an academic credit program. The average age is early 30s, but they range from 18, 19 to 60-70. Most are in their late twenties to middle thirties.

M: Language groups?

T:...The largest population are Southeast Asian speakers of Asian languages like Vietnamese, Laotian, and Thai. The next largest group is native Spanish speakers. After that, a large number of people from the former Soviet Union, Poland, and some Bosnians. We have lots of Middle Eastern students and a number of African students. Not too many Western Europeans.

M: This has been all in Dallas?

T: Right.

M: Have you found any variation in the writing skills of these students?

T: Yes, and I think that one of major differences are students who received most of their higher education, including high school or some or all of their college education outside the U.S., and students who came into the U.S. and completed at least high school in the U.S. and we have a number of students who have received fairly low level education in their home country and have really low literacy skills in their L1 and consequently in their attempts to learn a second language. They also have poor skills, more difficulty learning. I see three groups broadly.

M: What differences in writing have you found in working with these students?

T: With the students who come in for high school in the U.S. it seems to me that I see a lack of depth in terms of their approach to topics or their selection of writing topics. They don't seem to have a lot of maturity. They also use a lot of idiomatic expressions and lots of slang but they don't seem to have a good grasp of the meaning of the vocabulary they use. They tend to have a pretty idiomatic vocabulary but it seems like they don't use it correctly or accurately. The students who have completed education outside the U.S. or high school at

least seem to have a more focused approach to writing. They usually make more mature choices in terms of topics it seems like . While they tend to have more problems with idiomatic usage of the language they usually are fairly accurate in the language they choose. And their vocabularies are generally more limited at first. The other difference I see in those two particular groups is the development of learning strategies. The group that's completed their education in a pretty unbroken fashion in one language seem to have developed more sophisticated learning strategies while the other group seems to be in the process of developing learning strategies. Of course the group with the low literacy skills are still developing vocabulary . They are still developing the ability to match sounds and symbols.

M: In the best of all possible worlds should they be taught separately? And then why or why not?

T: I was thinking about this in terms of "should." I guess it would be nice to teach them separately. I think in some respects it would be nice to teach them based on their educational goals rather than their previous experience but if you would have the luxury of separating those groups I think in terms of challenge and support especially the education in their first language. The group educated in U.S. high schools, I wonder if part of the reason their learning strategies don't seem very developed is because the language acquisition has run interference there. While I might use real similar content with the two groups I would tend to use a lot more step by step and I don't want to say hand holding but do things in small steps to help those students develop learning strategies while with the other group I would tend to give them more general instructions and allow them to apply the strategies that they have from their first language in the second language. The U.S. high school group I would give them pretty high challenge material because they have a lot of high language knowledge already. I would give them lots of support. The other group I would give them high challenge material but I might provide less support in terms of teaching learning strategies.

Transcript of Interview with Teacher F (M=Mike; T=Teacher)

M: Tell me about your ESL teaching experience at the college level. Discuss ages, language/educational backgrounds, location, grad/undergrad.

T: I began college level teaching in 1977 at San Francisco State Univ. In 1978 I taught several writing classes at San Francisco State...mostly long term immigrants (Chinese)...some who transitioned from high schools and American Language Institute...I moved to LA in 1979 and started teaching at USC (American Language Institute), pre-university, mid to upper level courses. In 1982 I taught part-time at Santa Monica College (community college) intermediate writing. The USC students tended to be OPEC students...the Santa Monica students were Asian and Japanese...In 1988 I got my present job at UCLA, teaching a multi-skills course with a writing component, high intermediate, university matriculated students. They tend to be predominantly Asian, Taiwanese, Korean, Japanese, and sprinkling of European, a few Latino.

M: All undergrad or grad?

T: 50-50. Grad only sections or undergrad sections. Undergrad sections are content based courses...grad courses focus on writing in their disciplines.

M: Has the majority of the experience been in California?

T: All in California.

M: In your writing classes at the college level, focusing on undergrad, assuming that they have been placed appropriately in the class, have you found variation in the writing levels of your students?

T: Sure. Some are weaker in language and have problems at the sentence level but have a general understanding of rhetorical devices...and then you get students (longer term high school students) with a pattern of language errors but nothing that interferes with communication, but they have writing problems more similar to a native speaker freshman (developing ideas, supporting their thesis statement).

M: So what accounts for this variation? Talk about your long term high school students.

T: I think a lot of things account for it. Length of time in the country. Amount of time spent focusing on developing their language or writing skills in high

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school. Some students in high school can be mainstreamed immediately, put in ESL classes, put in sheltered classes...different high schools do different things. Sometimes students like being in ESL classes and like the support and others like regular classes. I think for some of those kids they don't get enough attention to their language...teachers will look at their papers and say you have some really good ideas but not give them formal instruction in language.

M: So would there be a number of years where these students would look different from other students who graduated or went to high school in their own country?

T: Well, the ones who've been here longer tend to do better, but not always. I have a couple of students in my 33C class who have been here since 4 or 5, what the heck are they doing in an ESL class? That's an interesting question. How much of the L1 is spoken at home (like in the Korean or Vietnamese community)? We've noticed that our Vietnamese students are transferring in from community colleges with at least an AA degree and they come in with really weak language skills...

M: Can you describe the differences in their writing, the long term high schooler from US as opposed to someone who finished high school in their country...

T: The biggest difference is their verbal fluency. Some of these kids open their mouths and you'd never know. You look at their writing and they lack academic register. They write the way they speak which is informal. Some patterns of language errors, word forms, articles, agreement, and lack of academic vocabulary. Then if I look at the other group they may have fewer sentence level problems but problems with fluency, vocabulary. It's hard to make big generalizations. You can usually tell the difference.

M: Do you see problems with their ability to exit the programs?

T: In our program they are already in the university. No. Where I see the problems are with the ones who place in the lower levels and go through a sequence of three or four courses and you're not going to be at the same level as someone who placed in the class. That's where we see our biggest difference...

M: In the best of all possible worlds, should these groups be taught separately?

T: I don't think so. I think they learn from each other. We have a strong cooperative learning philosophy in our curriculum. In any class you're not going to get people with the same needs. It's just not going to happen.

Transcript of interview with Teacher G (M=Mike; T=Teacher)

M: Tell me about your ESL teaching experience at the college level, age range, language background/educational background, where you taught, grad/undergrad.

T: My college level ESL teaching has been restricted at UCLA...a TA for six years...I taught multi-skills courses for matriculated students and I taught a mixture of undergrad, most of whom were immigrants, and grad students most of whom were international students...I've taught writing courses and oral skills courses for TA...undergrad age range from 18-23 and grad from mid twenties to early thirties...languages, primarily Asian, a lot of Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, some Japanese, some Spanish, very few Europeans...grad students have university degree in their home country and undergrads most of them went to high school in the US and either UCLA as a freshman or went to a community college.

M: In your writing classes, assuming students were placed based on their assessment scores, have you found variation in the writing skills of your students?

T: Of course.

M: What do you think accounts for it?

T: Variation in the level of thinking that goes into the writing, variation in control of English grammar and syntax, control over the conventions of academic writing, willingness or ability to take into account feedback and revising.

M: What would account for this?

T: I think there was a real difference between the undergrads and the grad students. Grad students tended to write in a more sophisticated style although their control over language is sometimes not as good as undergrads, but were better able to write for an appropriate audience.

M: So is age the bigger factor? Or were there other factors?

T: It's hard to know if it's age of maturity or whether they had their undergrad training and they know more about academic discourse. I think it's a combination..

M: Would you find differences in an undergrad writing class?

T: Yeah. But the differences --I don't know if I can make any sweeping generalizations. Maybe how long they have been in the country. Those who have been here since first grade have more fluency in their writing compared to those who came here four or five years ago...the vast majority had their high school education here.

M: Do you see any differences between those who got their high school here and those who got their high school in their first language?

T: I can't even recall a specific student...It's been a long time since I've taught writing. The students who received a high school education in their own country would be the exception, not the rule.

Transcript of Interviews with Teachers H & I (M=Mike; T1=Primary Interviewee; T2=Assisted interviewer))

M: This is for a project that I'm doing in Charlene's class in looking at a certain population. What I'm doing is interviewing experienced ESL writing teachers to get some information about their perceptions of the writing issues facing non-native speakers...Can you start out by telling me about your teaching experience with NNS, focusing on the adult and college level.

T1: All of my experience is at the university level. I've been teaching writing for six years...Most of it has been classes that have been preparing students for regular academic classes, regular English courses...But I've also taught for two years an ESL version of freshman comp where NNS weren't required to go to a mixed class. They could take their comp with NNS. So all of my teaching experience in teaching writing has been with ESL students. I've had classes ranging from 15 to 32 students. Mixed backgrounds.

M: When you say mixed backgrounds, what type of backgrounds? Language backgrounds?

T1: Different language backgrounds and both immigrant and foreign students.

T2: You should get at where she taught because that's going to be relevant -- which part of the country?

T1: In California for four years and here in Michigan for two.

M: And this was at MSU

T1: Yes.

M: California?

T1: San Francisco State, UC Berkeley, and Monterey Institute of International Studies.

M: In your work with a immigrant and foreign students, did you notice differences in their work and in your class, in writing...

T2: Were they undergrad, grad, or mixed?

T1: At Monterey Institute, all grad...At UC Berkeley, all undergrads...At San

Francisco State, all undergrads. ...At MSU, it's mixed. At ELC, it usually comes close to 50-50.

M: Regarding immigrants & foreign students...

T1: I notice that more of my immigrants struggle with grammar and register...they can usually express themselves fluently but have odd grammatical structures ...or they spell things phonetically, or their writing will be very conversational in tone and non-academic...so a lot of their needs are language needs. With international students, they also have language needs but usually slightly different in that if I say "Oh you're having a mistake with a relative clause," they usually know what a relative clause is but if I talk with my immigrant students about a relative clause their eyes usually glaze over...They have no idea what I'm talking about. So international students have more of a metalanguage for grammar than the immigrants. The international students struggle with cultural problems in their writing more either from most of the writing I do is based on things they've read and they have greater misunderstandings based on cultural concepts. And I think that the immigrant students tend to be more savvy as to who their audiences are and the cultural expectations of writing.

M: Have you noticed differences in their rate of writing or quality of writing or acquisition of writing skills...differences in their performance regarding exit competencies or GPA?

T1: For the bulk of the students there aren't any differences, but among the immigrants people who got to certain levels have difficulty progressing beyond that.. Whether its sociocultural factors making them stop at a level of acquisition or the quality of the input that they're getting in living in immigrant communities I'm not sure what that is. But I think it's common to get stuck at semester two of freshman comp and not pass. They could take it five times and not move on. With the foreign students, I don't see that happening that often. It's not uncommon for them to make faster progress because of their good foundation in grammar and they have a good foundation in academic skills in general and it's just a matter of putting things together and they can progress fairly quickly. But as I said the bulk of the students there's not much differences. It's few extremes of the international students who progress much faster and few extremes of immigrant students who don't progress.

T2: But in terms of the problems you mentioned that would be the bulk of the students. When you were talking at the beginning about the different problems they had.

T1: Yeah.

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the structure of the atom. It is shown that the structure of the atom is determined by the laws of quantum mechanics, and that the structure of the atom is a function of the atomic number Z .

2. The second part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the structure of the atom for different values of the atomic number Z . It is shown that the structure of the atom changes as Z increases, and that the structure of the atom is a function of Z .

M: Did you notice whether any of it was based on their L1 itself or was it more of one group that were immigrants and one group that were internationals that seemed to make faster or slow progress.

T1: Yes. But I'm not sure it's first language but it's due to the social and cultural situation in their country. For example, Cambodian students I dealt with had no

formal schooling in their home countries and the whole world of academics were foreign to them and they were very slow learners because they weren't just learning language or just learning writing but sitting in their seats quietly for a couple of hours at a time and basic critical thinking skills. So a lot of the refugee students I had had more difficulty. In terms of language backgrounds, obviously my European students tend to have an easier time both with the language itself and with rhetoric and with critical thinking skills. They tend to progress much faster. Hispanic students from Central & South American tend to progress very quickly with rhetorical things, but I see a lot more difficulty with oral language interferences I was talking about. A lot of phonetic spelling to the point of having difficulty understanding what they were trying to say. These are gross generalizations. Japanese students seem to feel there is something about the rhetoric and the critical thinking that is involved in American writing that they tend to catch on a lot faster than a lot of other Asian students.

T2: Do you think, when you say, that there is a correlation between grad /undergrad and foreign student/immigrant in the people you've taught. Do the grad students tend to be more---

T1: The grad students have all the critical thinking skills. The grad students tend to have the critical thinking skills at their fingertips. When I'm teaching argumentation, a lot of basic ability to go through and identify evidence in an argument and evaluate it is quite easy for the grad students and difficult for the undergrads. And a lot of the grad students seem like they're exposed to more rhetorical styles. And they're, they can pick up on rhetorical styles more easily.

T2: Do the grad students in your experience tend to be more foreign students than the undergrad than immigrants. Have you ever had immigrant grad students?

T1: No, I've never had. Not never. I've had the rare refugee grad student...here and there...but not a lot of them.

T2: And undergrad foreign students?

T1: Yes, a lot of them.

M: You mentioned the Cambodians not having formal schooling or limited

formal schooling. In your experience, is there a level of formal schooling necessary or have you found that to be a way to separate certain types of immigrants or foreign students in terms of their success or non-success. Obviously, formal schooling seemed to be one of the issues. Is there a certain level of formal schooling that you would expect or predict and what would that level be.

T2: Could I ask for clarification of the Cambodian student. Did they go to high school in the U.S. ...Clarify what you meant by immigrant and what you meant by foreign student.

M: And my formal schooling question would apply to first language, not second language.

T1: What I'm calling an immigrant is a student who does not have any plans to return home and usually is here with their family, not alone. And foreign students are here for a limited amount of time for the purpose of learning English and will return to their home countries.

T2: So that Cambodian student who has just moved here maybe, if they haven't gone to high school in the U.S. they could be similar to the foreign student if they've just arrived --

T1: There are so many social factors that make a difference. Even an immigrant student who has just arrived chances are they have their family with them,. they speak their native language at home...more than likely they need to use English to communicate outside the classroom...the support system makes a difference. Many of my immigrant s came from traumatic backgrounds so there was a lot of personal trauma interfering with their education...I'm now confused about the question.

M: Is there a level of education in their first language that is necessary to level the playing field when you have these students in your writing classes.

T1: I think that if they haven't had at least one year of high school in their home countries, there's really a problem. Of course, the courses I've been teaching have asked that they have college level skills with the understanding that there are language problems, but in terms of critical thinking and being able to read and analyze and write in certain rhetorical styles, they're expected to be at a college level, and if they haven't gotten at least some high schooling their own language, they're really having problems.

M: In the best of all possible worlds, should these groups be taught separately? And why or why not in a writing class?

T2: And what would you do?

T1: Yes...I've found that immigrant students have really responded from going from personal writing to academic writing. I think it's Mike Rose who talks about whether there really is a transition from personal writing to academic writing. And I could always make that transition very effectively with my immigrant students to to get them to start out with academic writing is difficult, but to get them to write about themselves first slowly and make that more academic sounding prose was successful. Whereas for the international students, starting with a lot of personal writing is a waste of time. And there's more resistance to that too.

T2: Why?

T1: Partly because international students come here to be more academic and personal writing doesn't fit that schema and they want the practice with the academic sounding language whereas with the immigrant students, like I said, a lot of them have come from fairly traumatic backgrounds and they're dealing with more personal problems that interfere with their schooling and if they have a chance to write about their personal problems that helps them.

T2: Is this more of a grad/undergrad thing or do you think that's really an immigrant/foreign student thing?

T1: My international undergraduate students...show an equal distaste for personal writing.

M: So you see that as the main strategy to introduce academic writing?

T1: Yes.

M: Are there any other strategies?

T1: With international students, they're going to be going home and using English for a specific purpose and I try to find out what that purpose is and I get at that mostly through their majors and if they're mostly business majors I would add rhetorical styles I wouldn't ordinarily teach (business letters, report writing)...whereas with immigrant students, if I do teach non-academic rhetorical forms, it's usually something more like daily communication or living in the U.S.

T2: Is there something with the language you would focus on? Sentence level or more editing or more vocabulary?

T1: The editing strategies I tend to teach are more successful with the

international students.. I have a certain way of teaching editing...a systematic way of teaching proofreading. I developed this when teaching immigrants and frustrated that it wasn't working and move here to MSU and found that it worked much better and was more effective. So if I were to go back again to work with immigrant students I would find a more different approach.

T2: Could you go back what you said about the difference again you had talked about I just wanted to review and see if there was anything else. Their problems about the grammar..you said they had the metalanguage...but looking at their writing product, what differences --

T1: I think that with international students, there are more lexical problems, not having the vocabulary word...grammar errors that result from using vocabulary incorrectly...verbs that take prepositions and verbs that don't...whereas that seems to be more acquired and natural than with the immigrant students..but the immigrant students will have a lot more really convoluted sentences where they have no idea that a sentence has to have a subject and a verb and they didn't have the basic sense of sentence structure so sometimes you get strings for words that they're meanings made sense in the order that they strung the words together but there was no grammatical sense.

M: It was a lot like their spoken English?

T1: Yes. But if they just stuck with their oral English it would sound more comprehensible, but a lot of them got this idea that academic writing had to sound sophisticated and had to have a very different quality than their oral English and that's when it would completely fall apart and to you would get sentences that were completely garbled and non-comprehensible.

T2: Was every group EAP? So they were all enrolled or ready to be enrolled?

M: In both Calif. and MI. ?

T1: Yes.

T2: Have you taught writing to lower levels?

T1: One time I taught the low level writing course ...and it's been a long time...

M: What were the age ranges of the students?

T1: 18 to 55 but the average was 20.

Transcript of Interview with Teacher J (M=Mike; T=Teacher)

M: Tell me about your ESL teaching experience...talk about age range, location, language groups, educational background.

T: All of my ESL experience is with adults...my youngest was 15 (just a few) and my oldest was 78, so there's been quite a range...my first experience was in Canada, starting out as a volunteer program with advanced students who wanted writing experience...the program eventually became an integrated program with listening, writing, speaking, etc...then I was hired into the adult high school to teach credit ESL programs...when I left Canada I was hired in the Farmington Intermediate School and I was hired to teach intermediate and advanced ESL to adults...these were non-credit programs with the option of taking it for credit if they chose...I started working part-time at OCC with a lower-intermediate writing/reading class which was a credit class...almost every language depending on the program has varied dramatically...students who have had four years of education in their own country and were almost illiterate, some could not read cursive writing...at the other extreme I've had medical doctors from Germany, teachers, engineers, people with high levels of education...at OCC we have a large Chaldean population, a large Russian population, and a mattering of Asians...

M: Have your students been all undergrad?

T: I think I'd have to classify them all as undergrads, even those who were professionals in their country were not doing grad work here.

M: Assuming your students have been placed by an instrument that puts them in a range, have you found variation in the writing skills of your students?

T: Yes, the big difference is people who can barely write a paragraph and people who can write three pages at a time.

M: What do you think might account for that?

T: Education in their own language and people who were educated here...I think people who are fluent in their own language and who write easily transfer that skill readily...if you're used to taking pen to paper and translating your thoughts, it takes over...if you are a person who is much more oral in your own language, that carries over into English also.

M: Does the writing itself look different? You mention those people who have had a lot of experience in their own language writing.

T: If they have graduated from high school or college students in their own language, then they know a lot about writing styles...they have a fluency even though they might not be accurate or follow our patterns...whereas a student with a low level of education who hasn't written a lot in their own language tends to write very short sentences, struggles for vocabulary...words with letters missing...sometimes they will spell the same word differently four different times...they don't seem to discriminate between letters very well.

M: These are students who didn't receive an education in their own country?

T: For the most part or low levels or came here at some point in the educational process, took ESL here, people who have graduated from high school here and have those same problems...

M: So you see this also with those who graduated from a high school here as opposed to those who graduated from high school in their own country?

T: Yes. And I suppose that depends on their background on the country they came from, how important education was in their family, sometimes women tend to have much lower levels than men.

M: In the best of all possible worlds, should they be taught differently?

T: I don't know...that's a hard question. I think to start with if it were based strictly on an objective test for a group who needed remedial work, that's one thing. I think if you try to break it into groups based on writing, then I think there would be resistance to taking this class...I don't know how much they really learn from each other. You'd think that advanced students would help the other students but I'm not sure if that's what happens. I tend to teach toward the upper third of the class and the others may need tutoring.

M: Have you found differences between the two groups of those who completed high school in their native country and those who didn't in terms of their ultimate progress in the second language, does it impact their ability to move forward in their education?

T:...I don't really know. In many cases they have to repeat a course...

APPENDIX F

APPENDIX F

Instructions to ESL Teachers for Identification of Essays

1. After you have read the essay, indicate if you believe that the essay was written by a non-native speaker (NNS) of English who completed high school in his/her native country or if the essay was written by a non-native speaker of English who completed three to five years of secondary schooling in the United States.

_____ Written by a NNS who completed high school in his/her native country

_____ Written by a NNS who completed three to five years of secondary schooling in the U.S.

2. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being a "wild guess" and 5 being "very certain"), how certain are you of this distinction? 1 2 3 4 5 (circle one)

3. Based on your answer in #1, please give one or two brief reasons for your choice.

APPENDIX G

APPENDIX G

Instructions to ESL and Basic Writing Teachers on Rank Ordering the Essays

Attached are 19 essays written by non-native speakers of English. Also attached is the original writing prompt. At the end of each essay, identify the rank order of the essay based on the following criteria: a) organization; b) development; c) grammar and usage (overall fluency with respect to the written conventions of English). The essays are to be assigned a ranking of 1 to 19, with no rank number repeated. A rank of 1 would be considered the best holistically based on the three criteria and 19 would be considered the worst. You might find that some are very close and the ranking will be difficult to discriminate, for example, a 10 from an 11; however, the research design requires that each be assigned only one rank number in the packet.

APPENDIX H

APPENDIX H

Guidelines for T-units, S-nodes, and Errors

T-units

- a. A T-unit is defined as an independent clause and all its dependent clauses.
- b. Count run-on sentences and comma splices as two T-units with an error in the first T-unit.

ex: My school was in Saudi Arabic, it was the best school there.

T	/	T
1 error		error-free

If several comma-splices occur in a row, count only the last as error free.

- c. For sentence fragments, if the verb or copula is missing, count the sentence as 1 T-unit with an error. If an NP is standing alone, attach it to the preceding or following T-unit as appropriate and count as an error. If a subordinate clause is standing alone, attach it to the preceding or following S and count it as 1 T-unit with an error.
 - d. When there is a grammatical subject deletion in a coordinate clause, count the entire sentence as 1 T-unit.
- ex: First we went to our school and then went out with our friends.
- e. Count both "so" and "but" as coordinating conjunctions. Count "so that" as a subordinating conjunction unless "so" is obviously meant.
 - f. Do not count tag- questions as separate T-units.
 - g. Count S-nodes with a deleted complementizer as a subordinate clause as in:
I believe with A and (that) B = 1 T-unit.

h. But, direct quotes should be counted as:

John said, "A and B."

1 T-unit

1 T-unit

i. Assess the following type of structure on a case-by-case basis:

If A, then B and C.

As a result, A or B.

j. Count T-units in parentheses as individual T-units.

Clauses (S-nodes)

a. A clause equals an overt subject and a finite verb. The following are only one clause each:

He left the house and drove away.

He wanted John to leave the house.

b. Only an imperative does not require a subject to be considered a clause.

c. In a sentence that has a subject with only an auxiliary verb, do not count the subject and verb as a separate clause or as a separate T-unit (e.g., John likes to ski and Mary does too; John likes to ski, doesn't he?; John is happy and Mary is too)

Error Guidelines

a. Do not count spelling errors (including word changes like "there/their").

b. Be conservative about counting comma errors; don't count missing commas between clauses or after prepositional phrases. Comma errors related to restrictive/non-restrictive relative clauses should be counted. Extraneous commas should also be considered errors.

c. Base tense/reference errors on preceding discourse; do not look at the

sentence in isolation.

- d. Don't count British usages as errors, (e.g., "in hospital," "at university," collective nouns as plural).**
- e. Be lenient about article errors from translations of proper nouns.**
- f. Don't count errors in capitalization.**
- g. Count errors that could be made by native speakers (e.g., between you and I).**
- h. Do not count register errors related to lexical choices (e.g., lots, kids).**
- i. Disregard an unfinished sentence at the end of the essay.**

APPENDIX I

APPENDIX I

Error Classification System

- 1 whole sentence or clause aberrant**
- 2 subject formation (including missing subject and existential, but not wrong case)**
- 3 verb missing (not including auxiliary)**
- 4 verb complement/object complement**
- 5 dangling/misplaced modifier**
- 6 sentence fragment**
- 7 run-on sentence (including comma splice)**
- 8 parallel structure**
- 9 relative clause formation (not including wrong or missing relative pronoun or resumptive pronoun)**
- 10 word order**
- 11 gapping error**
- 12 extraneous words (not included elsewhere in descriptors)**
- 13 missing word (not including preposition, article, verb, subject, relative pronoun)**
- 14 wrong modal**
- 15 tense/aspect (incorrect tense, not incorrect formation)**
- 16 voice (incorrect voice, not incorrect formation)**
- 17 verb formation (including no auxiliary verb, lack of "to" with infinitive, participle misinformation, gerund/infinitive problem)**

- 18 subject-verb agreement
- 19 two-word verb (separation problem, incorrect particle)
- 20 noun-pronoun agreement (including wrong *or missing* relative pronoun)
- 21 quantifier-noun agreement (much/many, this/these)
- 22 epenthetic pronoun (resumptive pronoun in relative clause, pronominal copy)
- 23 ambiguous/unlocatable reference
- 24 wrong case
- 25 lexical/phrase choice (including so/so that)
- 26 idiom
- 27 word form
- 28 wrong noun phrase morphology (but not word form)
- 29 wrong comparative formation
- 30 singular for plural
- 31 plural for singular
- 32 quantity words (few/a few, many kinds of, all/the whole)
- 33 preposition (incorrect, missing, extra)
- 34 genitive (missing/misused 's, N of N misuse)
- 35 article (missing, extra, incorrect)
- 36 deixis problem (this/that; the/this; it/that)
- 37 punctuation (missing, extra, wrong including restrict/non-restrictive problem--do not include capitalization)
- 38 negation (never/ever, any/some, either/neither, misplaced negator)

- a. If sentence at the end of an essay is not finished, don't code it.
- b. Code errors so that sentence is changed minimally. If there are two possible

errors requiring equal change, code the first error.

c. If tense is incorrect and misformed, count it only as 15.

d. If error can be classified as a relative clause error, or a verb formation error (I know a man call John.), count it only as verb formation.

e. Don't double penalize for SV agreement.

ex: Visitor are pleased with the sight. (only a 30)

The man generally likes to go to work. (only a 30)

APPENDIX J

APPENDIX J

Classification of Cohesive ties

I. Adverbial Subordinators (simple and complex)

Time: *after, as long as, before, since, when, whenever, until*

Location: *where, wherever*

Manner: *as (e.g., Do that as your brother does it.), in that*

Purpose: *so that, in order that*

Reason: *since, because as (e.g., He left, as it was late.), inasmuch as, now that*

Simultaneous: *while (e.g., While she sang, he played), as (e.g., As I was leaving, I saw her.)*

Conditional: *if, even if, as long as, in case, provided that*

Concessive: *although, even though, though, while*

II. Conjunctive adverbials

Additive

emphatic: *in addition, moreover, furthermore, besides, also*

appositional: *that is, in other words, for instance*

comparative: *likewise, similarly*

Adversative

proper adversative: *however, nevertheless, despite this, in contrast*

contrastive: *in fact, actually, however, on the other hand, at the same time*

correction: *instead, rather, on the contrary, at least*

dismissal: *in any case, anyhow, at any rate*

Causal

general causal: *therefore, consequently, for that reason, thus*

causal conditional: *then, in that case, otherwise*

Sequential

then, next, first, second, last, finally, up to now, to sum up

III. Correlative conjunctions

both...and, neither...nor, either...or, not only...but also

IV. Coordinating conjunctions

and, but, yet, so, for, or nor

APPENDIX K

APPENDIX K

Score Criteria

Content

27-30 *Excellent to very good*: knowledgeable; substantive, thorough development of thesis; relevant to topic assigned.

22-26 *Good to average*: some knowledge of subject; adequate range; limited thematic development; mostly relevant to topic, but lacks detail.

17-21 *Fair to poor*: limited knowledge of subject; minimal substance; poor thematic development.

13-16 *Very poor*: shows little or no knowledge of subject; inadequate quantity; not relevant, or not enough to rate.

Organization

18-20 *Excellent to very good*: fluent expression; clear statement of ideas; solid support; clear organization; logical and cohesive sequencing.

14-17 *Good to average*: adequate fluency; main ideas clear but loosely organized; supporting material limited; sequencing logical but incomplete.

10-13 *Fair to poor*: low fluency; ideas not well connected; logical sequencing and development lacking.

7-9 *Very poor*: ideas not communicated; organization lacking, or not enough to rate.

Grammar

- 22-25 *Excellent to very good*: accurate use of relatively complex structures; few errors in agreement, number, tense, word order, articles, pronouns, prepositions.
- 18-21 *Good to average*: simple constructions used effectively; some problems in use of complex constructions; errors in agreement, number, tense, word order, articles, pronouns, prepositions.
- 11-17 *Fair to poor*: significant defects in use of complex constructions; frequent errors in agreement, number, tense, negation, word order, articles, pronouns, prepositions; fragments and deletions; lack of accuracy interferes with meaning.
- 5-10 *Very poor*: no mastery of simple sentence construction; text dominated by errors; does not communicate, or not enough to rate.

Vocabulary

- 18-20 *Excellent to very good*: complex range; accurate word/idiom choice; mastery of word forms; appropriate register.
- 14-17 *Good to average*: adequate range; errors of word/idiom choice; effective transmission of meaning.
- 10-13 *Fair to poor*: limited range; frequent word/idiom errors; inappropriate choice, usage; meaning not effectively

communicated.

7-9 *Very poor*. translation-based errors; little knowledge of target language vocabulary, or not enough to rate.

Mechanics

5 *Excellent to very good*: masters conventions of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraph indentation, etc...

4 *Good to average*: occasional errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraph indentation, etc..., which do not interfere with meaning.

3 *Fair to poor*: frequent spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing errors; meaning disrupted by formal problems.

2 *Very poor*: no mastery of conventions due to frequency of mechanical errors, or not enough to rate.

Total ____/100

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