Learning and Writing in a New Academic Culture:
An Investigation of a Group of Taiwanese Postgraduates
at the University of Leicester

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

School of Education
University of Leicester
2003
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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to examine the problems that five Taiwanese postgraduate students faced in adapting to a British academic community and, more specifically, the learning and writing difficulties they encountered. Qualitative data from three interviews with each student and also one interview with British tutors were collected, and an examination of the standard feedback given by these students’ tutors on their written work was conducted. In addition, some attention was paid to the students’ structuring of their writing. The data overall illustrated the kinds of cultural and academic difficulties encountered by these subjects in adapting to the requirements of their Master’s course.

The findings also showed that the five Taiwanese students brought to their studies different expectations of learning from those of their British tutors, and that both sides should be aware of such differences if they are to work successfully together in the British academic system.

A preliminary model of Taiwanese Students’ Writing and Learning in the UK is proposed based on the findings of this study. It shows the interrelationship of the British academic culture, teachers’ feedback, and students’ writing and learning. Implications and directions for further research are also discussed.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents and two brothers for their continuous support and generous love through the whole process of my Ed. D. studies. In particular, I would express my gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Diane Davis for her valuable help. I am especially grateful to Professor Martin Cortazzi, Dr. Dan Robertson and Dr. Peter Martin for their special advice.

Mention should also be made of Dr. Li-Xian Jin and Dr. Agneta Svallberg for their clear guidance for the thesis amendments, as well as other friends and colleagues, whose kindness and encouragement has contributed to the completion of this work.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

In recent years, more and more international students have been coming to English-speaking countries to study in pursuit of a better future. Numbers have been steadily growing since UNESCO (1988) showed that “International student flows across national boundaries increased from approximately 400,000 in 1970 to over 1 million in 1986” (cited in Paige 1990: 163). In 1999, the number of applications for studying in the UK by Taiwanese students was about 6553 and then in 2000, the number of Taiwanese applicants was 8576 (SUROCK Higher Education Statistics Agency 2002), representing an increase of 10.83%. Overseas students have brought millions of pounds into the UK, which adds to the economic strength of the United Kingdom and boosts the reputation of its educational system.

Several years ago, I myself was an MA student from Taiwan studying at the University of Leicester. During my Master’s course, I was expected to embark on several long (e.g. 6000 words) or short (e.g. 3000 words) assignments for the course requirements. This requirement brought me, being an EFL speaker, the terrified feeling that, at the beginning, I did not know how to start the preparation for these essays. Being now a doctoral student, I have seen other Taiwanese students in the same situation as I was in, either in preparing the required coursework (mostly written assignments) or adapting to a new study life in the
UK. Therefore, on a personal level, for this study I was hoping to find out if other Taiwanese students would encounter similar difficulties. On a broader level, the purpose of this study was to examine the problems of adaptation of five Taiwanese students to British academic culture during their initiation into their postgraduate Master's programmes. Moreover, it was hoped that the result could sharpen awareness of intercultural differences in academic expectations between Taiwanese students and British university staff to both parties’ benefit.

A consequence of adapting to a new environment is an increase in the emotional distress caused by “cultural-distance” (Furnham and Bochner 1986: 121) for international students coming from a culture which is different to the Western one which predominates in British or American universities. Yet there is little knowledge of the process that these students go through in adapting to the new academic culture in order to complete their postgraduate programmes. This is a complex process of adaptation to an unfamiliar academic culture in Western universities that “involves not only the acquisition of content knowledge but also learning the value systems and the definitions of the field, as well as acquiring academic literacy which includes both reading and writing professional discourse” (Angelova & Riazanteseva 1998: 4). These international students are expected to achieve the same standards of writing ability as their English-speaking fellow students. It may be difficult for them to alter embedded habits of composition in their first language to write successfully in the second language. In particular, international students may bring “values, beliefs, patterns of behavior, ways of learning, and thinking” (Paige 1990: 166) which may differ
from those of their hosts, such as expectations about learning culture, and the relationship between teachers and students, etc. Some communication difficulties may arise in the interaction between such students and their British tutors\(^1\), such as 'emotional', 'academic', and 'adjustment' difficulties (Singh 1963). In order to provide an in-depth investigation of the process of adaptation to British academic culture, this research has looked in detail at five Taiwanese subjects each of whom came to a British university to undertake a taught Master's course. It investigates their perception of British academic culture and preparation for the first assignment and final dissertation. It also includes interviews with British tutors who have experience of teaching Taiwanese students.

My study analyses a collection of qualitative data in order to examine the academic literacy experience of these students in the light of their language learning strategies and home cultural background. The strategies they developed in response to the writing demands encountered in their Master's courses will also be considered. All participants in my study have the same ethnic background (Taiwanese) as the writer herself, as opposed to choosing subjects from different nationalities with which the researcher is not familiar. The period of time for data collection lasted one year. In order to investigate the process of development, "the long and ever-changing process of acquiring that is internalizing and gaining ownership of academic literacy" (Spack, 1997: 4), a longitudinal study is used to provide information about the Taiwanese students' experiences during their Master's degree year in the UK. Concerning this

\(^1\) Many tutors at British universities were born outside Britain, but henceforth for brevity the phrase British
longitudinal approach, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991: 11) state that “it typically involves observing the development of linguistic performance”. The data were collected at periodic intervals over a year. Three qualitative paradigm characteristics of the longitudinal approach could easily be found: naturalistic (I used the subjects’ interview responses), process-oriented (they were interviewed over time) and ungeneralizable (they were a small group) (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991: 11). In order to investigate the process of academic writing adaptation by Taiwanese students, the present study is process-oriented because the researcher needed to trace the process itself, along with British tutors’ feedback on written work (the first assignment and final dissertation) and reflections. Five subjects is of course a relatively small study, and would not allow us to draw quantitative conclusions. It is, however, large enough for the main elements of this experience to appear, and to infer that these same elements are likely to characterize the average experience of Taiwanese students in the UK educational institutions. To counter the usual problem of ungeneralizability of a single study, it helps to conduct a number of concurrent and independent longitudinal studies for more than one subject, which would be more powerful and convincing, although it seems unavoidably time-consuming. Yin (1984: 31) states that “if two or more cases are shown to support the same theory, replication may be claimed”.

There were a limited number of Taiwanese students studying at the University of Leicester; the researcher asked ten for their permission and five students gave tutors will be used to refer to them.
their verbal consent and five British tutors who had the experience of teaching Taiwanese students agreed to participate. Following this, a written information sheet was given to each participant. This information sheet gave the interviewees an idea of what would be involved in the study, the purpose of this study, research procedures and assurance and benefits.

Four different disciplines were being followed by these subjects, but their experiences were found to be so similar that it was decided this factor could be ignored.

The goal of this study was to find out more about the process through which EFL postgraduate students (particularly Taiwanese) go while acquiring specific disciplinary discourses. With this purpose in mind, I proposed that the following questions should be addressed:

1. How do Taiwanese students perceive their new studying experience in the UK, regarding the different learning culture and related culture shock?

2. What problems do Taiwanese students encounter when they approach their first assignment and final dissertation?

3. How do tutors at British universities perceive their own British academic culture, regarding the marking of assignments, the expected ways of teacher-student communication, and responsibility and what were their impressions of their interactions with Taiwanese students?

4. What can be learnt from comparing the interview data of these two parties
5. What implications do these answers have for helping future Taiwanese students and improving British educational institutions?

It should be clear that questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 are intended to reveal the detailed workings of cross-cultural interactions with a view to answering question 5.

The above five research questions would address the fact that some academic problems may tend to arise from both sides' different expectations when Taiwanese students undertake advanced studies in English-speaking countries. Thorp (1991: 117) suggests that teachers “should try to increase their own awareness of themselves as cultural beings”. For learners, it may be better for them to have cultural awareness of academic discourse first.

Three sets of interviews with students were conducted over one year from September 1999 to September 2000. The first interview was conducted when the participants started their postgraduate Master's course. The second interview was conducted when they received feedback on their first assignment. The last interview took place at the end of their course, when they had nearly finished their dissertation. The interviews with British tutors followed later. All interviews were tape-recorded. Tape-recording is necessary because it is difficult for the researcher to record the content of an interview accurately on paper. It also enabled the researcher to interact more naturally with the interviewees. Meanwhile, it made it possible for the researcher to listen carefully, respond to the interviewee, and cover the topics necessary to collect the required data.
Given the fact that three interviews were conducted with each student at different stages, I did not consider classroom observation to be necessary. Also my focus was on the subjects' feelings about their performance and how these feelings changed, and with attention to their performance following their tutors' feedback sheets. The first interview lasted about one hour and the others about half an hour each. What was required most was to get interviewees to talk freely and openly without being too conscious of a time limit. The content of the first interview addressed their views about the differences between Taiwanese and British academic culture. The second interview was to investigate how they wrote their first assignment concerning structure, topic and written conventions. The third interview was about how they wrote their dissertation and what differences they thought existed between writing academic assignments in Chinese and English styles. For the interviews with British tutors, the main attention was paid to their perception of British academic culture, teacher-student communication and responsibility, marking elements in written assignments and their impression of Taiwanese students' performance.

In brief, the analysis of relevant cultural criteria was clearly influential in determining my research questions. This referred to beliefs and values about teaching and learning in a cultural group, and the norms of communication in a different culture. Furthermore, this influence also extended to the way in which I conducted the interviews and evaluated the research results. The research interview used in this study provided sufficient data from each participant and the similarities and differences between the individuals were noted.
In Chapter 2, the contextual background of English education in Taiwan will be outlined. Chapters 2 and 3 form Part 1 (contextual background and literature review). Chapter 3 reviews the literature from three perspectives, which are 'culture shock', 'language and culture: differing expectations of Taiwanese learners and Western tutors', and 'comparison between one Chinese writing style and the Western problem-solution pattern'. After Chapter 3, Chapter 4 of Part 2 provides a discussion of the research design and methodology.

Part 3 consists of four chapters, which report the analysis of findings. Chapter 5 details the first interviews with students. Chapters 6 and 7 illustrate the related academic writing experience when these students confront their first assignment and final dissertation. Chapter 8 presents the findings from interviews with tutors. In the final section of Part 3, Chapter 9 examines the findings from both the Taiwanese students and British tutors. Finally Chapter 10 draws the findings together and then presents the implications and makes some recommendations.
Part 1

Contextual Background & Literature Review

The purpose of Part 1 is to provide important background and contextual information for the study. This part consists of two chapters. Chapter 2 gives a brief introduction to Taiwan relating to its education, sociolinguistic context and English education. Chapter 3 reviews the literature on different expectations between Taiwanese learners and Western tutors in the UK context and considers specific points of comparison between the Chinese and Western writing styles.
Chapter 2

Contextual Background- English Education in Taiwan

This chapter sets out to provide a general picture of the background of Taiwanese students, related to the recent history and linguistic context of Taiwan (Section 2.1), education system (Section 2.2) and particularly English education (Section 2.3).

Taiwan, which is separated from the south-eastern coast of the Mainland China by the 150 kilometers of the Taiwan Strait, is an island with an area of 35,981 square kilometers and a population of about 23 million.

2.1 Brief History of Taiwan and the Linguistic Context

About 6000 to 8000 years ago, Austro-Polynesians formed the aboriginal population of the island. These early settlers are believed to be the ancestors of the Austronesian people. They are divided into two groups: Pingpu Zu (the plain tribes) and Gaoshan Zu (the mountain tribes). Little is known about their movements either within or outside the island.

In 1624, the Dutch came to invade the south part of island and established colonial rule until 1661. In 1625, the Spanish invaded the north part of the island until they were conquered by the south colonial government in 1648. During
Dutch colonial rule, the island was still inhabited by the Austro-Polynesian aborigines (Tsao 1999: 330).

In 1662 (the late Ming Dynasty), Zheng Cheng-Kong had driven out the Dutch and he and his family had ruled the island for 21 years (1662-1683). As Zheng himself was from Southern Fujian, and his followers were mostly from the same region, their dialect (the Southern Min) was spoken. Later his rule was replaced by the Qing dynasty for about two hundred years (1683-1895). During the late Ming Dynasty and the early period of Qing Dynasty, because of economic hardship and political turmoil on the mainland, many people from the coastal provinces of Fujian and Guandong went to south-east Asia and Taiwan for searching a better life. People of these two provinces were mostly speaking the Zhangzhou or Quanzhou variety of Southern Min. The other group of immigrants was the Hakka and mostly from the province of Kuangdong. When these different groups of people went to Taiwan and settled on the island, they chose places which were similar to their home regions in the Mainland.

In 1894, Taiwan was ceded to Japan by the Qing Dynasty after losing the first Sino-Japanese war. At that time, the Southern Min speakers accounted for 82% of the population, the Hakka people for 16%, and the rest for only 2% (Lamley 1981: 291-293, cited in Tsao 1999: 331). Taiwan remained a Japanese colony for 50 years. In 1945, after the end of the Second World War, Taiwan was returned to China. In 1949, the Nationalist government lost Mainland China to the Chinese Communists and was forced to retreat to Taiwan. The followers (the Mainlanders or Wai-Sheng-Ren) of the Nationalist government were speaking a
variety of Han dialects or minority languages and also Mandarin. Mandarin has become a major marker of identity among these mainlanders (Hsiau 1997: 303).

The island was at that time divided into three ethnic groups. The largest one was the southern-Min people (called Taiwanese, in contrast to Wai-Sheng-Ren), who constituted 75% of the population of the island and speaking Southern Min (often referred to as Taiwanese). The other two groups were the Hakka (about 10%, speaking Hakka) and the aborigines (about 2%, whose native languages belong to the Malayo-Polynesian or Austro-Polynesian family).

Since the Nationalist government (KMT, Kuomintang) took over Taiwan, Mandarin has been defined by the KMT government as the only politically legitimate language, promoted as the national language and used officially in schools, government, the media, and most business offices. Therefore, other languages (Taiwanese, Hakka and the indigenous aboriginal languages) had been treated as less important while Mandarin became the effective medium of communication.

From the mid 1980s, the political status of KMT has been challenged by the rapid development of the Taiwanese opposition. In 1988, Lee Teng-Hui became the first Taiwan-born Hakka to govern Taiwan after the death of Chiang Ching-Kuo (the son of Chiang Kei-Shek), who was born and raised in Mainland China. This was a striking sign of a shift in power.

In 1986, the opposition party to the KMT, called the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was established and gained strength after martial law was revoked
in July 1987. Then in 1993, a second opposition party, the New Party, was founded and multi-party democracy could be said to have begun (Tsao 1999). In March 1996, Li Teng-Hui became the first president elected by the people in the history of the island. As politicians were forced to address the needs of voters, lots of attention was paid to the ethnic groups and a new sense of natural identity began to emerge. More and more people came to associate their identity with the island of Taiwan instead of Mainland China, where they or their ancestors originated (Tsao ibid.: 367). In March 2000, Chen, Shui-Bian from DPP became the president which highlighted further the new national identity.

Under the impact of the new political situation, more people on the island are becoming aware of the importance of preserving various languages and dialects and nativist education has been promoted in elementary and secondary schools. Started in September 2001, primary school students are required to take at least one course in a local language, such as Southern Min (Taiwanese), Hakka, or an aboriginal language. For junior high school students, this becomes optional (Government Information Office 2002, available at http://www.gio.gov.tw/taiwan-website/5-gp/yearbook/bief/).

2.2 Education in Taiwan

Education is strongly emphasized in Taiwan, the Republic of China\(^2\). Since 1968, nine years of fundamental education (six years of elementary education and three years of junior high education) has been compulsory, and a wide range of other

\(^{2}\) An official name for Taiwan, c.f. the People Republic of China.
educational options has been made available to citizens of all ages (Government Information Office 2002, available at http://www.gio.gov.tw/taiwan-website/5-gp/brief). The following table shows the mainstream education system in Taiwan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>School System</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>Kindergarten (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>Elementary School (FE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>Junior High School (FE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Senior High School (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior Vocational School (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Junior College (HE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>University (HE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Technical college (HE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Technological University (HE)</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td></td>
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<td>21</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23+</td>
<td>Graduate School (HE)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2-1  Mainstream Educational System in Taiwan

Note: P stands for “Preschool”; FE for “Fundamental Education”; S for “Senior High school”; HE for “Higher Education”.

Under this system, a student may spend more than 22 years in school, including two years in the kindergarten (age from 4 to 6) for preschool education, six years in elementary school (age from 6 to 12) and three years in junior high school (age from 12 to 15) for the fundamental education, then three years in either the senior high school, the senior vocational school or junior college (age from 15 to 18), four (ordinary departments) to seven (medical study) years for undergraduate study (age from 18 and beyond), and at least two years of
postgraduate programmes. After the fundamental education, students have to
take exams to enter one of three types of institution (senior high school, senior
vocational school, or junior college). Before school year 2001, students
graduating from senior high school had to take the Joint University Entrance
Examination (JUEE) to enter university. Students from senior vocational schools
could pass the test to enter technical college and then technological university if
they wished to continue. Students from the junior college could move on to the
technological university after taking the JUEE or relevant examinations. Besides,
some universities and colleges offer a wide variety of Master’s and Doctoral
programmes and students have to pass through competitive examinations.

In this study, the five Taiwanese subjects had all gone through the education of
senior high school before their university education as undergraduates.

2.3 English Education in Taiwan

As described in section 2.1, Mandarin Chinese has been the main focus in the
school system (Young 1992; Tsao 1999). It is taught from the first grade up to
college freshman level and the most important subject in all elementary and
secondary schools. Compared to the situation of national language teaching,
before September 2001, English had been taught in the secondary school up to
the first year of college, which was the background of the five subjects of this
study. However, after September 2001, the MOE (Ministry of Education)
launched the teaching of English to fifth and sixth grade students as part of their
formal education. In order to promote social modernization and economic
growth, the teaching of English has been emphasized for the purpose of providing information access to the world of technology and science (Tsao 1999: 352) and also the main subject of the entry exam system.

In the course content of English learning, writing of short sentences and short readings are taught and tested in the exams. In secondary school, in particular, grammar and translation are given the most emphasis (Tse 1987). In English classes, writing activities are limited to drills of sentence combining and translation, and training in speaking and listening is inadequate. This may result in some students having a good knowledge of grammar. However, oral communication, listening comprehension and extended writing might be difficult for them.

When students move on to the university, most are required to take a one-year compulsory English course but composition courses for paragraph and short essay writing are offered only to students majoring in English. Because extended writing is seldom emphasized in the secondary curriculum, this has been a major weakness for most Taiwanese students.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, a brief history, the linguistic context and education system has been outlined. This provides a general contextual background for the five Taiwanese subjects in this thesis before their further study in the UK.
Chapter 3

Literature Review

In recent years the number of Taiwanese students entering British postgraduate studies has steadily increased. Through writing or speaking and non-verbal interaction, they come to communicate in the L2 culture and any lack of familiarity with some features of this language or related study skills may inhibit access to academic culture. These students are considered to be often unprepared for the rigorous demands of academia (e.g. teaching and learning styles) and required to accommodate to a different Western lifestyle and culture, where problems of adaptation occur. Yet little is known of the processes through which these students acquire the conventions of different disciplinary discourses necessary for the successful completion of their Master's course. The differences between their first language and second language writing indicate salient differences, which place these students at a serious disadvantage (Kaplan 1966; Connor 1996) at the early stage of preparing themselves to be members of the British academic discourse community. The following concepts were chosen because after consideration (including reflection on my own experience), they seemed likely to illuminate the difficulties of my subjects (apart from linguistic competence). Therefore, these four aspects will be discussed in the following order: culture shock, differing expectations of Taiwanese learners and Western tutors, comparison between one model of Chinese writing and the Western problem-solution pattern and other studies in relation to cultural context and
discipline-specific discourses.

In this chapter, I will first present some problems of culture shock seemingly experienced by international students adapting to a new cultural environment with respect to emotional and academic adjustment. To balance this, I will also show that there may be some advantages in that culture shock. Secondly, I will focus on the differing cultural expectations between Chinese learners and Western tutors. Deriving perhaps from Confucian traditions, Chinese learners’ viewpoints about academic lectures are compared to those likely to be held by Westerners. In addition, some tables of the different perceptions of teacher and student roles in higher education between Chinese students and British teachers will be presented. Following this, a comparison between the traditional rhetorical pattern of Chinese essays and “Western” academic writing will be discussed before other studies in relation to disciplinary discourse and cultural context. Finally, I will discuss how the two groups can work more effectively together, to enhance both learning and teaching.

It is important to state one principle (or limitation) in advance. The discussion here is about ‘Chinese’ and ‘Western’ students and teachers, who, of course, differ greatly as individuals or as members of many sub-groups or sub-cultures. Chinese refers not only to Chinese in Mainland China, but also those in Taiwan. Nevertheless, there do seem to be broad trends which apply to these large groups, especially in contrast with each other. In particular, it seems useful to highlight such trends in relation to cultural adaptation, with the clear recognition that trends do not necessarily apply to every member of either group.
First, the following section reviews some of the writing on ‘culture shock’ that some overseas students may experience during their first stay in a foreign country.

3.1 Culture Shock

‘Culture shock’ is a term coined by Oberg (1960), which suggests some anxiety or fear may occur when sojourners have prolonged encounters in an unfamiliar or new cultural environment. Furnham and Bochner (1986: 47) explain that:

The culture shock ‘hypothesis’ or ‘concept’ implies that the experience of a new culture is an unpleasant surprise or shock, partly because it is unexpected and partly because it may lead to a negative evaluation of one’s own culture.

It is stated that the most critical problems students may face are “in English proficiency, adequacy of their education preparation, racial or religious discrimination, unfriendliness of the citizens in the host country, home-sickness, exclusive interpersonal interaction with people from their own country and inadequate funds” (Henderson et al, 1993: 383).

In the context of emotional problems, international students may feel stressed, lonely, homesick and easily experience fatigue (Harris 1997). Regarding academic adjustment, such students may bring their own culture of academic learning and educational expectations, which may be different from those held by tutors in the host academic culture. Under the impact of different aspects of
cultural interaction, those students may have a negative image of the host culture because of the confusion which has arisen from the new ways of thinking between two parties, from one’s own normative expectation about the behavior of others and possible language barriers (Smith and Bond 1993).

Research by Mestenhauser (1983, cited in Paige 1990: 169) shows that:

overseas students are perceived as handicapped, that is, lacking adequate language ability, satisfactory academic preparation, sound analytical reasoning skills and academic writing skills, and familiarity with the host education system and how it works.

In order to adjust well in a situation of cross-cultural interaction, international students are recommended to try, on the one hand, to adapt themselves to the new culture and try to learn about it; on the other hand, they need to know how to fit into the new learning environment and what the new expectations are. Yet most would believe that their own cultural identity must be retained in this process.

During the process of inter-cultural adjustment, some international students may find it very difficult to handle their negative impressions of the host country. It is important to filter out positive experiences in a downward spiral of generally negative experience (Cushner and Brislin 1996). One underlying factor here is students’ general expectations which may include some hidden assumptions embedded in their home cultural backgrounds and also from previous educational experiences (Cortazzi 1990) especially if they take cultural issues for
granted while they give priority to more obvious aspects of study. It may not be easy for them to accept and learn to participate appropriately in a different culture.

The culture shock argument is by no means a clear issue. Not everyone experiences such shock. As Furnham and Bochner (1986) explain, it is not a single process which might be amenable to simple diagrams (such as the well-known V or W curves from Furnham and Bochner 1986: 135). Further, Adler (1987) suggests that culture shock has some positive effects on self-development and personal growth even though it is often accompanied by negative influences. Any positive side of 'culture shock' may be quite beneficial for the personal understanding of change through learning experiences. It will enrich students' minds and broaden their horizons through reflecting upon their own behaviour (Cushner and Brislin 1996). Also, the negative influence is not always applicable in equal measure to those whom it affects. Damen (1987: 226) argues that "Individuals vary greatly in their reactions to the effects of culture shock" and suggests that "culture shock is a natural process and should be treated as such". Culture shock should be treated as a process for transforming old values into new values, behaviour patterns and attitudes. Morgan (1998) also suggests that culture-shock encounters may be beneficial because some observers can see differences which the host people may not be aware of and also give an objective and different viewpoint.

The writer feels, therefore, that a less pejorative name for this should perhaps be used e.g. cultural experience or cross-cultural challenge. This may encourage the
person going through this to see it as a positive “growth” experience. However, an individual who was undergoing extreme alienation in this context, might find their difficulties taken less seriously, if this more positive label was attached.

If they are to be successful, international students in English-speaking countries need to overcome the difficulties of learning in a different culture and, most importantly, in a new academic mode of study. Many students often feel their academic experience in the host country is quite stressful when they encounter new academic demands which they interpret in terms of their previous academic learning experience and expectations. In the next section, I would like to focus on the question of language and culture in relation to the academic learning styles of Chinese students. These will later be contrasted with British styles.

3.2 Language and Culture: Differing Expectations of Taiwanese Learners and British Tutors

Language is a means to access culture yet language is also part of culture and a medium through which culture is both represented and constructed. For international students, through L2 they come to communicate in the L2 culture. In the host classroom, such students’ encounters with academic culture are necessarily mediated by a language that is not their first language and the most common academic problems experienced by the students in their study pertained to language difficulties (Nicholson 2001: 9). Given such complex relations between language and culture, there is an argument that academics should be aware of possible aspects of international students’ different cultural
This might be a good moment to discuss what we mean by academic culture. In its broad sense, it would include the following at least:

- Structures of universities, e.g. hierarchy
- Physical layout of universities (campus v.s. distance-learning)
- Titles and roles of the academics
- Relation to the society at large of the institutions
- Concepts of academic freedom
- Funding issues
- Who goes to the university
- Values, ways of communication
- Expectations of ways of learning and teaching between students and tutors/lecturers
- Where responsibility for successful learning is thought to lie

The writer has chosen the last two of these as the most relevant to her study. Some may argue that it is impossible to separate academic cultural adaptation and English language improvement. English language competence is certainly part of academic cultural adaptation. However, if someone who has a high English language competence, this does not necessarily mean that his/her academic cultural adaptation is better although these two have a close interrelationship.

Damen (1987: 215) points out that:
It may be that the terms 'communicative competence' and 'communicative performance' should be broadened to include 'cultural competence' and 'cultural performance' in order to compensate for the Western bias which generally equates communication with verbal, intentional, conscious activity.

In order to achieve 'cultural competence' and 'cultural performance', one should learn the host language and perhaps some host non-verbal behaviour so that one can be understood and accepted by the host (Kim 1988). Otherwise, the negative side of being unaccepted and misunderstood may create feelings of tension, frustration, anxiety, anger and stress. How to use a language in a different context is the main point to facilitate, but it is difficult: for example, to know how to greet people in an appropriate way, how to react in a certain spoken context, and how to use the formal rules in writing. For international students, a major problem remains, which is how to gain a better understanding of the host academic culture. For overseas students, they have their 'think-as-usual' patterns of academic expectation from their previous learning experiences. Although they have left their home community, they may still retain, wherever they are, a common system of standards of perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting (Kramsch 1998: 10). Therefore, students from different cultural backgrounds develop distinctive beliefs about learning expectations and achievement. Thus, if the expectations between the host teachers and international students are different, they may become a barrier to interaction and communication between them. If not a barrier, alternatively, they may help to bridge the difficulties of
differing learning cultures.

Todd (1997: 177) shows that “students may have difficulty leaving behind old behaviors and be unsure of what the new expectations are”. Philips (1983) explains the term ‘invisible culture’ as meaning that “we all operate learnt patterns of judgment and have standards for perceiving, believing, acting, and evaluating which are cultural specific” (cited in Paige 1990: 109). If both parties do not have an awareness of different cultural norms or mutual understanding, it may easily lead to a negative picture of their respective background.

From their research with Chinese students, Cortazzi and Jin (1998: 117) find that “their understanding of L2 culture and L2 academic culture does not at all achieve the same level as their competence in the second language” even though most of them pass the required language examination (i.e. achieve sufficiently high scores on IELTS or TOEFL tests) before they come to study in the UK. Therefore, it is crucial for students from other cultures, in this study, especially from Taiwan, to have the readiness to learn to change in adapting to the British academic culture of learning.

Several research studies (Jin 1992; Jin and Cortazzi 1993; Young 1994; Scollon and Scollon 1995) outline the specific differences between Western and Confucian culture (Eastern). The following table (Cortazzi and Jin 1997: 78) shows the expectations of British university teachers compared with those of Chinese students (or Chinese staff).
The "individual orientation" in British culture is emphasized between individuals. "The 'I' identity has precedence in individualistic cultures over the 'we' identity, which takes precedence in collectivistic cultures" (Gudykunst 1994: 40).

Students are encouraged to develop as individuals with their own opinions; independence of mind, creativity and originality are valued. It seems desirable that individuals can show their disagreement with their teachers and classmates.

However, for many other non-Western groups, they may feel uncomfortable because more emphasis in their own culture is put on a high regard for relationships.

In Chinese culture, a traditional relationship between students and teachers may not lead to a close relationship. The role of a teacher is like that of a strict parent with moral integrity. Students show respect to teachers with full attention, quietness and fear (Bond 1991). On the other hand, Connor (1996: 73) states that
In the Confucian sense of self, one is more a self in human relationships, and less a self in isolation. Chinese people tend to be collaborative, whereas Western people value individualism. Compared with Chinese teachers’ styles, some Chinese students may feel that Western teachers are more friendly and they may feel less distance and stress from this informal academic relationship (Todd 1997). Again, there are questions of emphasis but such concepts or individual-collaborative trends do seem to have some explanatory power regarding the situation of Chinese postgraduate students in Britain.

Again, the following table in Flowerdew and Miller (1995: 348) lists some points of comparison between Chinese students’ thinking about academic study that is under the influence of Confucian philosophy and how they think about Western academic values:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confucian</th>
<th>Western</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- respect for authority of lecturer</td>
<td>- lecturer valued as a guide and facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- lecturer should not be questioned</td>
<td>- lecturer is open to challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- student motivated by family and pressure to excel</td>
<td>- student motivated by desire for individual development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- positive value placed on effacement and silence</td>
<td>- positive value placed on self-expression of ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- emphasis on group orientation to learning</td>
<td>- emphasis on individual development and creativity in learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-2 Confucian and Western values as they relate to academic lectures

The above table shows the significant difference between Western individualism and Chinese collectivism from the perspectives of Chinese students. However, this table might be criticized on several counts. The two columns give the appearance of absolute contrasts or oppositions, rather than trends. ‘Confucian’
ideology as a term describes thousands of developing ideas and sometimes absorbs some influences of Buddhism and Taoism and other modern ideas. In some cases, items listed are a matter of degree- any realization or practice will depend on the context. For instance, Western lecturers are by no means always open to challenge, or even question, especially on more formal and public occasions.

From the above discussion, some Chinese students may believe that teachers play the main role of providing knowledge from the influence of "Confucian-heritage cultures" (Chan and Drover 1997: 55). That is, teachers have "authority" in knowledge. From my own personal experience, I have observed that in Western courses teachers may express frankly the fact that they do not know the answers to students' questions. This can result in a shock for some Chinese students comparing their previous learning experiences and the expectation of teachers' authority in knowledge. This may also undermine the traditional authority status as perceived by the Chinese about their teachers in the classroom. Some students may even have doubts if their teacher is knowledgeable enough. On the other hand, some Chinese students may think asking questions to teachers directly in the classroom is "face threatening" because it may imply that the teacher has not explained things clearly enough in their teaching (Thorpe 1991: 112). Therefore, it is easy to see why Chinese students tend to remain silent in class. What seems to be important here is not each such example per se, but the likely effect of combinations of such perceptions.
Not only is the notion of authority different but relating to the thought of ‘face’ (mian zi) perceived in Chinese culture between two parties, it is also difficult for a Chinese teacher to say “I am sorry. I don’t know. Let’s work out a solution together” (Ho and Crookall 1995: 237) in order to maintain the face of a teacher as an authority. This “face-saving” does not allow people to confront one another directly (Chang and Holt 1994, cited in Ho and Crookall 1995). In addition, in Taiwan, it is normal to see a square platform in front of each classroom. Teachers stand on this stage most of the time. Students sit on their chairs below and listen to the teacher’s words. The effect of this higher-lower angle and some distance between the standing point of teachers and seats of students reinforces the authority of teachers.

Therefore, after the above discussion, it is important to have a better understanding of Chinese tradition in terms of social order and education. The concern of “harmony-within-hierarchy” is emphasized to explain Chinese social behaviour (Bond and Hwang 1986: 214). In the Chinese tradition, ‘self’ constitutes a significant reference point in a person’s value system; the human relationships actually extend from the self and are centred around the self (On 1996: 33).

In the Confucian tradition, certain relationships are governed by certain rules. There are so-called Five Cardinal Relations (wu lun): those between sovereign and subject, father and son, elder brother and younger brother, husband and wife, and friend and friend. These are general terms, which show the social order between relationships in spite of gender account. Connecting with these five
relationships was *li* which stands for the correctness of behaviour (Bond and Hwang 1986: 215). In order to maintain the hierarchy between these relationships, the junior should pay respect to the senior and every person needs to observe their own responsibility not to exceed or fail to follow. Through obedience, harmony of the social order will be maintained.

In these five Cardinal Relations (*wu lun*), three relationships (those between father and son, elder brother and younger brother\(^3\), and husband and wife) are rooted in the members of a family. Hence, it can be seen that the family is the core of Chinese society. It can be said that one gains one’s identity from one’s family (social group) rather than the individual. People achieve certain goals not only for themselves but try to honour the whole family which is behind them. Hence, for the Chinese, to be successful in academic work or other individual performance is closely related to succeeding in family and social life (Salili 1996: 87).

In order to glorify their family, firstly, people need to cultivate themselves through learning (*neisheng*) (Chang 1976, cited in On 1996: 37). On (1996: 34) states that “the purpose of learning is therefore to cultivate oneself as an intelligent, creative, independent, autonomous, and what is more, an authentic being, who is becoming more fully human in the process of learning”. Therefore, learning is a channel for excelling oneself and it signifies an individual achievement, too.

\(^3\) In its original formulation, this is undeniably patriarchal/sexist. However as a general model/paradigm example, it is understood as not necessarily ignoring or subordinating women.
Excelling oneself in learning is also to promote deeper reflection and enquiry. Confucius's Conception of learning was indeed a process of “studying extensively, enquiring carefully, pondering thoroughly, sifting clearly, and practicing earnestly…” (The Mean, XX. 19; cited in On 1996: 35). Through these stages of the process, one should make the most efforts to cultivate oneself. Under this influence, much attention is paid to effort, hard work, and endurance for achievement (Yang 1986). It is believed that through effort, everyone can succeed regardless of their level of ability. Therefore, under this influence, Chinese students take more individual responsibility for their success or failure in their academic study, which also relates to hard work, endurance and parents’ expectations (Salili 1996; Volet and Renshaw 1996).

Zhu Xi elaborated Confucius' ideas and held that one should be familiar with the text (memorize it), continue to reflect on it, then gain a real understanding of it and also question it (On 1996). Here, memorization does not mean the same as rote learning because it is an important precursor of understanding, and can enable a deeper understanding (On ibid.: 36). I would like to emphasise this distinction by quoting Chan and Drover (1997: 55):

To understand the Confucian-heritage culture students, one has to distinguish ‘rote learning’ (learning in a mechanical way without thought of meaning) from ‘repetitive learning’ (which uses repetition as a means of ensuring accurate recall).

Many other Chinese authorities (such as Su Shi) have emphasised the processes
of reflection analysis, thinking and comprehension that should follow memorization.

In ‘repetitive learning’, students may comprehend the whole text first and then access the meanings of its parts. Biggs (1994: 26) claims that “A student who uses repetition to optimize retrieval in an exam is not using a surface approach but making a wise strategic choice”. In rote learning, meaning has no place in the learner’s intentions; in repetitive learning it may (Chan & Drover 1997: 55). This may distinguish repetitive work from the idea of rote-learning (learning in a mechanical way without thought of meaning) in the Western context.

Here, on the other hand, in order to help learners’ reflective thinking and questioning, an ideal teacher in this context should be a guide without putting too much pressure on students. As On (1996: 36) quotes from Lin’s words (1938: 247) which show the importance of the role teachers can play:

- guiding without pulling makes the process of learning gentle;
- urging without suppressing makes the process of learning easy;
- and opening the way without leading the students to the place makes them think for themselves.

Now if the process of learning is made gentle and easy and the students are encouraged to think for themselves, we may call the man a good teacher.

The above theme illustrates that one should excel oneself in order to be perfect (be a sage) and an ideal teacher should try to help students as a “facilitator”, which accords with Western teachers’ views of their roles (Cortazzi and Jin 1997: 85). To be a sage is a person’s internal goal. Moreover, in the book of The Great
Learning, it says that “a person should cultivate himself, then regulate the family, then govern the state, and finally lead the world into peace (The Great Learning, IV)” (cited in On 1996: 37). This saying suggests that one should establish inner excellences and then have a beneficial influence on the outside world.

Confucius’ way of giving a good influence to others may mean an implication of obtaining a position in a government office. Education plays an important role either in one’s cultivation of the self or serving the community. Being a powerful employee in a government office means fame, wealth and a good life. Through studying, it will lead to one’s perfection (inner fulfillment) and also to outward reward (external achievement). It also implies that the idea of studying hard to gain educational success is in order to gain access to a higher social position and become an important figure.

Therefore, the family ethics of “developing your fame and glorifying your family” has created a strong motivation for pursuing excellence (On 1996: 38). It is believed that with hard work and strong willpower, one can obtain success if one wants to; failure does not come because of low ability but weaker endurance and insufficient effort.

The above discussion has noted some traditional factors which may explain the impression of Chinese students’ strong motivation to educational achievement and also the importance of family expectations and the “ideal” teacher.

For the relationship between Chinese students and Chinese teachers, Chan and Drover (1997: 55) explain that:
Social relations seem well developed but very hierarchical and formal from the outside, but in reality there is a high degree of interaction, partly because students and teachers both live on campus and partly because of inter-generational respect.

The following table (Cortazzi and Jin 1997: 85; Jin and Cortazzi 1993, 1995, 1996; Cortazzi and Jin 1996) shows the different perceptions of teacher and student roles in higher education: Chinese students and British teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student view of teacher roles</th>
<th>Teacher view of teacher roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• be an authority, expert</td>
<td>• be a facilitator, organizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• be a model: know that, how to</td>
<td>• be a model of how to find out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• be a parent; friend</td>
<td>• be a friendly critic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• know students’ problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• give answers, clear guidance:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teach us what to do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student view of student roles</th>
<th>Teacher view of student roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• develop receptivity, collective</td>
<td>• develop independence,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harmony, apprenticeship,</td>
<td>individuality, creativity,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deductive learning</td>
<td>inductive learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• respect teacher: learn by listening and reflection</td>
<td>• participate: engage in dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• learn methods, technical advances</td>
<td>• develop critical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• focus on product, result</td>
<td>• focus on process of learning,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>research skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ask if there are problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• find own answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• should know what to do or work it out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-3  Different perceptions of teacher and student roles in higher education: Chinese students and British tutors
From the above table, the Chinese see learning as depending on the teacher for knowledge, and also for care, concern and help since the teacher-student relationship is reciprocal: students respect and obey the teacher, the teacher teaches and cares for students like a strict parent with moral disciplines (Cortazzi and Jin 1997). Students show respect to teachers and regard them as a model and expect them to give a full instruction. Here we can see learning is an apprenticeship, listening to and following a master-teacher (Cortazzi and Jin 1997: 86).

On the other hand, in order to help students to get high marks in the exams, Chinese teachers tend to give students clear guidance what to do or give the students copious notes that may be related to the exam papers. Under the influence of this way of teaching and also combining the competitive national exams based on uniform textbooks, Chinese students may be led to believe that following teachers' notes in lectures, reading line by line and detailed memorization of their textbooks, then a reproductive approach to their exam papers, will lead to exam success. However, often following teachers' notes and memorizing the details in the textbooks, it may be argued that some Chinese students rely on their teachers too much without learning independently or thinking critically, and that too much detailed memorization of the textbooks could be thought of as rote learning. Some Western teachers may complain that "students expect to be spoon-fed and feel this indicates a lack of ability" (Todd 1997: 177). When these students come to a different learning culture which values creativity and independence, they may face the challenge of relying on
themselves. Therefore, it is important to know that the differing expectations of roles in different learning cultures may bring failure for students in different cultural situations if they are not aware of the differences. Furthermore, the previously highly competitive exam system has also brought out students’ high level of motivation in order to keep up with such demands. Without these demands and pressures from parents and rigorous teachers back home, some overseas students of Chinese may show reluctant attitudes towards learning and lose self-motivation. This may contradict the idea of the Chinese students’ hard working stereotype. It is suggested to let students recognize who is taking ownership in learning and the autonomy training should build on a “culture-free” setting (Littlewood 1999).

The definition of autonomy was given as “the capacity to take control of one’s own learning” (Benson 2001: 47) and also “learners should take maximum responsibility for their own learning styles and stages outside the constraints of the traditional classroom” (Johnson and Johnson 1998: 25). The level of control may vary in different forms for individuals, even for the same individuals in different context or times. Therefore, Benson (2001: 50) argues that at least three levels of description of autonomy in language learning should be recognized: learning management (control over learning behaviour), cognitive processes (control over psychology of learning) and learning content (control over learning situation). These three levels are interdependent. The learning management involves the cognitive processes of decision-making from the learning content and the learning content affects both cognitive process and learning
management.

In some teacher-centred education, some students may be used to tutors’ taking learning control over them: with some pressures from the learning context or without teachers around, students may easily lose interest in learning after they finish their education at school or may not know where to start. In other words, for these students from the culture of collectivism and accepting of relations of power and authority (Littlewood 1999), Ho and Crookall (1995: 237) argue that “being autonomous often required that students work independently of the teacher and this may entail shared decision making, as well as presenting opinions that differ from those of the teacher. It is, thus, easy to see why Chinese students would not find autonomy very comfortable”. The consequence of this may produce a learner stereotype: passive, reticent and reluctant to openly challenge authority. Pierson (1996: 51, cited in Benson 2001: 56) argues that this consequence might be the product of “…centralized curricula, didactic and expository teaching styles, concentration on knowledge acquisition, examinations emphasizing reproductive knowledge over genuine thinking, overcrowded classrooms, and inadequately trained teachers”. Besides, without stimulation and pressure from the study workload, this situation may become worse if no teachers are around, when learners may feel insecure in their individual learning. Therefore, it is important to develop an attitude that learning is a life-long process and it is vital to acquire the skills of self-directed learning (Ho and Crookall 1995: 235). This would prepare learners for a rapidly changing future. It is also crucial for effective functioning in society (Cotterall 1995).
It is noticeable that autonomy may come by degrees. First, it is important to make learners aware that they have the right to make decisions about their learning and be their own masters. Ho and Crookall (1995: 236) list what self-directed or autonomous learning should involve:

1. Choosing instructional materials;
2. Setting learning objectives and prioritizing them;
3. Determining when and how long to work on each objective;
4. Assessing progress and achievement;
5. Evaluating the learning programme

The above indicates that one should know what one needs to learn and why in different learning settings. In particular, knowing how to use L2 appropriately or academically in a different cultural context is a major challenge, especially within postgraduate studies. It is believed that the concept of autonomy has an association with the Western ‘individualistic’ context (Littlewood 1999) and this theme seems embedded within Western cultural values (Jones 1995: 228).

It is vital to notice that learner autonomy is exercised within the context of specific cultures, which are implicitly emphasized. How to enable learner autonomy within a Western context to be applied to students from a teacher-dominated educational setting and train them in order to integrate and act properly in a Western culture becomes an important issue. Therefore, the issues of the roles between teachers and students in the classroom, the responsibilities, their relationship, and human relationships within the culture should be concerned (Little 1995).
Therefore, from the above discussion, it is brought out that some academic problems may occur from both sides' different expectations when Chinese students pursue advanced studies in Western (in this case English-speaking) countries. They also may not be sure what the new expectations of their further academic studies are. Thorp (1991: 117) suggests that teachers “should try to increase their own awareness of themselves as cultural beings”. For learners, it may be better for them to have cultural awareness of academic learning first, especially the demands of L2 academic writing style within the postgraduate studies.

Following this point, I would like to discuss points of comparison between the traditional rhetorical pattern of Chinese essays and Problem-solution pattern of Western academic writing in the next section.

3.3 Comparison between One Chinese Writing Style and the Western Problem-Solution Pattern

In the West, it is suggested that “…there is a single set of academic values shared by all academic disciplines” such as “good writing, effective reading, careful listening and note taking, and sound critical thinking” in a more general way (Johns 1997: 34). It is, therefore, predominantly these values which are shared with particular groups of communities of readers and writers in Western universities. Some of these groups will use English as a second language, e.g. Taiwanese students in the UK. If these students do not share the same values and conventions as perceived by Westerners, problems may occur.
Among Western rhetorical values, argumentative composition writing instruction often tends to approach a topic from a balanced perspective, by encouraging students to give appropriate information to support the topic from two or more points of view, to lend these views credibility and to come to a 'balanced' conclusion or judgment (Ballard & Clanchy 1991, Johns 1997; Krause and O'Brien 1999). It is established that Western students are usually instructed that readers need to be convinced of the validity of the writer's position and that the onus of persuading the reader is on the writer when students attempt writing (Johns 1997: 20; Hinkel 1999: 90). It is said (Grabe and Kaplan 1996: 190) that English is a "writer-responsible" language which places the burden on the writer to make relationships, purposes, and main messages as transparent as possible within the conventions of the text type. Therefore, the importance of "originality and individuality" and "self-expression and logical argument" in writing is emphasized (Matalene 1985: 790). This means that these qualities are desired in much academic writing, even though they may not always be evident in all students' work, even those who are native English speakers (Lillis 2001). In contrast to the writer-responsible language, it is suggested that the reader-responsible preference in Chinese may explain the shorter sentence length in English writing by Chinese students and this reflects a tradition of brevity and reading between lines in Chinese writing (Reid 1988, cited in Grabe and Kaplan 1996: 190; Connor 1996; Jin and Cortazzi 1998b).

Furthermore, it is suggested that Chinese L2 writers' texts tend to contain fewer elements of justification, credibility, persuasion, and fewer reasoning devices
thus resulting in lower grades for writing than those of NSs (Scarcella, 1984; cited in Hinkel 1999: 90). It is stated that “there is strong resistance in the Asian tradition to critical analysis, that there may be no pressure on students to evaluate... no requirement to argue, to resolve ambiguities or dilemmas, to reach clear-cut conclusions” (Ballard & Clanchy 1993: 32-33, cited in Krause & O’Brien 1999: 61). An idea from a Chinese traditional educational perspective is that a learned person should master Chinese classics and respect the words of early scholars. This may lead them not to favour criticizing the works of the masters. In addition to this, some researchers (Cortazzi 1990; Kember and Gow 1991) may argue that the cause may be explained by the nature of the L1 curriculum and the teaching environment rather than as an inherent characteristic of the students (Kember and Gow 1991: 126).

Since the early 1980s, research into L2 learning and acquisition has established that NNSs frequently transfer their knowledge of L1 rhetorical and discourse paradigms and conventions to L2 writing (Hinkel 1999: 91). It is therefore likely that Chinese learners of English may bring their own knowledge of L1 genres to the Western classroom (Jones 1999) if they are not familiar with conventions of Western academic writing and disciplinary discourses. Disciplinary acculturation is a complex process that involves not only the acquisition of content knowledge but also learning the value systems and the norms of the field, as well as acquiring academic literacy which includes both reading and writing academic discourse (Angelova and Riazantseva 1998: 4). If newly-arrived Taiwanese students are not familiar with the rhetorical values of Western academic writing,
it is a possibility that some may not change their embedded L1 values easily in
L2 writing in Western universities.

This study will argue that one of the major problems is acquiring the familiarity
with conventions of Western academic writing by Taiwanese students. However,
there is not necessarily a single explanation for this problem for all Taiwanese
student writers, writing in English. There are two possible explanations for the
difficulty:

(i) They are experiencing the same problems that all writers encounter

(ii) There is transfer interference from rhetorical patterns in the L1

In the following sub-section, firstly the discussion will be illustrated through one
rhetorical pattern in Chinese writing.

3.3.1 Rhetorical Patterns in Chinese Writing

Kaplan (1966) states that each language has rhetorical conventions unique to it.
In 1972, he asserted that the rhetorical conventions and cultural factors of writing
in the first language build a barrier to L2 acquisition (Kaplan 1972). It is argued
that Chinese as well as other “Oriental” writing is indirect (Kaplan 1966). In his
1972 article, Kaplan explains that the cause of “indirectness” in Chinese comes
from the influence of the “eight-legged essay” (or ba gu wen), an essay form
required in the standard civil service examination from the middle of the
fifteenth century until the year 1901. Connor (1996: 37) notes that:
The length, organization, and topics for eight-legged essays were derived from classic Chinese books such as *the Four Books* and *the Five Classics*, which convey the teachings of Confucius and set the moral standards for society.

The “eight-legged essay” was a means used by the government to control people’s thoughts to encourage social harmony. Cai (1993: 6) explains that ‘*ba-gu wen*’ concludes eight parts: “*poti*”, “*chengti*”, “*qijiang*”, “*qigu*”, “*xugu*”, “*zhonggu*”, “*hougu*”, and “*dajie*”. These terms mean literally “the opening-up”, “amplification”, ‘preliminary exposition”, “first argument”, “second argument”, “third argument”, “final argument”, and “conclusion”. The examinees in the traditional setting or other writers were conventionally expected to follow this standard order to present a framework of ideas from the Chinese classics. It is noted that the part of “*chengti*” requires the writer to introduce the topic and then express the extended theme of the essay contained in two or three sentences. For the remaining five parts, the writer needs to elaborate on the topic for ten to twenty sentences by drawing anything from the required Chinese classics before the writer concludes the essay in two to four sentences.

It is suggested that English compositions by Chinese ESL students might show evidence of use of either the eight-legged or the four-part patterns, which are called *qi-cheng-zhuang-he*, in their expository writing (Cai 1993; Hinds 1990). The functions of these four parts are: *qi* prepares the reader for the topic, *cheng* introduces and develops the topic, *zhuang* turns to a seemingly unrelated subject, and *he* sums up the essay (Cai 1993, cited in Connor 1996: 39). Under this
influence, in both Chinese writing and speech, it is probably easy to find the
inductive discourse pattern. In the “inductive” discourse pattern, the writer
shows some substantial proof to lead the reader to understand and accept the
final conclusion. However, Western academic writing requires students to state
the main point quickly and preferably early in their writing, especially in
answering specific questions. This is known as the “deductive” discourse pattern,
in which the main topic should be presented very early and every topic sentence
should appear in the first part of the paragraph (Scollon and Scollon 1995).
Therefore, some Chinese students may follow their L1 conventions to express all
related ideas in their English essays and make a perfect conclusion in the end but
finally they may feel upset about the mark and cannot realize why their essays do
not meet the expectations and standards of their Western tutors.

These are trends and emphases, not absolute differences between Chinese and
Western styles. In other writing forms, it is claimed that classical Chinese poetry
consists of four five-character or seven-character lines, providing that the
principle of qi-cheng-zhuanghe serves one function with each line (Tsao 1982).
However, it must be added that there are other common valid patterns of Chinese
writing, both for essays (e.g. lun shuo wen) and poetry (Lin 1987). Mo (1982)
finds from his research that this four-part paragraph organization
(qi-cheng-zhuanghe) is the most common principle of paragraph organization in
Chinese (he does not refer to other available principles). Mo (1982, cited in Tsao
1983: 110) gives a similar but clearer explanation of this four-part organization
that “qi (literally, ‘beginning’; introduction of topic), cheng (literally, ‘hook up’;
education of topic), zhuan (literally, ‘turning’; turning to another viewpoint), and he (literally, ‘coming together’, ‘closing’; summary of conclusion)”. Mo and Tsao argue that the qi section in Chinese cannot be regarded as having the same function as the topic sentence in English. This qi part should be related to the general theme in some way or other, but it is not necessarily a theme statement. Second, the zhuan part in most cases involves a change of some kind- a change of mood (from factual to suppositional), a change of place, a change of time, a change of point of view, a change of tone, or simply a change of grammatical subject/topic, etc. The following is one of the examples given by Mo:

[Qi] Human and political freedom has never existed and cannot exist without a large measure of economic freedom. [Cheng] Those of us who have been so fortunate as to have been born in a free society tend to take freedom for granted, to regard it as the natural state of mankind. [Zhuan] It is not the natural state of mankind- it is actually a rare and precious thing. Most people throughout history, most people today, have lived in conditions of tyranny and misery, not of freedom and prosperity. [He] The clearest demonstration of how much people value freedom is the way they vote with their feet when they have no other way to vote (1982: 43-44; cited in Tsao 1983: 110).

The findings of the research by Fagan and Cheong (1987) show that 50.9 percent of the students wrote their English composition following the Chinese four-part model instead of the English pattern. This demonstrates that this particular process of transfer can occur, but it also shows that (as one might expect) not all
students are influenced by the L1 pattern. In a study a number of other aspects of the writing context need to be considered (e.g. reading, preparation and the process of writing). A discussion of problem-solution pattern in academic writing will be illustrated next.

3.3.2 Problem-Solution Pattern

Knowledge is not linear, but text is. Thus it might be a problem for writers to organize their non-linear message in a comprehensible linear form (Coulthard 1994: 7). Swales and Feak (1994) explain two common kinds of underlying structure to English academic writing which are the movements of general-to-specific and problem-to-solution. They (ibid.: 57) state that “general-specific passages tend to be descriptive and expository. In contrast, problem-solution texts tend to be more argumentative and evaluative”. Therefore, the problem-solution text is commonly found in research papers.

Hoey (1983) elaborates the popular rhetorical pattern (problem-solution) from Winter (1986) for establishing a relation, to analyze whole discourses and longer passages. Enkvist (1984) suggests that sentence-based models could tell us what the sentences of a text look like in grammatical sentence terms but they cannot tell us why the text makes use of these particular sentence types. In order to answer the question why, one should investigate text structures not as such, but as an output of the writer’s goals and plans. How to conduct adequate research into what the goals and plans are, and precisely how they influence text, is a challenge which seems to be particularly addressed by think-aloud procedures.
Here is a short invented example by Winter (1976):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I was on sentry duty</th>
<th>situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I saw the enemy approaching</td>
<td>problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I opened fire</td>
<td>solution (to the problem)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The enemy retreated</td>
<td>evaluation (of the solution)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-4   An example by Winter

The above text analysis, although it seems simple, could be analyzed as a standard macro-organization for a typical research thesis. For instance, the four parts: *Situation*: the current state of knowledge (review of the literature); *Problem*: the question(s) the researcher has chosen to address; *Solution*: the researcher’s answers/proposals; *Evaluation*: a concluding section commenting on what has been achieved and what remains to be done.

Among these four parts of the problem-solution pattern, in the part of *Situation*, we find ‘while’, ‘when’, ‘what happened?’ and ‘in what situation?’ as explicit connectors (Hoey 1983: 43). The text relations can be illustrated as: ‘when’ connects sentence 1 to the following three sentences “when I was on sentry duty, I saw the enemy approaching. When I saw the enemy approaching, I opened fire. When I opened fire, I beat off the attack” (Hoey 1983: 43). Following the question ‘in what situation?’ the text can be explained as the follows:

D: I beat off the attack

Q: In what situation?

D: (while) I was on sentry duty
And

D: I opened fire

Q: In what situation?

D: (while) I was on sentry duty.

In sentence 3 and 4, there is an implied question ‘How successful was this’ that brings us to the part of Evaluation. The previous part of Situation normally elicits answers of facts. However, for the evaluation part, it is asking the author/speaker to assess, or evaluate, his action described in sentence 3 in terms of its efficacy (Hoey 1983: 47).

In connecting sentences 2 and 3, the last sentence is seen as functioning as Evaluation and then that Evaluation is of the response described in sentence 3. The pattern becomes:

Situation→Problem (that aspect of Situation which requires a Response) →
Response→Evaluation of Response

It is suggested that the label Problem can be replaced with the phrase “Aspect of Situation requiring a Response”. Hoey (1983: 55) points out:

For the parts of Situation and Evaluation, these are regarded as fundamental units of discourse analysis, corresponding roughly to the questions ‘what are the facts?’ and ‘what do you think of the facts?’ and the other elements of the pattern, Problem, Response and Result...
Despite the simple text above, "the basic four parts can be complicated in several ways, for instance by embedding a complete four-part structure inside one of the components of another structure" (Coulthard 1994: 8). The greatest complication occurs when the Evaluation of a solution is negative, then it creates a potentially indefinitely recursive structure with possible sub-cycles and elaboration (Coulthard 1994: 9):

Situation
Problem
Solution

Negative $\rightarrow$ Evaluation = Problem

Solution

Negative $\rightarrow$ Evaluation = Problem

Solution

Evaluation

Figure 3.1 A problem-solution recursive structure

If this recursive structure results in an extended pattern, it can still be restructured explicitly in terms of Problem-Solution. Moreover, Hoey (1983) mentions that rhetorical organisation involves writers taking the responsibility to relate one or more of their sentences to any of the other sentences in their discourse in order to produce coherent discourse not fragments. Moreover, in order to make coherent discourse which is not rhetorically inept, it is also important for writers to show a clear pathway through the parts of their discourse
to let readers follow.

Some studies use the argumentative text as a cognitive process of problem-solving (Kummer (1972), Tirkkonen-Condit (1984), Toulmin (1958), Winter (1976) and Hoey (1983, 1994)). The goal of the writer is to alter the reader's initial position, which might be opposed to the goal of the writer to the final position, or one which equals the position of the writer. Typically, the process of written argumentation has the following structural units: situation, problem, solution, and evaluation.

In the following section, the comparison of the previously introduced Chinese macro-structure with this Western problem-solving schema will be discussed. As already mentioned, there are several rhetorical patterns in both Chinese and English, so a one-to-one transfer is far from the only possibility. However, the present focus is restricted to these two patterns as an exploratory procedure.

3.3.3 Comparison between the Chinese Macro-structure and the Western Problem-Solution Pattern

Mohan and Lo (1985: 519) describes how the traditional "eight-legged essay" or wen-yan style with its rigid structure, is still taught in Taiwanese schools but has effectively been replaced by the informal bai-hua style, which is based on contemporary spoken Mandarin. They argued that this (wen-yan style) is one small part of Chinese writing patterns but Chinese students are still taught the wen-yan style as a subject in school. In the Analects of Confucius or Mencius, some examples that Mohan and Lo (1985: 519) provided (such as the Analects of
Confucius Book 16, No. 4 and Mencius Book IV, Part A, No. 1) could show a similar direct pattern as is common in English writing and also the mode called *Lun Shuo Wen* (a traditional type of essay polemic). Additionally, they claim that the instruction of classical and modern Chinese styles given to students tends to be a direct rather than an indirect expressive mode. However, Matalene (1985) and Scollon (1994) support Kaplan's hypothesis of indirectness in Chinese writing, although they do not attribute the direct cause to the eight-legged essay.

It seems useful to analyze text as an embodiment of the writer's knowledge about schema-based production and comprehension of text types. It is assumed that readers' impressions about the quality of compositions are based on their perceptions of the intentions that writers had in writing, and readers look at the discourse structure and at individual sentences to see how well these intentions are fulfilled. It is also helpful to know the writing requirements demanded of specific academic disciplines.

If L1 readers and L2 writers cannot be assumed to share the same discourse knowledge (Kaplan 1988), there might be a problem for Chinese learners of English at the British universities whose "written discourse accent" (Scarcella 1984; Wong 1988: 8) is different from their tutor's writing culture. The problem might be that previous learning experiences have, in the past, focussed on the traditional Chinese pattern (*qi-cheng-zhuang-he*) and that this influences the English text. Part of my analysis in the present study focuses on the subjects' discourse-level genre characteristics between English argumentative patterns (problem-solution structure) and common paragraph organizational patterns in
Cai (1993) maintains that teachers need to be familiar with the socio-cultural sources of the problems possibly encountered by Chinese students when writing in English as a foreign language. He argues that it is common for writers to adopt the four-part model of *qi-cheng-zhuan-he* to organize paragraphs.

These two patterns (*qi-cheng-zhuan-he* and the Problem-Solution schema) can be compared, as shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Common Four-Part model in Chinese</th>
<th>The argumentative Text as a Problem-Solution structure in English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qi:</strong> prepares the reader for the topic</td>
<td>Situation: introduces background material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cheng:</strong> introduces and develops the topic</td>
<td>Problem: a statement of the undesirable condition of things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zhuan:</strong> turns to a seemingly unrelated subject (at this point where <em>cheng</em> is finished, turns the idea to a subtheme where there is a connection, but not a directly connected association [to the major theme])</td>
<td>Solution: a statement of the desirable condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>He:</strong> sums up the essay</td>
<td>Evaluation: an assessment or an evaluation of the solution in terms of its efficacy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-5  The comparison between two patterns (*qi-cheng-zhuan-he* & Problem-Solution Schema)

It is noticed that the argumentative texts emphasize the problem and how to solve it. However, in the Chinese four-parts, it seems that the arguments are often delayed, and that arguments, statements and narration seem unconnected to the rhetorical patterns of the Western readers (Matalene 1985). This might indicate that the problem is emphasized at the stage two in the Problem-Solution
model, whereas if a problem is mentioned at all in the *qi-cheng-zhuan-he* model, it is likely to occur at stage 3, and possibly not as a problem, but as a point of contrast or the extended point. In the *he* part, the solution may not be emphasized prominently but the narration instead. Therefore, it is suggested that the apparent lack of argumentative coherence occurs because of the conventional Chinese reliance on appeals to history, tradition, and authority and its frequent references to historical and religious texts as well as proverbs (Connor 1996: 38).

### 3.4 Other Studies

Recently there have been several studies in the field that focus on the cultural context in which writing takes place as well as on the experiences of ESL students in the initial stages of acquiring discipline-specific discourses (Zamel 1983; Cumming 1986; Arndt 1987; Cotterall 1991; Prior 1991; Kusel 1992; Benson et al, 1993; Leki & Carson 1994; Leki 1995; Leki & Carson 1997; Angelova & Riazantseva 1998), some specific expressions of L1 literacy in L2 writing (Hinkel 2002) and research of citation conventions (Kirkpatrick and Yonglin 2002). Such research has revealed some insightful information about adaptation to a different academic community. Frequently, L2 may find themselves in a situation where the L2 shared knowledge is not accessible to them and their L1 background and literate knowledge is not recognized (Hinkel 2002: 473). Therefore, L2 learners need to learn how to apply L2 discourse conventions to their writings in order to access L2 literacy and be accepted in a L2 academic community.
Participants selected in several pieces of research are multi-national ESL learners with varying linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Angelova & Riazantseva 1998; Leki 1995; Huang & Chang 1996; Prior 1991), which show varieties of different cultural perceptions. Some researchers suggest that cultural issues should be taken into account (Angelova & Riazantseva 1998; Huang & Chang 1996). However, they do not explain the cultural challenges that students from one specific culture may encounter, while my study has attempted to study a particular cultural group of Taiwanese and examine the study result accords to the previous research. It is necessary that the special knowledge of a specific culture should be considered within the methodology so as to elicit more data concerning aspects of adaptation in the academic context (Jin and Cortazzi 1993, 1995, 1998a; Cortazzi and Jin 1996).

More importantly specific factors should be considered in a class setting, such as teaching and learning styles between two different cultures, students’ behaviour in the classroom, and face-saving in Chinese culture (McLaren 1998). Moreover, the process of conducting their L2 academic writing in the case of the postgraduate Master’s programmes, relation to their L1 writing conventions and how to minimize the adjustment problems within the specific academic community should be reflected, too.

3.5 Overview

In this literature review, I have discussed culture shock and the related problem of language difficulties encountered by those international students, the different
expectations towards teaching and learning styles between British tutors and Chinese students in the UK academic context; the comparison between one Chinese writing style and the Western problem-solution pattern regarding their individual characteristics, the possible problems and the potential influence of L1 to L2 academic writing and other related research of multi-cultural ESL learners.

In particular, some expectations recognized by English-speaking readers might not be found in these Taiwanese students' written work. In order to acquire a successful pass for their Master's course, it would be better that L2 learners write in the way that English readers expect. The writer has avoided valued judgment of different Chinese and Western writing styles, as she felt that, this fell outside the scope of her study, which only concerns the attempt to adapt from one to another. Angelova & Riazanteseva (1998: 8) suggest that more research is needed involving students from other countries such as those in Asia, South America and the Middle East. Therefore, in this study, the writer chose to investigate one specific group of five Taiwanese Master’s students at a British university to explore their process of becoming members of a UK discourse community, how they adjust themselves to the demands of British academic writing (particularly with their first assignment and final dissertation) and how this relates to their cultural background. Meanwhile, also with tutors’ suggestion, the study result wishes to provide some suggestions and recommendations for future Taiwanese students in order to minimize their possible problems of academic adjustment to UK postgraduate studies.
Part 2

Research Design and Methodology

Every social researcher is faced with a variety of options of research strategies when he/she carries out an investigation. The approaches chosen and strategic decision made by the researcher for a piece of research should be appropriate for specific aspects of investigation and specific kinds of problems in order to fit the purpose. Reasons provided for the choices should be explicit and transparent (Denscombe 1998).

This section will address the issue of research design and methodology chosen in this study. Chapter 4 considers the methodological aspect of this study. An interview method was used to investigate the two parties (Taiwanese students and British tutors) with regard to different perspectives of learning and writing within the British academic context, along with the examination of tutors' feedback sheets.
Chapter 4

Methodology

This chapter illustrates the methodology of this study. The conceptual framework of the research design provides the advantages of qualitative research, which fits the purpose of this study. The main tool of investigation in this study, interviewing, is evaluated, with examination of other data from tutors' feedback.

4.1 Qualitative Research

Two main concerns indicated in ‘qualitative research’ are: one is with meanings and the way people understand things and the other with patterns of behaviour (Denscombe 1998: 207). To understand the thoughts and behaviour of human beings, either as individuals or as members of groups, qualitative researchers tend to capture or understand the uniqueness of a particular complexity of a situation or response and they are concerned with process, rather than products or outcomes (Merriam 1988).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, qualitative research is chosen as the most appropriate framework to address the research questions in order to investigate the five Taiwanese students' writing and learning experiences and the reflection of British tutors (who have had the experience of teaching Taiwanese students) upon British academic culture and the performance of Taiwanese students. The qualitative research provides an in-depth study of focused areas, especially suited to small-scale research. The “thick descriptions” assure a richness and detail to
the data when dealing with complex social situations (Denscombe 1998: 220).

In addition, the researcher being a Taiwanese herself and understanding their shared cultural norms, it was not possible to wholly exclude the researcher's own interpretation of the study since "the researcher's self plays a significant role in the production and interpretation of qualitative data" (Denscombe 1998: 208). It is believed that this can provide a privileged insight into social issues and should be treated as a crucial resource not as a limitation.

The next section will explore the main tool, the interviewing method, which is employed in this investigation.

4.2 Interviewing

This study was mainly based on interview data. For interviewers, "the primary issue is to generate data which give an authentic insight into people's experience" (Silverman 1993: 91). Through the interaction between researcher and participant, interviews are "designed to explore the perspectives of people concerned" (Leki and Carson 1997: 44, cited in Hammersley 1990: 31). Cannell and Kahn (1968, cited in Cohen and Manion 1994: 271) define "the research interview" as "a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description...". It involves the gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals (Cohen and Manion ibid.), from which the main data of this study come.
The intention of this study is to investigate the students' understanding and interpretation of their learning and writing experiences within the different cultural perspectives and British tutors' perception. The interview is treated as a method of data collection, and the contents of answers as the data. Kvale (1996: 30, cited in Cohen et al, 2000: 272-273) points out key characteristics of qualitative research interviews:

1. *Life world*: the topic of the qualitative research interview is the lived world of the subjects and their relation to it.

2. *Meaning*: the interview seeks to interpret the meaning of central themes in the life world of the subject. The interviewer registers and interprets the meaning of what is said as well as how it is said.

3. *Qualitative*: the interview seeks qualitative knowledge expressed in normal language, it does not aim at quantification.

4. *Descriptive*: the interview attempts to obtain open nuanced descriptions of different aspects of the subjects’ life worlds.

5. * Specificity*: descriptions of specific situations and action sequences are elicited, not general opinions.

7. **Focused**: the interview is focused on particular themes; it is neither strictly structure with standardized questions, nor entirely ‘non-directive’.

8. **Ambiguity**: interviewee statements can sometimes be ambiguous, reflecting contradictions in the world the subject lives in.

9. **Change**: the process of being interviewed may produce new insights and awareness, and the subject may in the course of the interview come to change his or her descriptions and meanings about a theme.

10. **Sensitivity**: different interviewers can produce different statements on the same themes, depending on their sensitivity to and knowledge of the interview topic.

11. **Interpersonal relations**: the knowledge obtained is produced through the interpersonal interaction in the interview.

12. **Positive experience**: a well carried-out research interview can be a rare and enriching experience for the interviewee, who may obtain new insights into his or her life situation.

The researcher adopted the above points for this study of qualitative research interview. The interview data provides the interpretation of the respondents’ meanings and expression of exchanging ideas, which involve inquiring their ‘interiors’ (knowledge, beliefs, motives, meanings) or valid descriptions of ‘exteriors’ (Baker and Johnson 1998: 230). Through the medium of language, as Silverman (1993: 108) has put it, “By analysing how people talk to one another,
one is directly gaining access to a cultural universe and its content of moral assumptions”. The evidence from the interview data offers or implies reasons, justifications, motivations, and outcomes of the subjects’ courses of social action (Baker and Johnson ibid.: 231). In this study, interviews with Taiwanese students and British tutors provide access to their social behaviour and action within this particular setting.

By asking these questions, I wish to find out about Taiwanese students’ learning and writing processes and British tutors’ experience of teaching Taiwanese students and their perceptions of their own academic culture.

Three sets of interviews for students were conducted in order to provide a full investigation of students’ writing and learning process. Besides, the multiple interviews gave the subjects a chance to reflect on their learning process and be aware of their progress in learning and writing.

The interview with British tutors was concerned with their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and experiences towards their own academic culture and the interaction with Taiwanese students, which gives professional reflection on their practice by means of talking in an interview situation.

Some drawbacks of interview data are those of all self-reports (e.g., remembering incorrectly, attempting to show oneself in the best possible light, adapting answers to please the researcher) and face-to-face interactions (e.g. the researcher’s possible misleading). However, the interviews were conducted immediately after the participants’ own experience with cultural and writing
contexts, which the study was exploring, the participants appeared to have no troubles answering the questions. Besides, it is believed that problems were minimized by the fact that the researcher sought only the objective truth of the participants' reactions, perceptions, and experiences as they themselves understood them.

4.3 Tutors' Feedback

In this study, a textual examination was undertaken of tutor written feedback on students' written work, the responses from students towards tutors' feedback as well as some attention to students' written work. The written feedback from tutors was mostly from tutors' standard feedback sheets, which carried a grade and some general comments. This analysis has raised the issues for students of conveying different messages about university values and beliefs, about the role of writing in learning, and criteria for assessment (Lea and Street 2000; Ivanič et al, 2000).

4.4 Ethical Considerations

The issue of ethics needs to take account of informed consent, guarantee of confidentiality, beneficence and non-maleficence (Cohen et al, 2000: 279). All participants were ensured of anonymity and confidentiality. Hence, the names of all participants appearing in this study have been modified to protect their real identities.

Apart from the confidentiality and anonymity, informed consent should be the
first consideration. Concerning 'informed consent', also called 'real consent', and sometimes 'valid consent' (Stroh 2000: 208; Kent 2000: 81), Kent defines this as managing "to achieve a position whereby people who agree to take part in a research programme know what they are agreeing to and authorize you to collect information from them without any form of coercion or manipulation". Therefore, in order to abide by this rule, before interviewing, the researcher gave each of the subjects a full description of the research and its possible consequences. It is necessary to protect the ethical principle of autonomy. Therefore, the researcher needs to give the participants some information, which shows what the purpose of the study is, what the procedures involved will be and the probable consequences.

Meanwhile, the researcher also tried to assure the benefits for the participants joining this study. Within the researcher's own capacity, the researcher offered to share her own experiences of English learning and writing in English being a postgraduate student herself in the same university. The researcher also pointed out to the participants that through attending this study they could reflect on their own learning processes and benefit from this.

4.5 The Subjects

The subjects were five Taiwanese students and four British tutors at the University of Leicester. All names presented in this study were pseudonyms.
4.5.1 The Taiwanese Students

The four subjects were in their mid-twenties and one was over thirty. All were female. The four subjects were studying Humanities and Social Sciences (Museum Studies, Mass Communication Studies and Applied Linguistics and TESOL) and one subject was taking a Master's degree in Science (Finance). In the study reported on here, however, the writer considered the possibility of whether the different disciplines being followed might distort the results, i.e. an individual's experience might reflect the demands of a particular course, rather than the subject's own general language- and culture-related problems. However, since a high degree of consistency was found amongst the reports from the four different departments, it was decided that this factor was not of major significant and could be safely left out of the scope of this study.

All subjects had finished their undergraduate degrees in Taiwan before coming to the UK for further studies, two with similar English language proficiency as indicated by the TOEFL or IELTS score (Jenny TOEFL score 610 and Beth IELTS score 6.5) and one with the full score of TOEFL test (Elaine TOEFL score 677). The other two (Winnie and Faye) got lower IELTS test scores, who came earlier to attend the Language Course C held by the Language Centre at the University of Leicester before their Master's courses. Before the language course, Winnie had the IELTS score 5.0 and after the language course her score was up to 6.0. Faye got IELTS score 5.5 and after the language course she got 6.0.
4.5.2 The British Tutors

The tutors interviewed were from four departments at the University of Leicester; these four departments are CMCR (Centre for Mass Communications Research), English Language Unit (School of Modern Languages), School of Education (Applied Linguistics and TESOL), and Museum Studies. These four subjects were called Tutor O, Tutor S, Tutor K and Tutor R respectively later on in the analysis of findings. All respondents had taught and supervised Taiwanese students in their own department. Here is the table showing the tutors’ backgrounds:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tutors’ Name</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>CMCR</td>
<td>ELTU</td>
<td>Education (AL) + TESOL</td>
<td>MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>UG, MA, PhD.</td>
<td>EL courses</td>
<td>AL</td>
<td>MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwanese</td>
<td>MA + Ph.D.</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>MA + PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5-20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-1  British tutors’ backgrounds

Note:
1. CMCR: Centre for Mass Communications Research
2. ELTU: English Language Teaching Unit
3. AL: Applied Linguistics
4. MS: Museum Studies
5. LC: Language Courses
6. %: the percentage of Taiwanese students in their class

Tutor O came from a northern European country and had 17 years of teaching experience in the field of Mass Communications and taught various subjects in undergraduate, postgraduate and supervised Ph.D. students and is believed to be familiar with the British academic culture. Tutor S from the English Language Unit had 6 years of teaching experience at University of Leicester and
specialized in English Language courses. Tutor K taught the subject of Applied Linguistics at the School of Education. Tutor R had been in the department of Museum Studies for five years and taught in the MA courses. From the table, we can see that in English Language courses, the proportion of Taiwanese students was 33% in the whole class, which was a relatively large number, being one third. In other departments, the proportion of Taiwanese students was relatively small, though the MA course in Museum Studies had allocated 15 Taiwanese students to a whole class of 70 students.

4.6 Interview Questions

Semi-structured interviews were applied to this research. Drever (1995: 8) shows that semi-structured interviewing is suitable for gathering information and opinions and exploring people’s thinking and motivations. Closed and open questions were used in the semi-structured interviews. For example, in my study, the question “how many years have you studied English?” is a typical closed question, which gives little scope in answering. Unlike ‘closed’ questions, ‘open’ questions offer a wide range of choice. Another example “what do you think about your pre-sessional course?” represents an open question.

Before the formal interviews with the subjects in this study, the writer informally discussed the questions with some Taiwanese friends for suggestions and to make adjustments rather than making a formal pilot study. The questions written for the three sets of interviews were mainly based on the writer’s and other Taiwanese students’ studying experiences.
In this study, interview questions for Taiwanese students from the first to the third interview were chosen covering various areas, such as teaching and learning styles, behaviour in the classroom, the comparison between English and Chinese writing, language skills and academic culture learning etc. In order to compare with the findings of students' interviews, questions in the British tutors' interview covered the main characteristics of British academic culture, the expectations of teachers' roles and students' role in British academic culture, the ways of communicating between tutors and postgraduates, the marking criteria for students' written assignments and feedback, also the impression of Taiwanese students' performance in class and written assignments and then some further comments.

There are three sets of interview questions for Taiwanese students and one set of interview questions for British tutors which are listed in Appendix A.

4.7 The Interview Procedure

To investigate how students experience culture and writing during their Master's year, three sets of in-depth interviews were conducted, one at the beginning of their course, the second after their first assignment, and the third during the time they were writing up their dissertation or after. Because students do not typically experience these cultural and writing conditions simultaneously, the interviews were conducted at three different times in the term to give the student respondents the opportunity to reflect. The length of all interviews for students depended on each subject's interests: some are over one hour and some are about
half an hour. The same questions were asked to each participant. Firstly, before
the interview started, the subjects were told that it would not matter if they chose
either Chinese or English in which to answer the interview questions in order to
allow subjects to talk freely and feel comfortable. Therefore, some interviews
were partly in Chinese.

Regarding the interviews with tutors, the researcher firstly made an appointment
by e-mail or in person with these four tutors in advance. Interviews were carried
out individually in tutors’ offices. In all cases interviews were tape-recorded with
tutors’ agreement. All respondents were supportive, enthusiastic and helpful. The
interviews with tutors lasted from 30 minutes to 45 minutes.

4.8 Transcription and Code-Switching

All parts of the interviews were first tape-recorded and then transcribed verbatim
before being translated where required by the researcher (please see Elaine’s
that:

A full transcription is best tackled in at least two distinct stages. The first is
to represent the whole interview verbatim as far as possible. The second is to
replay the conversation whilst entering emphases, annotations and
comments.

The words of a transcription are simply a transparent medium to ‘reality’
(Silverman 1993: 115). In the transcriptions, some code mixing and
code-switching can be found. Where a change of language occurs, in the interview transcripts the researcher put the Chinese translation in brackets immediately after the English sentences (please see Appendix B).

The situation of code-mixing and code-switching is unlike an ideology of linguistic ‘purity’ as, for example, in the case (Milroy and Milroy 1985, cited from Milroy 1987: 186) of a Punjabi/English bilingual who prefers speaking pure Punjabi than the mixed language. He felt guilty about using a mixed Punjabi/English. On the other hand there is a trend in Taiwan of using a Chinese/English mix, which is perceived a displaying greater knowledge than Chinese alone. Therefore, to “gain a better understanding” (Qi 1998: 415) through code switching and code mixing was a priority during the process of this research. It is also natural linguistic behaviour because all subjects and the interviewer were in the same context in the UK and sharing the same ethnic and linguistic background.

Powney and Watts (1987) suggest that it is better that the two stages of transcribing and translating are not done by the same person in order to make explicit some of the doubtful points. Because of the time-consuming nature of the work, however, the transcriptions were done entirely by the interviewer. It took longer to translate from Mandarin Chinese to English in some parts of the interviews. The location of each interview with the students was informal, being in each interviewee’s university accommodation, which made the interviewees feel comfortable.
4.9 Methods of Presenting and Analysing the Interview Data

Firstly with the data from students' interviews, after the transcripts were done, the researcher allocated questions with similar characteristics to topic headings (categories). From the interview data, the transcript was read through carefully, noted and coded in the same control. The recurrent themes and comments appeared to be salient in relation to the research questions, the categories (topic headings), and potential information in subsequent interviews. This method followed a strategy of analytic induction, which "involves scanning the data for categories of phenomena and for relationships among such categories" (Goetz & LeCompte 1984: 180, cited in Leki and Carson 1997: 48).

From remarks and ideas that emerged and the main interests of the discussion shown in the interviews which were salient and related to the topic headings, the researcher made a few comparative "matrices" as tables for each set of interviews following the categories and in each table the five subjects' summarised feedback could be found in the same order (Miles and Huberman 1994). Here a matrix is essentially the 'crossing' of two lists, set up as rows and columns (ibid.: 93); in this study, the names of subjects were listed in the left column and the categories as the row line. The writer believes that this illustrative display format of matrix would present information systematically and fully from which valid conclusions could be drawn.

In the first set of the interview questions with Taiwanese students (see Appendix A), at the beginning of the first interview process, some general questions were
utilized in order to build rapport with the interviewee. Questions 1 to 6 focus on
the background of the subjects. Questions 7 and 8 illustrated the subjects’
feedback from any pre-sessional course or other language course already
completed. Questions 9 to 11 explore the general comparison between Taiwanese
and British teaching styles, lectures/seminars and the subjects’ own behaviors in
class. Question 12 investigates each interviewee’s response to English academic
writing compared to her response when writing in Chinese. Questions 13 to 17
concentrate on reading, speaking and learning new words. Question 18 evaluates
the subjects’ motivation whereas Questions 19 and 20 investigate general factors
in learning English. Questions 21 to 23 examine the subjects’ perception of their
language learning strategies and the characteristics of a good language learner
related to the academic context. In Questions 24 to 26, the phenomena of
“culture shock” and “language shock” are discussed. Finally, the concluding
questions require the subjects to provide feedback regarding the research
interview itself.

The above topics shed light on 12 categories in all. They are “Years of studying
English back in Taiwan” and “What were regarded as the most difficult skills at
different stages of English learning” (questions 1-8), “Teaching Styles”
(questions 9-10b), “Behaviour in class” (question 10c) and “The reaction to
non-understanding of lectures”,(question 11), “Academic Writing” (question 12),
“Reading and Speaking” (questions 13-14); “Other skills of translation and
learning new words” (Questions 15-17); “Perceptions about Self and Culture”
(questions 18-26), and “feedback on the research interview” (questions 27-28).
The five individual tables from the first interview representing each subject were completed from the raw data. From these five tables, the researcher withdrew the same category from each subject's answers and arranged them into nine tables. Table 5-2 represents the background information, which includes question 1 to question 8 in the first interview. This background information shows how many years each subject had studied English before in Taiwan and the skills they considered most difficult to acquire during different periods such as their previous education in Taiwan, the English Language Course, Pre-sessional Course, and later Master's course in the UK.

Table 5-5 represents what the subjects felt about the teaching styles of their Taiwanese undergraduate study and the styles they had encountered so far in England. This concludes the first interview questions 9 to 10b. Table 5-3 shows what subjects do in class and their reaction to non-understanding the lectures and how they say they are going to improve. It (Table 5-3) covers the first interview questions 10c and 11.

Table 6-3 shows what subjects think of academic writing, Table 6-1 for reading, and Table 5-4 for speaking. This summarises questions 12 to 14 in the first interview. Tables 6-2 and 6-1 concern when the five subjects used the translation skill and how they learnt new words. Chapter 5.2.3 lists their perceptions about themselves and cultural adaptation and Table 5-7 shows these subjects' feedback on this research interview. This concludes questions from 18 to 28.

In the second and third interview schedules with Taiwanese students (see
Appendix A), the questions were designed to investigate the different stages of the writing process when each subject prepared their first assignment (discussed in the second set of interviews) and final dissertation (discussed in the third set of interviews). The questions were summarized under the 'Category' shown on the left of the tables in Appendix C. Since they are related, in Appendix C the writer put the categories that occurred in both interviews together. Thus, two sets of data were combined to represent both the second and third interviews with regard to the comparison between the writing of the first assignments and the final dissertations. Two keys are indicated in brackets after the categories. If the number (2) appears, it means that the data are from the second set of interviews and (3) means the data are from the third interviews. Moreover, in the third interview schedule, there are three additional categories which are not covered at all in the second interview schedule. These three additional categories relate to 'Structure of the dissertation', 'Pattern (situation-problem-solution-evaluation)', 'problems in dissertation writing'.

In the second interview, Questions 1 and 2 focus on how the interviewees chose their topic and where they got ideas to write. These form the category of 'topic chosen for first assignment'. Questions 3 to 8 ask the five subjects about their 'reading preparation'. Then, questions 9, 10, and 11 investigate their 'process of writing'. Questions 12 to 14 concern the subjects' 'quotation' skills. Questions 15 and 16 are about any 'editing strategies' the five subjects felt they might use. In questions 17 to 22, the 'feedback' from their tutor on their first assignment is discussed. Finally, question 23 asks the subjects to show their 'reflection upon
their own experience’ on the difference between writing in English and in Chinese.

The third interview aims to elicit how the five subjects prepared their dissertation and gives them a chance to reflect on their academic experience after their one-year Master’s course. Questions 1 and 2 focus on how the interviewees chose their topics for the dissertation and where they got their ideas. Questions 3 to 8 cover the category of ‘reading preparation’. Questions 9 to 11 examine their ‘process of writing’. Questions 12 to 14 ask how the five subjects use ‘quotation’. Questions 15 and 16 ask about any ‘editing strategies’ the five subjects believe they might use. Questions 17 to 22 discuss the feedback from their supervisors on their dissertation drafts. Finally, Questions 23 to 26 ask for the subjects’ reflections on their different writing experience when using Chinese and English and also differences between Chinese and English academic cultures relating to their future plans after finishing their studies in the UK.

The interview questions with British tutors were semi-structured with probes and prompts. There were a total of 15 questions in the interview (see Appendix A). These questions gave an opportunity to the respondents to relate their own teaching experience with Taiwanese students, how they perform in class and written assignments, what they think of British academic culture, their expectations of the students’ written assignments and then suggestions were given at the end of each interview.

After listening to the tapes and following the questions, the researcher selected
remarks, anecdotes and comments related to the thirteen topic headings which were "Background information", "Teachers' roles", "Students' roles", "The ways of communicating between tutors and postgraduates", "The main characteristics of British academic culture", "Taiwanese students' performance in class", "Taiwanese students' performance in written assignments", "Level of improvement over the academic year", "Marking criteria in written assignments & feedback", "Particular problems when marking Taiwanese students' assignments", "Home cultural difference affecting L2 written assignments", "Learning the cultural and educational background of Taiwanese and other international students", and "Further comments".

Next, I will discuss methodological problems combined with the feedback from the five subjects given after the interviews.

4.10 Discussion of Methodological Problems

These interviews were all tape-recorded. Powney and Watts (1987: 145) state that the drawbacks of tape-recording are that "a tape recording under-represents the communication by providing only the sound component- a component that is reduced even further at the transcript stage" although tape-recording can leave the interviewer free to concentrate upon the task at hand. Tape-recording cannot record gestures, facial expressions or other non-verbal events during the interview. It is possible, however, to use a notation that has symbols for non-verbal reactions. Stroh (2000: 210) suggests that it might be helpful for the researcher to take some time after the interviews in order to note down such
events in a research diary, which the researcher adopt in this study. Scott (1985) suggests some interesting points about tape recordings that tape-recordings actually do provide a function of reviewing the data without limits. Moreover, 'truth' lies on the tape, it becomes objective fact through transcription. Importantly, it can be replayed and therefore reheard many times, which often reveals previously unnoted recurring features of the organisation of talk (Silverman 1993: 117). These were the reasons the researcher chose to tape-record the interview data without using other means.

In some of interview data of this study, most subjects used "um" or "er" fillers to show reflection or hesitation about how to reply, and sometimes there was some silence between the turn-taking of the both parties. In places, this seems to delay the time of replying after the questions are asked. In interviews it is possible that the subject may edit his/her thoughts in a way that no longer reflects his/her original drift (Cohen and Hosenfeld 1981). However, using fillers might give interviewees more time to reorganize their thoughts before answering the questions. If the silence was unexpectedly long, the researcher would ask the question again or provide prompts and probes.

Furthermore, from the feedback on the research interview, some subjects suggested that it might be better for the interviewees to look at the research questions beforehand so that the interviewees could have prepared better answers and then shortened the interview time. However, the researcher chose not to show them the interview questions in advance. The reason for this was that there was a danger that it could have led some interviewees to seek to please the
interviewer by giving ‘ideal’ responses, not their own spontaneous ones or the “truth” (Robson 1993: 232; Kent 2000: 82). When this happens, it is not easy to tell. Furthermore, Ericsson and Simon (1993) show that asking subjects questions directly only about what is kept in short-term memory puts no strain on the memory to reconstruct past thoughts and in this case the period of time being referred to was relatively short.

The role of the interviewer is never easy. The interviewer must know what to ask and how to ask it. Interviews are the understanding of “people’s life-worlds” (Stroh 2000: 202). Among several interview situations, the ‘one-to-one’ interview gives the researcher the opportunity to explore an individual’s opinions in depth, combining other examination together later in the research. The crucial point is to ask open-ended questions, which could allow the participant to respond extensively with a long answer to a question rather than short answer with ‘yes’ or ‘no’. If closed questions happen unavoidably, the researcher could ask more extended questions to support the further answers given by the participants. Therefore, two skills could be used: probes and prompts (Drever 1995: 24). First, probes give the interviewer time to let the interviewee expand on a response. Often, probes are used following the general direction of answers the interviewee gives. It is a device of invitation for more contribution from the interviewee. Second, prompts give the interviewee suggestions of possible answers provided by the interviewer. Sometimes it happens that the interview questions consist of some jargon and the interviewer may try to explain it by means of the prompts.
These two skills need to be carefully used by the interviewer. In one way, the interviewer should not ask a leading question which may have some influence on the interviewee’s response or try to implant his or her thoughts in the subject’s mind to try to follow the interviewer’s preference (Leki and Carson 1997). Also, the interviewer should not interrupt the interviewee’s words and let the interviewees talk as much as possible in order to get productive data, i.e. a purpose of the interview, as a method, is to facilitate maximum expression of interviewees. During this ‘question and answer’ process, it would seem that the sequences of interview talk become longer and longer if this pattern goes on as a natural conversation flow (Coolican 1999). However, it is not only ‘question and answer’ sequences, but also the interviewer tries to explore or exchange information with the subjects and vice versa. Interviews are like a conversation between the interviewee and the interviewer. It is essential that the researcher invites the interviewee and both parties enjoy the contribution in order to make the interview successful (Drever 1995). While the answers of the interviewees might not be expansive enough, the interviewer has a right to ask a further question to elicit more (Silverman 1993: 117). In this study, the researcher tried to follow these suggestions to let the participants talk as much as they wanted to and provide questions at the appropriate time; therefore, the interview time varied and depended on the interests of the subjects’ talks.

The ‘question and answer’ sequences are like an organization of the conversational turn-taking system (Sacks et al, 1974 from Silverman 1993: 131). These turns involve: how the speaker makes a turn related to a previous turn,
what the turn interactionally accomplishes and how the turn relates to a succeeding turn (Silverman ibid.: 131-132). If some troubles occurred in the interview while both parties take turns, the present speaker might try to repair the failure of the sequence by speaking again in response to the preceding utterance (Silverman ibid.: 132). It occasionally happened in the case of the interviews I conducted that a few unpredicted phone calls came in the process of the interviews. Then, the process was disrupted for a few seconds and then re-started. There is a possibility that intervening events may have distracted the subjects from their intended answers. Such interruptions also meant that the topic flow was intermittent rather than consistently sequential. However, phone calls were inevitably part of the natural context in these particular interview situations, as they would have been in ordinary conversation within the same settings.

As Atkinson and Heritage (1984: 3, cited in Silverman 1993: 133) state, “...it is sequences and turns-within-sequences, rather than isolated utterances or sentences, which are the primary units of analysis”. Therefore, it is important to make a turn-taking interview-conversation successful. In this study, both parties (the interviewer and the interviewee) showed careful and full attention, and engaged in the whole interview with enjoyment.

4.11 Reliability and Validity

Reliability pertains to the consistency of the research findings (Kvale 1996: 235). In this study, the researcher strictly followed the same questions in interviewing each subject to avoid introducing any bias. When analyzing the findings, the
researcher used the same categorizing system and procedures to control the analysis. For example:

1. Using three sets of interviews with students at different times during their studies showed that responses made early on in the year could be compared with those made at a later stage. This helped to safeguard against over-reliance on students' initial impressions.

2. The transcripts were read through carefully to check their accuracy and clarity.

3. The interview questions subdivided the transcripts into several topics (e.g. the examination of the subjects' perception of their language learning strategies or reading and speaking), which were connected to the research questions. Then everything relevant to these categories was brought together and put into a table/matrix for comparison.

4. The interview data from both sides (Taiwanese students and British tutors) along with the standard feedback were compared and analyzed together.

The four kinds of research data collected (three sets of interviews with Taiwanese students, one set of interviews with British tutors, the tutors' feedback to the first written assignment and final dissertation and some investigation by the writer of the structures of the students' writing) contribute to the richness and strengthen the validity of the analysis. For instance, the interviews with tutors increased and strengthened the validity of both sides' testimony and tutors' feedback reinforced the statements made by students about difficulties in their
writing. The data from the three sets of interviews with students provided overall coherence to their statements.

4.12 Summary

This chapter has provided the methodological context of this study. Procedures for data collection, the method of interview, and analysis have also been reported. A detailed analysis of the findings will be presented in Part 3, from Chapters 5 to 9.
Part III Analysis of Findings

In this part, there are four chapters. Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the five Taiwanese students' responses from the three sets of interviews. Chapter 7 explores the reflections of the British tutors. Finally, in Chapter 8, there will be a comparison between the views of the Taiwanese students and British tutors.

In Chapters 5 and 6, transcripts of the interviews with each subject are examined in search of salient and recurring themes related to the process of adaptation to new academic discourse in the UK university community. Following the three interviews, the data were analyzed to reveal the individual problems met by each participant during the process.
Chapter 5

First Interviews with the Students

5.1 Introduction to the First Interviews

In order to answer the research questions (p.5-6), the first interview was designed to explore the subjects' first impressions of the British educational culture, their first reaction to the differences embedded in a new environment after arriving in the UK and their comparison of British learning culture to their previous educational background in Taiwan. Through this interview, the feedback from these five Taiwanese subjects provided a clear picture at the early stage of their adaptation.

There were 12 topics illustrated from the first interview questions (Chapter 4.9).

The following table 5-1 shows the arrangements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Table</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>Years of studying English back in Taiwan &amp; what were regarded as the most difficult skills at different stages of English learning</td>
<td>5-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>Teaching styles</td>
<td>5-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10c</td>
<td>Behaviour in class</td>
<td>5-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Reaction to not-understanding of lectures</td>
<td>5-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Academic writing</td>
<td>6-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>Reading &amp; speaking</td>
<td>6-1; 5-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>Other skills of translation &amp; learning new words</td>
<td>6-2; 6-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-26</td>
<td>Perceptions about self &amp; culture</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Ch. 5.2.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-28</td>
<td>Feedback on the research interview</td>
<td>5-7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5-1   Topics listed from the first interview questions
All five subjects finished their undergraduate studies in Taiwan before their Master’s courses in the UK. In the first interview, the feedback from these five subjects revealed their general impression on the teaching styles of Taiwanese and British tutors, the language difficulties and cultural differences.

Most of the subjects had a similar English learning background, age and cultural expectations for learning. Although the differences between them as individuals might vary according to their language proficiency, most of them found difficulties in oral (speaking) interactions within the whole English-speaking environment; some of them could not follow class interactions and the speech of lecturers. They experienced some degree of culture shock but knew how to deal with the effects. Besides, they could recognize the different teaching styles between their home culture and the British one.

5.2 Findings from the First Interviews

There are five parts in this section, consisting of “background information”, “teaching styles”, “language shock & culture shock”, “feedback from the subjects”, and the conclusion. These categories concern the subjects’ initial reaction to their arrival in the UK. Other categories appeared in the first interview questions regarding academic writing and will be discussed later in Chapter 6.

5.2.1 Background Information

In the education system of Taiwan, English is a compulsory subject at both
junior and senior high school (see Chapter 2.4). Each main stage of education lasts 3 years. When students go on to the university phase, some departments still provide General English courses for their students but some do not. It also depends on what degree subject they are doing and how many credits students have to complete.

From the response to the question regarding 'years of studying English' back in Taiwan, answers varied from 6 years up to 11 years. Normally, after their undergraduate study or during that period, if students were preparing to study abroad, they would attend a cram school outside the university privately. Under the intensive training of studying at the cram school, it is hoped that students could bring their English up to the required standard, in order to pass the TOEFL or IELTS test. Some subjects might have counted the time spent studying at cram schools when indicating the time of studying English, as some subjects claimed a longer time than others. Here is the Table 5-2, which covers the background information of these five Taiwanese students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Years of studying English</th>
<th>The most difficult skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td>S + L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine</td>
<td>+9</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faye</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnie</td>
<td>+11</td>
<td>S + L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5-2   The subjects' background information (questions 1-8)

Note: 1. "+" means "more than"

2. "S" stands for "speaking", "L" for "Listening", "R" for "reading", and "W" represents "writing"
From Table 5-2, the interesting difference shows that three subjects (Beth, Elaine, Jenny) did not attend the Language course; only Winnie and Faye did. The Language course was provided by University of Leicester and it was a preparatory course for non-native speakers whose IELTS or TOEFL grades were not up to the entrance requirement for the Master’s course. This means that the English level of Beth, Elaine and Jenny was already up to the standard requirement of their departments, so they did not have to attend the language course; but not in the case of Winnie and Faye.

The duration of the Pre-sessional course is only one month, and it is held a month before the new term starts. The language course lasts generally about three months per stage, and the language course C is held before the pre-sessional course. The Pre-sessional course is a course that provides the teaching of sufficient academic skills for students, who are ready for their academic degree course (including undergraduate and postgraduate study) later on. Focusing on the writing skills for preparing assignments, in the Pre-sessional course, students might be requested to write up a small project or an assignment as the requirement, and later receive feedback from their tutors. There was somehow a difference between the training of the Pre-sessional course and language courses; the former had a more academic focus than the later. Beth and Elaine attended the pre-sessional course but not Winnie and Faye, and Jenny did not attend either the language course or the pre-sessional course. It might suggest that three subjects (Jenny, Winnie, and Faye) might have lacked experience in preparing longer assignments, which most Taiwanese students are not trained
properly to do in their previous English education (see Chapter 2.3).

When answering the 1st interview questions 1-8, they think 'Listening' and
'Speaking' skills are regarded as the most difficult ones during the period while
all subjects were in Taiwan. The reasons given by the subjects for this are: no
contacts with native speakers, the education system only focuses on reading and
writing and gives no opportunities to practise or communicate in English, which
accords with the study of Tse (1987). In chapter 2, it was mentioned that the
official language used by the Taiwanese people is Mandarin Chinese and the
second language is Taiwanese. English is treated as the first priority foreign
language taught in Taiwan and also as a compulsory subject in junior high and
senior high schools. Johnson and Johnson (1998: 132) indicate that “An ESL
situation is one where English is widely used in commerce, administration and
education. It is a foreign language (EFL) in a country where English plays no
such role”. Therefore, it can be hard to find opportunities to use the English
language outside the classroom in Taiwan (Tse 1987, Tsao 1999).

Moreover, students are mostly assessed by written exams for the subject of
English; especially the assessments stress reading and writing (see Chapter 2).
Students get used to writing short sentences and paragraphs for English exam
papers. Since the Taiwanese' assessments are not so often made by oral
examination or listening tests, students inevitably pay more attention to reading
and writing instead of speaking and listening. Given that opportunities to
converse in English language are limited and the schools' emphasis on reading
and writing, not surprisingly speaking and listening are the weaker skills.
At the beginning of the language course C, it was found that the listening skill showed up as the most difficult one for the two subjects (Faye and Winnie) who attended the course, which was the same situation as they had encountered while they were in Taiwan. The reason might be that the subjects could not adapt well, from having very few contacts with an English environment back in Taiwan to immediately being surrounded by English-speakers. For the speaking part, two subjects (Winnie and Faye) suggested that teachers should encourage Taiwanese students to speak out in class because in their language course it was often found that some Taiwanese students were quiet and passive.

During the Pre-sessional course, Beth felt that the ‘listening’ part was the most difficult skill for her because she could not get used to British accents and some tutors tried to correct her American accent, which she seemed to have felt slightly annoyed about. The reason provided for Beth’s American accent is that English taught in Taiwan tends to follow the American model, e.g. people learn American pronunciation and usage from their textbooks. Some Taiwanese students might find it hard to adapt to the British accent at the beginning of staying or studying in the UK.

For Elaine, when starting the Pre-sessional course, the skill she found most difficult was ‘speaking’ because she felt frustrated about not expressing herself well, especially when surrounded by her more fluent non-native classmates. It seems that ‘speaking’ was also the most difficult skill for her when she was studying English in Taiwan. She felt the reason for this was because people in Taiwan do not have enough exposure to English. Therefore, it was hard for her to
cope with an entirely English-speaking environment.

Later, when the subjects moved on to their Master's course, the situation changed somewhat. Two subjects (Jenny and Winnie) found 'writing' was the most difficult skill for them, especially as they needed to write assignments according to the standard conventions of academic writing in Britain. This will be discussed more fully in the next chapter (see Chapter 6.2).

Still, at the stage of her Master's course, Elaine thought 'speaking' was the most difficult skill for her. Elaine was afraid that she could not express her ideas well in class. Two subjects (Beth and Winnie) found that 'reading' was the most difficult skill for them. Beth felt that her reading speed was quite slow and she could not handle so much reading within a short time. Because of time limits, she was afraid that she might not complete the required readings and finish her assignments on time. Winnie thought it was hard for her to read academic writing, especially the difficult vocabulary in the books.

Two subjects (Beth and Faye) found that the listening part was also difficult for them. Beth thought that she could not get used to the different accents of her international lecturers, who spoke with non-British accents. She also found that it was hard to follow the talking speed of radio programmes and TV news. Faye felt that her English proficiency was not good enough and that sometimes she could not understand what was going on in class. However, the fact she thought that she did not have the background knowledge of her subject was also a key issue here.
Combining the above discussion of the skills the subjects considered most difficult, the results show that most subjects encountered similar difficulties in these four skills although individuals varied. The following discussion will now look at their behaviour in class and how they dealt with failure to understand lectures. From questions 10c and 11 in the first set of interviews, Table 5-3 summarises the answers from each subject about their behaviour on the Master’s course and their reaction to not understanding lectures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Behaviour in Class</th>
<th>The Reaction to Not-understanding of Lectures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Takes notes, keeps silent in class</td>
<td>Looks up in the books, do the readings, asks the tutor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine</td>
<td>learns and concentrates, keeps silent in class</td>
<td>do the readings, asks classmate or tutor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>note-taking, translates</td>
<td>writes down the doubts and asks tutors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faye</td>
<td>couldn’t follow the class flow (language problem), not often concentrate, gets distracted easily</td>
<td>do nothing now, but would try to do the preparation before class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnie</td>
<td>Tries to take down Ts’ every word in lessons but sometimes she could not succeed in writing every word of what teachers said and (suggests more handouts from Ts would be helpful), keep silent in lessons but thinking actively in her mind and can follow the flow of the lessons</td>
<td>ask classmates, tries to read books or turns to her books written in Chinese translation; after all is done, if she still doesn’t understand, she gives up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5-3 The subjects’ behaviour in class and their reaction to not-understanding of the lectures (questions 10c + 11)

Note: Ts=teachers; Ss=students

From Table 5-3, the interesting point is that all five subjects keep silent in class, no matter if they think speaking is difficult for them or not. The reply to question 14 (do you speak as much as you want to in the class?) from Table 5-4 provides some reasons for this.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Not fluently, less confidence (face saving), seldom speaks in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine</td>
<td>Passive in class, feels hesitant to speak in the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>Doesn’t speak often; her speaking mood depends on the lecturer’s attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faye</td>
<td>Keeps silent in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnie</td>
<td>Does not know many foreign classmates; only being with the same cultural background classmates(speaking the same native language&lt;br&gt;Does not speak in class: no chance to speak in class; being afraid of not expressing herself well; being afraid of making mistakes because she does not have the background information in her subject (Finance)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5-4  The subjects' thought of their own speaking (question 14)

All five subjects seldom speak in class and they hesitate to express their own ideas in public, which is because of a lack of confidence, being afraid of not expressing themselves well or afraid of losing face through making some mistakes. For Elaine, speaking was the most difficult skill since her Pre-sessional course. She found herself to be passive in class and was also hesitant about speaking in public. For Faye, ‘listening’ was regarded as the most difficult skill when she began the degree course. She found that sometimes she could not understand what teachers said in class; therefore, she could not give an instant reaction to teachers’ questions. Faye and Winnie felt that they did not have enough background knowledge to support their new subject learning and therefore they were afraid of saying the wrong things in class. Jenny and Winnie felt that there was no time for students to express their own ideas in class because the class schedule was heavy and the class size was big. Jenny felt if the lecturer’s attitude was not open enough, she would not take the risk of speaking
out in class. There might be some interesting relation here to their home academic and cultural learning background, resulting from the teacher-centred traditional teaching. In traditional Confucian-heritage culture, it is important to respect teachers' words and not to challenge them (Chan and Drover 1997). The teacher is the main controller of whole-class activity, not students.

One interesting point to mention is that Winnie noted she was grouped only with students of the same ethnic cultural background and did not have much chance to get to know the native speakers and other non-Chinese students. Therefore, she had less chance to practise in English because the same mother tongue could be used in communication, instead of using English for it.

For the note-taking part, three subjects (Beth, Jenny and Winnie) took notes while in class; Jenny even tried to translate the notes into Chinese. Winnie tried to note down every word of the lecturer's but sometimes failed to follow everything up. All subjects tried to think and concentrate in the class but Faye had difficulties in following the class flow and easily got distracted if she could not concentrate fully. She thought it was the problem of her listening comprehension and lack of background information in her subject. Moreover, Winnie suggested that more handouts from the lecturer would have been very helpful for international students, and also simpler expression by teachers might be more effective. This suggests that for some international students written handouts could be helpful for compensating for the inadequacy in their listening comprehension.
From the above discussion, it is very important to instill into learners effective learning strategies in the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing); especially for the students coming from the EFL context. Besides, these postgraduate students' knowledge of previous L1 expectations might affect their studies in the UK, e.g. the expectations might differ widely in different contexts towards the roles of teachers and students. In order to prepare them well for their studies at postgraduate level, they have to be aware of the norms to be expected in British postgraduate courses. In the next section, some points of comparison between British and Taiwanese teaching styles will be explored.

5.2.2 Teaching Styles

Table 5-5 summarises the answers from the five subjects regarding their general ideas about British and Taiwanese teaching styles. This comparison is somewhat unfair as the impression of different teaching styles might reflect the difference between being an undergraduate and a postgraduate. However the writer believes that the question is so framed as to try to transcend this difference. Also some of the courses are similar (e.g. language and pre-sessional), to courses followed in Taiwan, so the postgraduate/undergraduate difference is less likely to distort the findings.
Table 5-5 The students' general impression of British and Taiwanese teaching styles (questions 9-10b)

Note: Ts=teachers; Ss=students

From the replies of all the subjects, the British teacher’s role tends to be like a friend or a guide who could help, give some advice, support, accept criticism and welcome discussion. The class in the postgraduate course tends to be small-sized and student-centred. In order to motivate students to learn, teachers in the UK may try to use different approaches or methods to involve students. As Winnie said “students should learn by themselves and the responsibility of learning is not only on teachers’ side and students should try to solve their problems by themselves”. As a result of this, Winnie felt that teachers in the UK might not care too much about students’ full understanding. Here, the expectations of UK postgraduate students from the UK context might contradict some of her own
ideas on teachers' and students' roles in Taiwan.

Some subjects felt that the class atmosphere was more relaxed compared to the situation in Taiwan. The reason might be that students could get frequent contact with the tutors directly in class and also the class size was small and teachers could give attention to each student.

On the other hand Taiwanese teachers, Jenny thought, were more like parents to students. Under the influence of the Confucian tradition, this creates a type of authoritative behaviour in teachers and the result of this may lead to students' fear of contacting or imposing on teachers. Moreover, with regard to not-understanding of lectures mentioned in Table 5-3, three subjects (Beth, Elaine and Winnie) would turn to the readings first to feel secure, if they did not understand. After consulting the books, if the confusion still existed, they would then ask their classmates for help or later their tutors. Jenny said that she would write down her doubts and then ask the tutors. Faye would just disregard the problem and move on. From the concern of their home academic cultural background and their perception of Taiwanese teachers (see Table 5-5), these subjects regard teachers as an authority or even like parents. They respect this idea and sometimes are afraid of asking teachers questions or for help. Only one subject (Jenny) would ask help from her tutors directly. Asking for help from tutors would be the last choice if they could not find any solution to their doubts and questions, even though they thought British teachers were like friends to them. This might explain their lack of speaking efficiency and reluctance to contact tutors themselves. On the British teachers' side, they may think students
from a Chinese background culture are a bit distant.

Moreover, another reason might be the size of the class in Taiwan. Mostly classes in Taiwan are large, normally from 50 students a class up to 200 students. In order to control and maintain order in the classroom, the class flow tends to be teacher-centred.

In Taiwan, the assessment for the subject of English is normally exam-focused. For English, the Ministry of Education provides certain textbooks for teaching in junior and senior high schools, the contents of which are not often renewed. In order to help students to get high grades in this subject, some teachers normally follow the textbooks, use routine methods and ask students to recite and memorize the contents because it is believed that the exam contents will come out from the textbooks directly. To help students comprehend the contents of the textbooks, teachers often give direct information and try their best to help students understand the textbooks. This might support Winnie's idea that teachers in Taiwan might be more responsible for students' learning, compared with British teachers.

From the above discussion, we can see that the degree of learner's expectations differs in these two cultures, which is related to learner autonomy. On the British side, teachers like to interest students and help them to learn by themselves. The teachers' role is more like that of a helper, a facilitator giving support for students' learning (Cortazzi and Jin 1997: 85). However, on the Taiwanese side, good teachers are expected to be an authority in terms of their knowledge, in
order to help students pass the highly-competitive exams (e.g. the Joint Public Senior High School Entrance Examinations and the Joint University Entrance Examinations) for entry into higher education with a better grade. It has been argued by educational reformers that the emphasis on test-memorization and deference to authority taught in the education system could hamper the growth of students’ creativity and independent thinking. In order to lessen pressure from taking examinations and give more choices for attending higher education, starting in the academic year 2001 some multi-route promotion programs were implemented (http://www.gio.gov.tw/taiwan-website/5-gp/brief/). Some students who were educated before the introduction of these multi-route promotion programs might tend to rely on teachers for knowledge acquisition and be unaware of different expectations by British tutors if they came to England for further study.

As mentioned previously, Winnie felt teachers in Taiwan had more responsibilities because they gave direct information so that the students only needed to follow what teachers said. This suggests that previous learning background did cause some difficulty in adaptation to the different learning environment, in this case the Western learner-centred classroom. Learners who come from teacher-centred learning cultures can feel lost when they lose familiar props.

In addition to this, one interesting point we can find in Beth’s first interview is that she believes that ‘studying is like a custom’ and success will be achieved through her *effort* as much as through autonomous learning. It shows that Beth
was motivated towards her study and some signs of cultural adaptation were significant. Kreber (1998: 84) argues:

educators should encourage learners to exercise their intuition function, and that they can do this by gradually relinquishing their position of power, introducing choices for students, and having them assume more responsibility for their learning.

Therefore, the main issue is how to train students who come from a teacher-centred learning culture to be more self-directed in learning along with this strong motivation. This involves the important issue: learner training. 'Learner training' refers to the awareness-raising of an individual's understanding both of language and of himself or herself as a learner (Johnson and Johnson 1998: 193). The effective learning strategies and training learners for independence and personal autonomy are the key concerns. Therefore, first we should turn to the replies of these five subjects to the question about what makes a good language learner, which relates to the key issue of autonomy. For question 22 (what kinds of characteristics do you think a good language learner should have?), the reply from the five subjects is as follows:
Table 5-6  Characteristics of a good language learner

It can be found that ‘motivated’, ‘study hard’, ‘practise’, ‘not lazy’, ‘endurance’, ‘create his/her own English-speaking environment’ or ‘exposure to the English-speaking environment’, ‘not afraid of losing face’ recurred in the replies of the five subjects. These answers provide the background to self-directed learning with regard to learner autonomy. Again, it can be found that they believe ‘studying hard’, ‘practice makes perfect’, ‘not being lazy’ and ‘keeping high willpower and endurance’ will lead to success. However, being successful in learning involves other factors; ‘effort’ here is what is needed but other related factors should be taken into consideration (e.g. appropriate learning skills, familiarity with the learning culture). It suggests that if a language learner autonomously monitors how he/she learns, he/she will become a better language learner. Three subjects said that ‘not afraid of losing his/her own face’, ‘trying to be brave’ show a sign of individualism. Being a person who comes from a collectivistic culture, being aware of the differences would be important.

In the next section we will discuss the perceptions of these five subjects
concerning "language shock" and "culture shock" and how to overcome these experiences.

5.2.3 Language Shock and Culture Shock

Elaine mentioned that "culture shock and language shock are related". This implies that if learners have better language ability, they may suffer less shock in the different culture. A better handling of communication and language use is part of what people need to achieve in order to adapt to cross-cultural differences. If bad management occurs, some potential misunderstandings could happen (Cushner and Brislin 1996: 40). Most of the subjects felt that life in the UK was different from that in Taiwan. They believed that being open-minded, flexible, and respectful of the differences and trying to accept the differences are the ways to overcome these problems.

Winnie mentioned that she did not get used to British English because English in Taiwan was based on the American system, which she was familiar with. This accords with the reaction of Beth previously. She was sometimes afraid that she had to repeat her words a second time if others did not understand, which revealed her lack of confidence in spoken English. She also suggested learning English alongside British culture would be helpful to overcome the shock. She felt that the shock itself could give learners more stimulus and help them to endure the frustration, making people stronger. She also believed that working hard could overcome the shock and people should build up their home cultural identity and values before going abroad.
5.2.4 Feedback from the Subjects

The table below lists the feedback on the research interview from the five subjects (i.e. answers to question 27 and 28 in the first interview).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Q. 27. Do you have any ideas/opinions about the research interview?</th>
<th>Q. 28. Can you tell me your impressions of this interview (as a research interview)? Purpose? Outcome? Have you told me what I want to know? Why? If not, why not?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Doubts about not being shown the questions in advance</td>
<td>Figured out the purpose of the research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figured out the purpose of the research</td>
<td>Asks the interviewer to slow down her talking speed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine</td>
<td>Prefers questionnaires to interviews (the data analysis might be easier)</td>
<td>Suggests showing the questions in advance for more and complete answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>Figures out the purpose of the research</td>
<td>Hopes that the university will notice and make some adjustments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faye</td>
<td>Suggests giving interviewees the questions before the interviews</td>
<td>Prompts may mislead, so let the interviewees think first before prompts are given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnie</td>
<td>The suggestion is to let the experience and problems of studying and living in the UK be known to educational organizers/teachers either in Taiwan or in the UK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5-7 Feedback on the research interview

Three subjects (Beth, Elaine and Faye) suggested that the researcher should have showed them the interview questions in advance so that they could produce well-thought-out answers. Elaine felt that collecting data from questionnaires might be easier for analysis. Jenny and Winnie expected that the result of this research would be noted by the university and educational organizers or teachers either in Taiwan or in the UK could do something about the issues in order to help new students coming to study in the UK.
5.2.5 Conclusion

During this orientation stage, all students needed some assistance. For Taiwanese learners of English studying in the UK, some complex factors might need to be considered to do with adjustment, motivation and achievement.

Winnie said that “you got a good grade before in English of Taiwan educational system which does not mean that you could easily survive in the UK academic life”. This remark revealed some initial difficulties in UK academic life which Taiwanese students may encounter after leaving their home country. In part these difficulties were linguistic relating to the four skills, but they were also due to different conventions and expectations in a different context (Littlewood 2000: 32). They need to make some efforts to be familiar with these in order to adjust well to a different learning culture.

Some subjects felt that Taiwanese teachers tend to give more direct information and pay more attention to students’ full understanding of the session. Compared to this, British tutors give more freedom to learners for independent learning. It is expected that learning responsibility was not only on the teachers’ side in the UK but students’ responsibility was also required. More emphasis should be placed on students’ independence and responsibility for decision-making (Bould 1988: 17). This will be discussed later in Chapter 7.

With regard to these different cultural expectations about the roles of both parties (the British tutors and Taiwanese students), it is necessary for both tutors and students to recognize the possible difference between the two learning cultures.
Further complexities include training students from the Chinese culture to be more self-directed and to be responsible in their learning (Biggs 1994; Littlewood 1999) and to be familiar with the conventions required in their academic studies.

Moreover, in this study the subjects lack adequate language (McClure 2001) and study skills for their postgraduate courses and show timidity in spoken English particularly. The efficient training of study skills could help them prepare for their postgraduate course to overcome these difficulties. Therefore it is an important issue for teachers to be sensitive and supportive (since adaptation might need some time), give full instruction on language learning skills and clear direction as to what would be expected in their postgraduate study before learners start their course. Learners should know what to expect before they actually start the course. These skills and preparation might be taught in a pre-sessional course or language courses; however, more emphasis at postgraduate level related to the subject-specific context might be required. Such emphasis would be helpful for students from Taiwan to learn these UK academic skills in order to adapt more successfully, instead of using their previous learning skills for surviving.

For British teachers, it might be better for them to have an awareness of the differences between these two parties. With the high regard for the traditional teacher authority role rooted in Chinese/Taiwanese learners, one interpretation might be that Chinese/Taiwanese students are afraid of showing what they perceive or asking for help either in their life or study in the UK. Therefore, for
British teachers, it might be better to deal with it by allowing enough time for their adaptation, and a greater knowledge of the learners' home culture might be necessary.

Besides the affective symptoms (e.g. shock of the new) experienced by these students in the different learning context, the success of their studies plays a supremely important role for these students because their postgraduate degrees will be helpful for their future career achievement. Assessments of the five subjects' degree courses were measured mostly by regular academic assignments. In the next two chapters, I will discuss how the subjects conducted their process of academic writing under the requirement of academic conventions. Firstly, the data from the first set of interviews concerning the subjects' academic writing and reading preparation will be reviewed. Then the second set of interviews data (Chapter 6.2) will be discussed to suggest how these five subjects had produced their first required assignment and how they felt about it after the feedback on the first assignment was received before the discussion of the third interviews (Chapter 7).
Chapter 6

The Second Interviews with the Students

6.1 Introduction

After examining the subjects' background information, the comparison of different teaching styles within two cultures, the reaction to the culture shock and language shock, and their feedback towards this study (as discussed in the previous chapter), this chapter will present the findings from the second interviews. Since all subjects were studying for Master's degree, most of the course assessments were required to be written work. Therefore, questions in the second and third interviews (Chapter 7) focus on their preparation for the first assignment and final dissertation with respect to the written process relating to L2 literacy (English) and their reflection on L1 (Chinese).

6.2 Findings from the Second Interviews

The second interview data are categorised below into seven "categories", which are "topic chosen for the first assignment", "reading and preparation", "translation", "academic writing", "the process of writing", "quotation", and "editing strategies and tutors' feedback" (Chapter 6.2.1 to 6.2.7) before the conclusion (6.2.8).
6.2.1 Topic Chosen for the First Assignment

Beth and Elaine chose a topic for their first assignment related to their previous work experience. Beth had read some relevant information that was related to her first assignment topic. The topic of Elaine's first assignment was to find the solution to the English-speaking problem among Taiwanese students because she thought speaking was the weakest skill among Taiwanese students and also for herself.

Three subjects (Beth, Jenny and Faye) chose their topics because they found the topic was interesting and easier for composition purposes. It is understandable that subjects might not have been confident in writing their first assignment when they first came to write a long composition. Four subjects (Beth, Jenny, Faye and Winnie) chose their topics from the list, which was provided by their tutors. Beth and Jenny were studying in the same course although Jenny's response did not show that the tutor provided a topic list. In Winnie's case, the tutor asked students to analyze three charts as the first assignment and also gave students instruction on how to analyze the project.

For Question 2 (where did you get your ideas to write?), the response from the five subjects includes 'from the reading list', 'from some websites or some relevant books', 'discussion with the tutor or coursemates', and 'follow the tutor's instructions'. Only Faye started writing her first assignment a week before the deadline and she simply read some Chinese articles and translated some of the main concepts in them into English. She said "for the first essay, I tried to
read articles and books widely before I wrote it but it is not a good idea”. She initially wanted to read every book and then got her own idea for the first assignment but there was not enough time for her. This situation illustrates that among many Chinese it is regarded as respectful to acquire as much background knowledge as possible (Bond 1991). One other reason to support Faye’s comments is that it might be the consequence of the strong competition in examination-oriented systems in Taiwanese society. If students do not acquire a broad knowledge of the resources, they are not able to answer detailed questions in demanding exams.

The following part examines how the five subjects do their reading preparation according to their replies from the first interview question 13.

6.2.2 Reading Preparation and Learning New Words

In the 2nd interview, questions 3 to 8 concern what the five subjects said about their reading and preparation for their first assignment and questions 16-17 concern their ways of learning new words. Before moving on to this aspect, Table 6-1 of the 1st interview lists the responses of the five subjects concerning Questions 13b to 13e (relating to the beginning of their postgraduate course) and questions 16 to 17.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Learning New Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Slowly, difficult to understand the theory</td>
<td>Motivated (makes her own dictionary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine</td>
<td>Skim: for supportive statements Scan: for the specific statements</td>
<td>Only skimming and reads several times to help to memorize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>British books are more difficult than American ones</td>
<td>Such as terminology, puts them into practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faye</td>
<td>Reading takes time and patience; she reads a couple of times to improve her comprehension</td>
<td>Learn new words from the articles; reads more times to help to memorize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnie</td>
<td>Difficult to understand the contents Do not know enough vocabulary Skim at the beginning then scan to get unknown words translates and guesses unknown words look up the unknown words and note them down (including adjectives, nouns, etc.) after this process, she would review these unknown words sometimes her own translation could not help the comprehension but she could get the impression of the contents after the reading sometimes she would rely on Chinese translation books to help with the comprehension afraid of using English to express her own ideas in exams</td>
<td>would look up unknown words but does not have time to memorize If the words appear often, she would remember puts the words into practice which will help memorization Previously in Taiwan: would write and pronounce the new words to help memorization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6-1  The subjects’ reading (Q. 13b-13e) & learning new words (Q. 16-17)

At the beginning of preparation for their first assignments, most of the subjects felt they had slow reading speed, poor reading comprehension, poor familiarity with reading skills (skimming and scanning) and difficult vocabulary or new words from the textbooks to cope with. Some subjects relied on their L1 for translation for boosting more comprehension of L2 readings (English).
Beth found that she read slowly and Faye needed more time and patience for her reading because she needed to read a couple of times for satisfactory comprehension. Four subjects (Beth, Jenny, Faye and Winnie) found some difficulty in their subject readings; especially Jenny who found British books were more difficult than American ones. Winnie also sensed that she did not know enough vocabulary to support her reading comprehension. Two subjects (Elaine and Winnie) mainly mentioned they used the skills of skimming and scanning for their readings. An interesting point is that Elaine only mentioned two reading skills (skimming and scanning) she used but it seems that reading is not a major difficulty in her Master’s course. This could be related to her IELTS score, the highest among these participants, which showed her advanced language proficiency.

Winnie used the scanning skill for unknown words but not for the specific keywords. For Winnie, she would guess the unknown words first. If she could not guess the meaning of unknown words correctly, she would try to look up all these unknown words in an English-Chinese dictionary. Then she would go back to the main reading and read again with better comprehension. It seems that Winnie was unable to read without knowing every word of her reading. Unknown words probably increase her fears of miscomprehension. This is understandable because the strong competition in the examination system in Taiwan produces a reading style of examining every word in fine detail. Some students may think that if they cannot understand the meaning of unknown words, they probably will not achieve full comprehension of texts and
consequently might not pass the exams. Thus, intensive and detailed reading may reinforce students’ sense of security in learning.

The most significant comment by Winnie was that she relied on Chinese translation books to help with her reading comprehension. She felt that she relied on the Chinese translation books too much; therefore, she was afraid of switching back to English and felt reluctant to use English for writing the exam papers.

Most of the subjects tried to review the new words or terminology several times in order to help with memorization or put these new words into practice. Beth even made her own new-word-dictionary, which showed her learning motivation.

The above discussion concerns how the five subjects reacted to reading at the beginning of their Master’s course and managed with learning new words. When asked what reading preparation they did at a later stage for their first assignment, all five subjects made the outline first for starting their first assignments but at different stages (some made outlines before reading and some after).

Beth said she made the outline first before reading because she had gathered some ideas about the topic already from her previous work experience. When she read, she skimmed the title or sub-titles of every book or article needed and picked the relevant titles and then read the text exactly. In Elaine’s case, she usually did the skimming then wrote the outline. Then she read the information thoroughly and clearly about what she wanted to write and collected the related resources from her readings to put into the sections of her outline.
Jenny also wrote an outline first and discussed the outline with her tutor. She tried to finish most of the reading before she wrote. An interesting point is that she would digest her readings and write notes down in Chinese (her L1). Then before she wrote the first assignment, she switched from Chinese to English. She first translated the key statements into Chinese, adding “so sometimes it is not exactly what the author mean[s], because I translated [them] by my own thinking”. When the researcher asked why she used translation, she replied: “cause I can understand it very quickly because it is my own language”. This may be interpreted as suggesting that Jenny still relied on her mother tongue to help with her L2 comprehension.

In Faye’s case, she would make the outline first and put the contents into the outline, which was the same as for the above mentioned subjects. However, after she tried to read everything before she started to write her first assignment, she found that “it is not a good idea and time is not enough”. Furthermore, she added: “I found the better way is writing, typing on the computer and reading altogether at the same time”. This differs from the reading preparation of the other subjects who would comprehend the reading and write the outline for the assignments. It seems that Faye liked to read widely to get the broad theme from the resources but time was limited. For her first assignment, she did not have enough time to do more reading; therefore she just continued to write extensively and later put the linking words in or made some changes in her first assignment. Therefore, she finished her first assignment within the short period of time (only a week). Faye also mentioned her difficulty with constructing the outline, which was her
main problem. Reading comprehension was hard for her as well and often she could not understand well the first time; therefore, she needed to re-read a couple of times to improve her comprehension. She was able to skim a text, but found scanning difficult, being unable to spot keywords quickly.

Faye thought taking more notes might be helpful for her reading preparation because previously she only took a few notes which might not be adequate for representing the key statements. Winnie wrote key notes on several pieces of paper and then put these individual papers back into the pages of the book to indicate where the notes came from.

For Winnie's preparation for her first assignment, she preferred systematic writing: that is, she made an outline first before she wrote. In her first assignment, she needed to analyze three financial charts following the tutor's instructions. She read first about how to analyze them before writing and then wrote and read together. At the beginning of her reading preparation, she would translate the notes into Chinese and write them down and then later she would try to take notes in English.

Concerning note-taking (the 2nd set of interview question 7: what sort of notes? In the way of Chinese or English?), only Elaine made notes in English but four other subjects (Beth, Jenny, Faye and Winnie) more or less relied on their L1 by translating their notes into Chinese to help with their reading comprehension which revealed that they were not confident using English solely for taking notes. Next, the translation part will be discussed.
6.2.3 Translation

For the translation part, the situation can be seen through Table 6-2 for the 1st interview question 15 ("Do you translate from Chinese in your head and when?").

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Not for daily dialogues but for lectures and complex talks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine</td>
<td>N/A (prefers using English logic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>Very often, it happens in tutorials or speaking in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faye</td>
<td>Only for academic uses not for daily talks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnie</td>
<td>Translation in reading</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6-2 Translation used by these subjects (question 15)

From the above table we can see that Elaine was the only subject who preferred thinking in the logic of English and not using translation. In her academic background, she got the full score on her TOEFL test for entry to her Master’s course. Therefore, she showed a better proficiency level in English than the other four subjects. The other four subjects still relied on translation often, especially for L2 academic use. However, interestingly, they did not use it for normal and easy everyday conversations.

6.2.4 Academic Writing

After the discussion of the five subjects in terms of their reading preparation, I shall now move on to the academic writing part: what they thought of academic writing at the beginning of their Master’s course (see the following Table 6-3).
Table 6-3  The subjects’ thoughts on academic writing at the beginning of their Master’s course

At the beginning of the degree course, Beth found that academic writing was not so difficult for her as long as she knew its rules. Faye also knew how to structure academic writing. Beth and Elaine thought that doing more writing would improve their skills. For Elaine, she read first and got information to support the arguments. She found that building up the argument and choosing the right words to express her ideas in English academic writing were the difficult parts for her and it was also important to notice the linking between paragraphs.
Consequently, she gave clear signposting for cohesion between paragraphs when doing academic writing. Winnie had the same problem as Elaine, finding difficulties with formulating ideas to support the arguments.

Jenny and Faye both mentioned that in Taiwan it is not necessary to note references in Chinese writing and direct quotes without references are often found. Jenny said that in the British system, it is necessary for writers to find references to support their ideas. Later, Jenny again mentioned that “in Taiwan, at least during my undergraduate studies, teachers didn’t ask us to find many references, they preferred to hear our own opinions. But here they ask everything, they ask support for everything so it is quite different, sometimes it is quite difficult”. Because of needing to find supporting references for the assignments, reading became time-consuming for Elaine, and she was afraid that she could not finish the assignment on time.

It is worth noting that Winnie said that she had learnt academic writing in a preparatory course taught by British tutors in Taiwan before going to England. This preparatory course was for students who wished to study abroad. She would follow the structure of ‘situation-problem-evaluation-conclusion’ to do academic writing in English instead of using the Chinese way ‘qi-cheng-zhuan-he’ for English academic writing. It is also noticeable that she did not learn how to do English academic writing in her previous English learning experience in Taiwan’s compulsory education system. From the first interview, it was mentioned that her English-learning background in Taiwan consisted of 11 years of study. We do not know how the other four subjects learnt how to do English
academic writing in their previous English learning experience in the Taiwanese education system. Nevertheless, from some subjects' responses that some difficulties with English academic writing did indeed exist, we can assume that the ways of doing English academic writing might not have been emphasized in their previous English-learning experiences in Taiwan. As a consequence of this, some students may have encountered some difficulties in English academic writing when they first attempted assignment work.

Turning to the category "Reflection on Experience" and specifically to the second interview question 23 ("Do you approach the task of writing in English differently from the way you approach it in Chinese?"), we can observe the lists of more discussion about the five subjects' difficulties with their first English academic essay in their Master's course. The researcher asked the subjects if the way of writing in Chinese was different from that in English. When replying to this question, Beth was not sure if her reply was right for Chinese writing but she could point out some differences between Chinese and English writing styles. Elaine also held the same attitude because she had not written this 'English' type of assignment before in Chinese. It seemed difficult for Beth and Elaine to remember their previous writing experience in Chinese. They were not sure about the exact way of constructing Chinese assignments. Elaine and Winnie felt that, when writing in Chinese, they would feel more confident in choosing the right words to express themselves because they had a better command of L1. Winnie found that her difficulty in English writing was also with the use of appropriate academic words, making the sentences well presented. Elaine
mentioned that after knowing how to write in English academic writing, she would use the English way to write the outline first for her Chinese essays if she encountered the same topic in the future.

In contrast to Winnie who mentioned in the previous reply that she would use the way of ‘situation-problem-evaluation-conclusion’ for her English essay construction, Jenny replied that she would use the Chinese way ‘qi-cheng-zhuan-he’ for writing her English essays. She said:

“it is like a logic, even if you use another kind of language, you can’t change the logic. So normally I do like to start the definition of the topic, or introduction to what I am going to discuss, then my opinion, then the opinion against mine, I tried to discuss the both sides and finally the conclusion. Normally, I do like that”.

From the reply, we can see that some subjects clearly noticed the structure of English “problem-solution” pattern but some still did not. There are of course other patterns (e.g. definition, description, classification, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, analysis, and synthesis) in English writing (Grabe and Kaplan 1996: 352). However, in this study, the most widely taught pattern of problem-solution was mainly focused on and compared with the four-part Chinese pattern (qi-cheng-zhuan-he).

Winnie also said that when she wrote in Chinese, she did not need to write the outline first and she felt her way of writing English was more systematic than in Chinese. Faye mentioned that it was very helpful to have the outline first when
she wrote her assignments but it was also difficult for her to construct the outline. The following is a discussion of the “process of writing” category (referring to the 2nd interview questions 9 to 11).

6.2.5 The Process of Writing

The five subjects preferred formulating the outline first before they started to write. Three subjects (Beth, Elaine and Jenny) discussed their outlines with their tutor but Faye and Winnie only discussed them with their friends or course mates. Faye said she did not have time to talk with her tutor. Winnie seldom asked the tutor because she was afraid of giving the tutor a bad impression of not studying hard. Therefore, Winnie preferred finishing her reading first and if she could not get helpful suggestions from her course mates, she might only then turn to her tutors. However, she tended to avoid it if she could. This situation may indicate that Taiwanese students from a Chinese culture may keep a certain distance between them and authority figures (teachers) to maintain face, a point which was discussed in Chapter 5.2.2.

The quote from Jenny on page 115 corresponds to the discussion of academic writing (referring to the 1st interview question 12) in which four subjects had difficulties with finding references to support the arguments. Elaine thought her main writing difficulties were choosing a topic and building up the main argument because she only did ‘reporting’ in her previous Chinese writing and did not include her own arguments. It can be seen (Todd 1997: 181) that in Chinese writing it is allowable to use personal ideas or those of unnamed others.
without supporting references. Jenny's comment supports this statement and she mentioned that "it is common to see one's own critical evaluation in Chinese writings without attaching references for supporting". From the above discussion of academic writing and the responses of the five subjects to question 12 in the first interview, it seemed that it was difficult for these subjects to construct their own arguments because they had not been asked to do so in their previous educational background.

Some people may claim that in Chinese students' academic writing in English it is difficult to find the flow of arguments and not easy to follow them. However, others suggest that Chinese writers tend to make indirect criticism (Todd 1997: 181) such as 'it is worthwhile to reconsider and discuss' instead of claiming directly to criticize and analyse.

The following section discusses how the five subjects reacted to the question about 'quotation' (2\textsuperscript{nd} interview questions 12-14).

\textbf{6.2.6 Quotation}

When the researcher asked the question "do you like quoting?", three subjects (Beth, Jenny and Winnie) said that they did not like direct quoting but Faye liked it because it could help increase with the word count to achieve the word requirement of assignments. Jenny and Winnie mentioned that if time was limited, it would be convenient to quote directly. The reason for Beth, Elaine and Jenny using direct quoting was to support their argument powerfully, to show the tutors how much reading they had done. They felt that if they quoted the author's
original words, their articles would seem more persuasive, especially since they could not themselves make a better presentation of the original ideas. Winnie sometimes did not understand what an author meant, but believed it to be important. She would therefore always directly quote, rather than paraphrase.

Elaine found, however, that she used less and less direct quoting after the first assignment and understood from the comments of her tutors it was not necessary to use lots of quotes. Therefore, she would paraphrase the source to support her argument without direct quotation. Elaine mentioned that she was previously afraid of using paraphrasing because she might miss some points. After the first assignment, however, she seemed to grow in confidence in the use of paraphrasing. Winnie also preferred paraphrasing to direct quotation. The other three subjects did not mention whether they used paraphrasing or not.

All subjects clearly indicated they would acknowledge quotations when writing academic assignments in English. In the previous discussion, some subjects mentioned that it was common to encounter some main arguments in Chinese writing without any references being noted. If some Chinese learners of English were not familiar with the importance of acknowledgement by references, direct quotation without acknowledgement would cause a problem in their English academic writing. A leading issue is the question of plagiarism, which is significantly regarded as cheating in the West academic context. In Beth's response to question 15 (did you ask somebody to check your grammar, vocabulary, or presentation before you handed your assignment in? what sort of advice/feedback was given?) in the 2nd set of interview, she mentioned that the
language tutor felt that some of her writing was plagiarized from somebody else's work. Because Beth thought she had paraphrased it, she did not need to acknowledge its source. However, the language tutor said "he could tell the first half of the sentence came from her own writing but the rest of it came from the book". It can be seen from Beth's situation that she still was not familiar with the correct use of paraphrasing skills.

6.2.7 Editing Strategies & Tutors' Feedback

Regarding the question of 'editing strategies', all subjects used the spell-checker and grammar-checker of the computer but two subjects (Beth and Winnie) did not think the grammar-checker was helpful.

Finally, after their first assignments had been marked, the feedback sheet was given to these five subjects. The researcher also asked for a copy of each subjects' feedback sheets in order to compare the tutors' suggestion on their written work with the subjects own reflections. All five subjects said they read through the feedback carefully when they first received it. All five subjects understood the feedback, but Beth, Faye and Winnie made some criticism of it. The feedback sheet of the four subjects (Beth, Elaine, Jenny, and Faye) was typed with grades on; only Winnie's feedback sheet was hand-written with the grade on.

Beth was not pleased with the feedback given by her tutor. The first marker said that her bibliography was inadequately narrow but Beth said that she had read almost everything on her reading list. Her first marker felt that Beth needed to
follow instructions and read the essay question very carefully before planning her essay; otherwise, the essay question would not be answered fully. Beth felt upset and confused about this but she let the situation remain unresolved and had lacked the courage to ask her assignment markers for clarification.

Faye and Winnie found that sometimes their tutors' feedback handwriting was difficult to understand and again they did not ask for clarification. For Faye, her department feedback sheet included five sections of assessment, which were 'planning', 'research', 'analysis', 'communication', and 'conclusion'. The levels used for these five sections were 'excellent', 'very good', 'good', 'fair' or 'poor' and usually the tutor would put an asterisk mark next to each comment category and then give brief feedback below. Faye had three asterisk marks on 'good' category of the aspects of 'planning', 'research', 'analysis'; two 'fair' asterisk marks on the parts of 'communication' and 'conclusion'. She was not sure what the standard was and the comment was brief so she just had a glance at it, then forgot about it afterwards, and she never read the feedback again. She felt that this kind of feedback was not helpful for her later assignments. Her tutor gave a comment on her first assignment that "this essay is a good introduction to the topic...some of the discussion and analysis could be further developed". She felt happy about this initial comment of "a good introduction to the topic" but afterwards found her assignment mark was not regarded as that good compared to other classmates' grades. She felt that British tutors often gave students positive feedback, probably for encouragement; however, this usually made her confused about the standard required.
Winnie felt that it was hard for her to present her personal opinions in appropriate ways. In this assignment, she quoted some references from books and the tutor said “this is a good piece of summary”. She thought if she gave her own personal opinions, some of them would be regarded as being wrong by the tutors. It was hard for her to balance these two apparently contradictory perspectives and also showed that Winnie had no clue how to handle critical arguments. Consequently, she preferred to write the standard summary without her personal viewpoints. Moreover, she found the feedback was of no use because she felt that a short response was sometimes given without rigorous attention to her work.

Elaine’s first assignment feedback was genuinely good with a grade of B+. However, her tutor commented that there were no references to support some of her claims and she needed to make some arguments clearer. This shows that Elaine might need more supporting details for her arguments in order to allow the reader to understand her points. She would follow her tutor’s feedback and make sure it did not happen again in subsequent assignments. Because of well-written and clear feedback, she felt that the feedback was always useful to help not only with the topic construction but also had a positive influence on her academic writing.

Jenny’s tutor mentioned that for Jenny’s first assignment, some usage of English made him confused. Also mentioned were “lack of coherent argument”, “unclear argument”, “lack of some previous literature support for argument”, and “some wrong placement of bibliography”. She said that “I think I have to improve my
English”. From the previous discussion, Jenny had relied on translation and used it for her reading and note-taking because it made her feel comfortable using L1 when learning L2. However, some mistakes might have occurred during the code-switching process between L1 (Mandarin Chinese) to L2 English writing which might have caused confusion in word usage. She felt that her tutor read through her assignment with care but she did not totally agree with some of the feedback given.

6.2.8 Conclusion

From the tutors’ feedback sheets, one subject (Faye) felt that it was easy to find good comments given by the British tutors at the beginning of the feedback, which sometimes made people confused as to the real standard they had reached. From Elaine’s and Jenny’s feedback sheets, “lack of references supporting the arguments” and “unclear arguments” simultaneously appeared, which accorded with the subjects’ difficulties in making their own arguments and finding support in available literature. Besides, choosing the right words in order to express one’s own ideas in L2 or the use of appropriate L2 academic words seemed quite difficult for them, especially as four out of five subjects relied on their L1 for taking notes and translation to help with their L2 reading comprehension. Most of the subjects experienced anxiety about their slow reading speed, difficulty with the subject vocabulary from the textbooks, unfamiliarity with reading skills and some with poor reading comprehension when they studied their textbooks.

For the academic writing skills, still some subjects preferred using direct
quotation instead of paraphrasing because some of them might not be able to fully comprehend the meaning of a text or might be afraid of losing the original meaning of it. When starting to write their first assignments, some of them had difficulty in creating an outline plan, which they seldom did in their L1 writing. This unfamiliar L2 writing system was different and also difficult for these students from Taiwan since they had never or seldom trained before in this way in their English classes back home. However, from the interview data they seemed to become aware, gradually, of the differences and to try to minimize the difficulties in their own way.
Chapter 7

Findings from the Third Interviews with the Students

After the previous discussion of difficulties encountered by these five subjects when they prepared their first assignments, in this section the findings from the third set of interviews will be presented following the 8 thematic categories mentioned below. All five subjects will be examined across the 8 themes (Chapter 7.1 to 7.8) to see whether any changes occurred between the periods when each subject prepared her first assignment (the second interview) and the time of the final dissertation (the third interview).

7.1 Topic Chosen for the Dissertation

First, Beth chose a topic for her dissertation which was related to her previous work experience in a radio station and also her own personal interest in classical music. Elaine’s dissertation topic was related to her previous teaching experience in Taiwan and was expanded from one of her previous assignments. The reason for Jenny to choose the presidential election in Taiwan for her dissertation topic was that she was familiar with Taiwan’s cultural background and political system, which she thought might be easy for her to handle. Faye tried to read previous dissertations done by seniors before making her decision about her own dissertation topic. She came up with one topic, initially, but her supervisor thought the topic was not significant enough for the dissertation and this view was also held in Taiwan, so she followed her supervisor’s suggestion to change
her initial topic. Winnie chose her dissertation topic because it was related to her interests, and the topic also provided easy access to a database that she could manage well.

Beth acquired the ideas for her dissertation from books, research interviews and internet searches. This time, in writing up her dissertation, Beth chose a topic relating to her personal interests which was somewhat different from her first assignment topic, when she chose an easier one for composition purposes. This shows that she had more confidence in writing up the dissertation topic. Elaine acquired her ideas for the dissertation both from her work experience as an English teacher in Taiwan and some information from her previous assignments. Jenny found the information from some websites supporting her topic on the presidential election in Taiwan and discussed it with her tutors who specialized in advertising and politics.

Because her dissertation topic was new and resources for it were limited, it was not easy for Faye to find references. She felt that it was also hard to define her topic and initially she did not know how to construct and organize her dissertation. Later, she found a book which provided some definition on her topic that she could easily follow up. Winnie tried to read through the articles written in English and Chinese and some dissertations written by other people in order to get more information.

Most of the subjects mentioned that they had never written such a big project before in Taiwan. For them, it was still a difficult transition to start writing their
dissertations although they had by now written several assignments in the courses. Moreover, if readings supporting their dissertation theme were limited, they would encounter more problems in writing up. Next, I will discuss each subject's responses to reading and preparation.

7.2 Reading & Preparation Revisited

In the third interview, Beth showed her familiarity with reading skills and used L2 for note taking and rewriting.

In the first interview, when Beth started her postgraduate course, she found reading difficult (see Table 5-2). At the beginning of her MA course, Beth was afraid of not managing to complete the required readings in order to finish her assignments on time, her reading speed being quite slow. By that time, it seemed that Beth had not acquired sufficient reading skills. However, by the time she wrote up her dissertation, she seemed to handle her readings better without this complaint. She mentioned in the third interview that she used skimming skills for the related information and even checked the index to find specific key words for finding more resources. She did not previously mention checking the index in the second interview for her first assignment.

When the researcher asked what the problems were in writing her dissertation, she mentioned that some complex terminology in her subject readings hindered her reading comprehension. She also said "...if the structure of the sentences are very difficult, I really don't know how to rewrite it in my own words, in my style". Therefore, it could be found that she did not feel competent in
paraphrasing advanced readings. This was the main problem in fact when she transmitted her ideas from reading to writing.

Beth made notes while reading but this time she took most notes in English including the outline construction; however, in her second interview for preparing the first assignment, she had mentioned that she mostly used English to make notes but the outline was made in Chinese. For question 8 (what do you do with notes?) of the third interview, she mentioned that she would rewrite the notes immediately in her own style of writing and put them into each section of the dissertation. If the readings were not difficult to understand, she would rewrite them in her own words; but if not, for the complicated and most important notes, she would quote them directly. In her second interview, she had only mentioned classifying the notes into several kinds of categories without rewriting them. It seemed that Beth now had more confidence in using her own words to reflect her L2 readings in notes.

In Elaine’s case, she skimmed all readings first and chose the topic from these readings and made the outline first before writing up her dissertation. This was similar to the way she prepared her first assignment. She felt that at the beginning of writing her dissertation, it was hard for her to construct her ideas about the topic. It seemed that making a choice about the topic might be the most difficult part for her after reading and the same situation had also applied when she prepared her first assignment. To write up her dissertation as a big project, she would make a plan about roughly how many words a day she needed to write in order to finish her dissertation on time. If she could not finish the daily target,
she would feel worried. This was also noted in the category of "problems in dissertation writing" that she felt pressurised by time. From this point of view, it can be seen that Elaine was an autonomous writer, responsible for her writing and clearly aware of what she needed to do in order to finish her dissertation on time. In her dissertation, she finished the chapter on data analysis first because then it would be easier to write the literature review chapter after the findings because both chapters would easily be connected. She made notes in English the same as she did in writing her first assignment. The interesting point is that she would now give her notes from the reading preparation short topic-related headings and later she would paste these into her dissertation outline for reference.

Like Beth, Jenny did not read everything before writing. She mentioned that "to be honest, till the last day, the day before handing in, I still tried to find some reference because I need something to support my point". She relied on her supervisor's feedback on her dissertation content. She made an outline first and then when she read she typed the notes using the computer. This time, she made notes in English, which was different from when she did her first assignment. The reason was "if you have to translate from English into Chinese, then translate it back again, sometimes the meaning would be twisted during the translation so I don't want to lose the real meaning of it". It seemed that Jenny oriented herself in order to have the input and output in the same language.

Faye, again, at the beginning of writing up her dissertation, tried to read through all books borrowed from the library, which was the same situation that occurred
when she prepared her first assignment. This did not work out again because she felt that this would take so much time and she would easily forget what she had read and was also not good at organizing. She mentioned that she still could not immediately understand whole English paragraphs just by skimming them. From this stage, it can be found that Faye still did not have enough competence in her reading skills (such as skimming and scanning skills) to apply them properly to her own reading. The same situation could be found when she did her first assignment. It seemed that Faye preferred detailed readings and this probably came from her previous educational background in Taiwan where she had to read closely and learnt by this method in order to survive the rigorous exam system (as discussed in the previous chapter).

For note-taking, Faye used both languages (English and Chinese) to make notes. If she could understand clearly what the author indicated, she would make notes in English and give them topic headings, which was similar to Elaine's method. If she could not do this in English or could not understand them fully, she would use Chinese for note-taking with extra description. She felt that notes (either written in Chinese or English) could help her review the readings and would save some time for writing. It seemed that Faye was getting better at using the skill of note-taking because she mentioned in her second interview that for her first assignment preparation she had only taken a few notes.

Winnie, unlike Elaine, did not read everything before making her outline; she felt therefore that she needed to read more before writing up her dissertation. She made notes in English before putting them into her dissertation. However, for
some difficult readings, she would translate into Chinese in order to help herself understand. Winnie mentioned in her second interview that she preferred direct quotation but this time when she wrote up her dissertation, she would try to avoid direct quotation by using paraphrasing instead. The direct quotations would be found in the chapter of her literature review.

7.3 Quotation Revisited

This part shows how the five subjects handled quotation and paraphrasing skills. For Beth’s first assignment, although she did not like direct quotation, she said “I need a quotation because what I know is limited and not very much...tutors won’t believe it’s all my idea”. For her first assignment, it could be seen that Beth relied on direct quotation to support her statements. In her third interview, she replied to the same question that she did not like to use direct quotations all the time in her writing and she would paraphrase or rewrite them if she could. This showed that less direct quotation was used in her dissertation than in the first assignment, and Beth now showed more confidence in using her own words for the presentation of rewriting.

For Elaine, the same situation applied. Instead of using many direct quotations as she had done in her first assignment, she now preferred to use fewer quotations and tended to use paraphrase because it would retain her own voice and the flow of her writing. In her literature review, as Winnie did, she used more quotations than in the methodology and discussion chapters. As Elaine said, “direct quotations from other people would change the tone in my writing”.

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In Jenny's case, she often used direct quotations in the first two chapters because they were concerned with the "historical" parts, but not in the rest of her dissertation. However, Faye admitted she quoted a lot in her dissertation and seldom used paraphrasing. The reason she gave was that direct quotation would help with the word count— the same reason she gave at the time of preparing her first assignment. She even mentioned that in her dissertation she sometimes forgot to put in the quotation marks when she did the direct quoting. It seemed that Faye was not confident enough to try paraphrasing herself and, for safety, she would use direct quotations instead of changing them to her own words.

Next, the students' responses to 'aspects of composing' including 'structure of the dissertation', 'pattern' and 'problems in dissertation writing' will be examined.

7.4 Aspects of Composition

Beth discussed her ideas for her first assignment with her lecturer, not with her friends, and asked the Language Centre tutor to check her grammar and spelling. For her dissertation, she discussed the outline with both her friends and supervisor. It seemed that Beth relied more on teachers for their evaluation at the beginning of her course than her peer group. However, later on when Beth did her dissertation, she discussed her written work with both her friends and supervisor. The same situation happened to Jenny, Faye and Winnie, but not to Elaine. In Elaine's first assignment and dissertation writing, the only person she turned to for discussion was either her tutor or supervisor. It seemed that she
relied on her tutor's feedback more than peer discussion. This might relate to the traditional notion among the Chinese that only the teacher represented authority.

Beth made the outline first for her assignment and dissertation before expanding it. The same situation applied to other subjects as well. But Beth, Elaine and Faye did mention in the third interview that if after the outline they found something interesting or the outline needed to be changed, they would modify the outline. Therefore, it was hard to say how many drafts they prepared before handing in their dissertations.

Regarding the structures of the five subjects' dissertations, only Beth seemed to put the order of each chapter differently. It seemed that Beth mixed up the orders of the 'methodology' part and 'literature review' part for the main body of the dissertation. Initially, she put the literature review chapter after the methodology and the subject background. Her supervisor asked her to put the literature review before her Methodology and definition chapters. In the end, her dissertation content was as described above. This might indicate that Beth was not familiar with some of the conventions of dissertation structure.

Elaine mentioned that her tutor showed her other dissertations written by seniors so that she knew how to present the chapters of her dissertation in the right order. Faye's and Jenny's cases seemed fine, but Winnie seemed uncertain about the contents of her dissertation because miscommunication occurred between her and her supervisor. This will be discussed in the later section on 'problems in dissertation writing'.
When the researcher asked if the five subjects followed the pattern 'situation-problem-solution-evaluation', Beth said, “actually, I forgot what I learnt in Pre-sessional course” and she did not think about this pattern at all when writing up her dissertation project. Perhaps this pattern was not the most relevant pattern. Beth did a comparison between two radio stations ‘Classic FM’ and ‘Radio 3’ for her dissertation research. It is likely, therefore, that Beth’s dissertation did not require the ‘situation-problem-solution-evaluation’ model. Elaine did not really answer this question. She only mentioned that she learnt how to signpost and make links between chapters. Jenny felt that her dissertation pattern was more like the Chinese model “qi-cheng-zhuan-he”. As mentioned earlier, this four-part pattern was commonly used for organizing Chinese paragraphs. Faye said that in her dissertation the narrative descriptions outweighed the problem and solution parts, which should have been stronger.

Only Winnie firmly mentioned that her course assignments mostly follow the pattern of ‘situation-problem-solution-evaluation’. She did her undergraduate course in a science field so she had learnt this scheme before in Taiwan but at the beginning of her Master’s course she did not know she needed to apply this pattern to her assignments. This scheme would be helpful for testing her empirical modules in Finance; without following this scheme she could not write up the analysis.

The researcher tried to ask these five subjects what their main problems were in dissertation writing. Besides having difficulties with complex terminology in readings, Beth sometimes did not know how to express it properly in her own
words. Beth mentioned she sometimes did not know how to manage or organize formal English writing because she sometimes could not avoid thinking in Chinese ways. She did not realize this situation consciously. In Beth's first interview, the language tutor reminded her that some Chinese-style paraphrase still existed in her first assignment. Her writings seemed to have improved because gradually less Chinese paraphrase was found after some assignments.

Elaine found that at the beginning of writing up her dissertation it was hard for her to construct her ideas and she thought feedback from tutors was important. She said, "don't be afraid of asking for help if any difficulties occurred". This idea from Elaine was completely opposed to Winnie's idea. In order to save face for both parties, Winnie might prefer not to ask her supervisor too many questions if she did not know what to do. As Winnie pointed out "... my supervisor didn't make some points very clear, how can I ask him again to make the clarification? Probably he may think I am stupid or something". On the one hand, she did not like to give her supervisor the wrong impression that she did not fully prepare for the meeting. On the other hand, if she asked too many questions, she might seem incompetent in doing her dissertation. Moreover, she had only two tutorials during the period of writing up her dissertation, her supervisor often forgot what she was doing for her dissertation or what he wanted to read in her dissertation. Because of this misunderstanding and not asking for help, she felt somewhat alone when she did her dissertation. One more point was that she did not know if her own ideas were appropriate in analyzing her data.
For Jenny, firstly she felt that it was difficult to give a proper English translation for the Chinese references she got from the websites. Secondly, she held different viewpoints towards the data analysis to her supervisor and felt she needed to reach an agreement with her supervisor. Thirdly, she had never done such a big project before; therefore, it was hard to manage direction and coherence between chapters. Faye only mentioned grammatical problems, such as problems with the article, prepositions, singular and plurals.

7.5 Editing Strategies Revisited

In the part about ‘editing strategies’, Beth only used the spell-checker on her computer and did not trust the grammar-checker. She also mentioned that her spellings were not a problem for her. Her supervisor mentioned that Beth needed someone to check her dissertation writing because there were still some English mistakes in her written work. The language tutor also suggested she needed to get a proof-reader. She would like to get a proof-reader because she said “some parts in my work look very Chinese cause I just stay here a year, not for a long time. I am not quite sure if I’ve done right. Done right about what is the very formal academic work...” However, she could not afford it; therefore, she followed the suggestion from the language tutor to leave her work for a couple of days and then go through it again later. When she went through it, she sometimes did find some writing strange and quite Chinese so she would try to correct it herself.

Elaine, Jenny, Faye and Winnie would use both the grammar-checker and
spelling-checker. However, like Beth, Faye did not trust the grammar checker. Elaine was very concerned about her grammatical correctness so she asked a native speaker to check her grammar. She also said that she was encouraged by her tutor to get her work proof read (or peer proof read) before handing in her dissertation. Jenny’s supervisor, by contrast, checked her dissertation structure, grammar and use of English. Faye asked her friend to check the grammar in her dissertation because she felt secure if somebody could check it. Only Winnie did not ask for help from anybody to check her dissertation writing.

7.6 Tutors’ Feedback

After receiving the feedback on their dissertations, the subject normally took up their supervisors’ suggestions. In the feedback given to Beth, first the tutor felt that Beth’s arguments were well structured and theory was well used, though often not developed as fully as it might be. Both markers commented that Beth lacked an integration of the relevant theoretical arguments into her research project. One marker suggested that some of literature review was excessive. The literature review was said to suffer from insufficient analysis of contemporary research on its topic and having virtually no contemporary research cited, such as journal articles or conference papers. The research method was thought as adequate and effective but slightly unambitious (further research could be done to strengthen the overall project). Some technical flaws were found in the number of references, which were never discussed and implied that Beth was not sufficiently familiar with some of the work cited. Overall, however, the markers gave a good comment (“a superb job with a fascinating and worthwhile subject”)
to Beth’s dissertation.

For Jenny’s case, she sometimes even argued with her supervisor over some points and tried to balance their arguments. In her tutor’s dissertation feedback, a mark of B- was given and some good comments made like “a very well structured and organized dissertation”, “the comparative work... is informative and well integrated into the dissertation”, “the contextual work ...is essential, and provides the background upon which the dissertation is built”, “the use of references is very good which does not simply stop with the introductory chapters, but is used throughout the analysis as well as in order to reflect on what is being said and tie the analysis to the earlier chapters”, and “the analysis...is very well carried out and very informative, the use of content analysis is appropriate and well conducted and illustrated”. However, in the later part of the feedback, the tutor suggested that Jenny should pay some attention to her use of English, echoing the feedback for her first assignment. The abstract was also written very poorly which did not convey the content of her dissertation very well. Judging from the feedback, Jenny showed a good command of organization, provided supporting references for her contextual work of dissertation, and presented an informative and well-carried-out analysis although some more analysis might be helpful in a more critical examination of her data.

Elaine’s supervisor asked her to be more critical and include more arguments in her writing (demanding more of her voice) but she found it was difficult to do so because it was hard for her to challenge academic authorities. She felt that Chinese learners might tend to believe that all books show the right things and
previously in Taiwan they had more experience in reporting what they read from
the books and were not used to presenting their own arguments. Moreover, it was
important to prove and support your own arguments when you criticized
someone else's work and to reach a balance between different viewpoints. Elaine
suggested that wider and deeper reading would be helpful for developing the
arguments. In general, Elaine received excellent general comments from her
markers and a mark of A- was given for her dissertation. The comments showed
that the writing through the whole dissertation was well organized with an
excellent presentation, an adequate literature review showed a commanding
knowledge, and her writing and awareness of academic writing conventions were
of the highest standard. The markers believed that her dissertation would be
valuable to her as an English teacher and to her students and some parts of the
dissertation were of a publishable standard.

Elaine and Faye got feedback from their supervisors that they should note
signposting, coherence between chapters and the conclusion while they were
writing up their dissertations. In Faye's case, a percentage grade of 52 was given
to her dissertation. Her tutor felt that Faye had to provide more examples and
details to make readers convinced. Some references to her dissertation issues and
recent development literature should be put in. The English was good despite
some grammatical errors and the abstract provided a good account of the issue to
be discussed.

Winnie showed more uncertainty when she did her dissertation because she did
not have enough confidence with the theories and the data analysis. She only
used her own opinions to analyze the situation. Because tutorials were infrequent, her supervisor sometimes forgot what she was doing and this contributed to her feeling of insecurity. It showed in the feedback sheet that very little feedback was given by her supervisor and a grade of C was awarded. There were only two written sentences in the feedback, which showed that Winnie had to improve her presentation of the dissertation a lot and the analysis of her results needed a lot more work. Since the puzzling words “a lot” occurred often in the feedback, it left an unclear image where Winnie should improve and the feedback did not give her too much of a direction.

7.7 Comparison between English and Chinese Writing

When the researcher asked Beth for a comparison of English and Chinese writing, she replied that “I think a similar process is used in gathering data, and in writing the outline”. When she wrote in Chinese, she just followed her instincts and “just like I am telling you a story that I want to understand what story is about immediately”. When the researcher asked her in what way she would like to talk about a story, she explained in a similar way to ‘situation-problem-solution-evaluation’. When doing her dissertation, Beth did not think about the pattern of ‘qi-cheng-zhuan-he’ for her English writing and she also forgot the pattern of ‘situation-problem-solution-evaluation’. As mentioned earlier, Beth wrote a critical comparison of two radio stations ‘Classic FM’ and ‘Radio 3’. Probably the presentation she used for her dissertation did not fit in either the Chinese pattern of ‘qi-cheng-zhuan-he’ or the English model of ‘situation-problem-solution-evaluation’. She mentioned that she did not notice
the pattern when she wrote up her dissertation; but when telling a story she would follow the scheme of ‘situation-problem-solution-evaluation’ because she said the scheme would be clear and helpful for understanding what the writer would like to express.

The problem again with Beth’s writing was that her paraphrasing skills were not good enough; therefore, her supervisor sometimes got confused with her expressions. The other reason, she said, was that her supervisor might not be familiar with her research topic. This time, Beth seemed to have more confidence in writing up her dissertation compared to her previous problems mentioned in the second interview with academic writing, citation, quotation, page number and paraphrasing.

Elaine replied to question 23 ("do you approach the task of writing in English differently from the way you approach it in Chinese?") that she thought English academic writing was quite similar to Chinese argumentation essay writing. She could not make a clear comparison between English and Chinese academic writing because she had never done such a big academic project before. She had only been trained in the experience of writing about 600 words for a Chinese argumentation essay (lun shuo wen). There are two kinds of Chinese argumentation styles under the category of lun shuo wen: one is yi lun wen and the other kind is shuo ming wen (described more fully at: http://163.26.9.12/noise/teacher/noise/noise-4.htm). Yi lun wen is a strongly polemical style, while shuo ming wen is a more narrative description of the writer’s view. These two kinds of Chinese argumentation essay (lun shuo wen)
are normally required in various composition exams or debate games. It is also one of several Chinese essay styles, which is different from the commonly used pattern of 'qi-cheng-zuan-he'. She felt that the writing style of Chinese argumentation essays (lun shuo wen) was similar to the Western model of 'situation-problem-solution-evaluation'. She also felt that the thinking of Western people was more logical and clear.

In Jenny's case, her supervisor allowed her to think in Chinese logic and accepted the pattern of writing in 'qi-cheng-zuan-he'. Jenny had not attended any language courses or pre-sessional course at the University of Leicester before she began her Master's course and she probably did not know what the pattern 'situation-problem-solution-evaluation' was. It is noticeable in her second interview that she used 'qi-cheng-zhan-he' for writing her English essays. She felt that it was a logic rooted in her mind and could not change it even when she wrote in L2.

At the beginning, Faye would use Chinese logic for her English academic writing. Later, she had learnt more about English writing such as the differences between grammar in Chinese and English and the differences in sentence structure. She could even notice if a text followed the Chinese way of English writing used by other Taiwanese people or not. She also mentioned that she knew better how to use English to express her own ideas.

Winnie has done her undergraduate course in the science area; therefore, in her opinion, it was necessary to follow up the pattern of
"hypothesis-question-experiment-result-discussion" which was similar to that of 'situation-problem-solution-evaluation'. She had no problems with this presentation.

7.8 Subjects' Reflections

After finishing their Master's course, all subjects said they would like to find a job related to their subject area, which was mentioned previously in their first interviews. It is worth noting that Elaine had been an English teacher in junior high school before she came to England. She would apply her knowledge from her Master's course to her future teaching back home. In order to promote students' learning, she mentioned some interesting points replying to question 25 ("what is your future plan?"). She said that most Taiwanese people believed that rigorous teachers would develop excellent students. The influence of teachers was probably more valued in Taiwanese society than students' learning by themselves. Therefore, Taiwanese students tended to follow what teachers said or did without any questions and this might reduce students' autonomous interests in independent learning and make them depend completely on teachers. After finishing compulsory education, students might not be able to learn by themselves autonomously because there were no teachers around or no access to direct instruction from teachers. From this point of view, it could be seen that expectations in Western and Taiwanese viewpoints about teachers' roles were very different. This may explain what Winnie thought about her course in the first interview. She mentioned that "Taiwanese teachers are more responsible because they try their best to let students understand". She also felt that British
tutors did not care too much about students’ level of understanding and the learning responsibility did not fall totally on the teachers’ side. In this third interview, Winnie still held the idea that “oriental teachers are more responsible for teaching”. Jenny mentioned that in Taiwan teachers would take care of everything; here, if students did not ask for help, tutors would assume that students might not have any questions, which could correspond to Winnie’s idea. However, Faye mentioned that British tutors are more accessible than Taiwanese teachers, which was probably because of smaller classes. At university British teachers are usually regarded as a guide or facilitator to students’ learning; therefore, students need to ask for help by themselves and tutors probably will not ask if they understand. Jenny said, concerning independent learning in British academic culture, that teachers here did not spoon-feed students like some Taiwanese teachers did, students needed to find out the related information by themselves and then discuss it with tutors or in class. Under these different circumstances, some Taiwanese students may feel that they do not learn enough from the course, as mentioned by Winnie. By comparison, in Taiwan students were more relaxed because teachers would give students directly all the knowledge they were presumed to need. Jenny made the point that students were always lazy; therefore, if Taiwanese students did not know how to be autonomous learners they might encounter possible failure later in the course. Therefore, it was far more important for Taiwanese students to train themselves to be autonomous learners.

Faye felt that in Taiwan students had good connections with teachers after class,
but in England she felt that the relationship between teachers and students was not so close. It may seem that teachers are regarded as ‘parent’ figures to students in the Taiwanese education system and teaching involves not only giving knowledge to students but pastoral care after class. One interesting thing Beth mentioned is the politeness of language. She pointed out that Taiwanese teachers said things more directly than British teachers and British teachers tended to give encouragement first before comments or criticism. She said that “British lecturers will say, well, basically, this part in your essay is interesting, or this part is interesting, but...then the word after ‘but’, you can tell how terrible job you have done”. This may also explain Faye’s reaction after receiving the feedback from her first assignment. From Faye’s feedback on her first assignment, she felt she had done a wonderful job because the feedback seemed at first very encouraging but felt mistaken when comparing grades with her classmates later.

In Elaine’s second interview, her tutor asked her to present more arguments or be more critical in her assignments. She thought this was a major difficulty for Taiwanese students because Chinese learners tended to believe all books show only correct things and people tended to report or copy from books without independent thinking. Under this influence, Chinese learners may not get used to expressing their real ideas in order to challenge the authors’ arguments. Therefore, it is common to find that Chinese learners’ essays show fewer arguments than expressions of agreement or acceptance.
7.9 Conclusion

Chapters 6 and 7 have presented the interview data showing difficulties encountered by the students when they prepared the first assignment and final dissertations along with the tutors’ feedback. Some of the feedback reinforced the writing requirements (e.g. norms and conventions of language use, incorporating textual resources into the main texts) expected in British academic writing and offered clear rules for students to follow, although it was a pity that some did not present these norms clearly enough. Following tutors’ explicit feedback and instruction in tutorials, students gradually recognized the difference between Chinese and English writing, achieved a better command of it and began to take responsibility for their own writing.

As a whole, on the students’ side, in order to “survive” their British Master’s courses, they had to adopt a new way of writing without much choice and recognize the significance of new norms, in the foreign language context. This new way of learning did not mean that the students had to abandon their old one entirely; instead, it brought a new dimension to the familiar approach and students could benefit from two kinds of learning.

Some British tutors were certainly aware of the problems encountered by Taiwanese students and tried to empower them by raising their awareness of the different academic norms in the British system. In the following chapter, the data from interviews with four British tutors will be discussed, regarding their perspectives on British academic culture, their impressions of Taiwanese
students' performance (both in class and for written work), and the suggestions
towards increasing mutual understanding.
Chapter 8

Findings from Interviews with Tutors

The previous Chapters 5, 6 and 7 concerned the interview data with students regarding their cultural adaptation and difficulties that occurred with the writing of their first assignment and final dissertation. The current chapter will focus on the input from some British tutors and aims to provide some perspectives from the side of British academic culture and how they perceive the performance of Taiwanese students both in class and in their written work. There are four main topic headings: “British academic culture”, “Tutors’ impressions of Taiwanese students’ performance”, “Learning about students’ cultural and educational background” and “Further comments”. Under the first topic heading “British academic culture”, there are five categories, which are “the main characteristics of British academic culture”, “teachers’ roles”, “students’ roles”, “ways of communicating between tutors and postgraduates” and “marking elements in written assignments & feedback given”. For the second heading of “Tutors’ impressions of Taiwanese students’ performance”, there are four categories which are “Taiwanese students’ performance in class”, “Taiwanese students’ performance in written assignments”, “the effect of students’ home culture on their written assignments” and “helping L2 students with their writing”. The third and fourth headings stay as they are, “Learning about students’ cultural and educational background” and “Further comments”.

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8.1 British Academic Culture

In this section, tutors expressed their ideas towards the characteristics of British academic culture, what they think the roles of tutors and students are, how these two parties (tutors and students) interact, and finally their thoughts on marking criteria and the feedback given. There were four tutors interviewed. They are named Tutor O, Tutor S, Tutor K and Tutor R.

8.1.1. The Main Characteristics of British Academic Culture

Tutor O expressed her concern that British academic culture has been changing and she was not sure how it would end up. She also mentioned that tutors have had less time to do research and teaching because of too much administration work, which was similar to the thoughts of Tutor R. Tutor R mentioned that tutors felt real tension and pressure to do more research, to teach better and to manage administration. Because of too much work, tutors did not have much time left. He also emphasized that his department (Museum Studies) was different from the other departments, which focused on theory based teaching because his department needed synergy with museum professionals internationally and connections beyond the campus that would be quite outward-looking. He felt that the outward-looking character of his department would be similar to the School of Education, which provides practical teacher training for students.

Tutor S pointed out that British academic culture is a “critical” culture and in the way of being critical, people had to evaluate theory, express their ideas, and
create new knowledge, which was not done by memorizing old books or reproducing or imitating the "old masters". Tutor K felt that British academic culture was based on reading what had been written before and then producing their own written work. To be able to argue was the key issue and also being objective was very important.

8.1.2. Teachers' Roles

In the category of "teachers' roles", I summarized eight key statements following the reply from the tutors, which were "a good listener", "a helper", "an organizer", "a guide (teacher, researcher, tutor, and supervisor)", "to be accessible", "a facilitator or provider (of correct content in terms of knowledge)", "an interpreter (of possible arguments)", and "a challenger". Tutor O mentioned that tutors should try to provide what students lack and get students to start to think critically themselves. Tutor S pointed out that tutors should try to have a general caring kind of role for international students and try to help them to adapt to British academic culture, a point which the other three tutors did not particularly mention. There might be a reason for this, however, in that Tutor S encountered lots of international students at the early stage before they began the degree (undergraduate or postgraduate) course and was experienced as an EFL tutor. Tutor K explained that being a teacher meant one should be able to teach, supervise, and help to guide students to write a piece of difficult work. Tutor R felt that a teacher at the postgraduate level should prepare students for further studies or career needs.
8.1.3. Students' Roles

Tutor S made some general observations on being a good student which were “be punctual”, “be courteous”, “be independent, efficient and use initiative in the learning process”, “be able to plan their essays & critically select the materials for their assignments”, “be a hard worker”, and students have to make it clear whether they understand the lessons or not. Students are expected to use their initiative in the learning process, being independent and efficient.

At the postgraduate level, Tutor O felt that students should be good at writing essays, be open to different analyses of materials and also ask critical questions in seminars, not just accepting everything from the tutors. The important thing would be that they should be critical and think critically. Interestingly, Tutor O had the impression that British students were better at writing essays than American students but American students were better at discussion in seminars. American students seemed not to be trained to write long essays; therefore, when they came over to England for further study, some of them would get lost and not know what to do. This situation shows that if students are not familiar with academic writing styles or not used to writing longer essays, there might be some problems, even for native speakers of English. The problems would become bigger if they were EFL students.

Both Tutor K and Tutor R had the same idea that postgraduate students had to be more independent than undergraduate students and were expected to be more responsible for their own studies instead of being taught what to do, which
enabled postgraduate students to develop their own learning capacities. Tutor R also mentioned that his department had an extensive mechanism for supporting the students; therefore, there would not usually be any problems for them to work independently. He then emphasized that it is also important for students who could welcome other students to participate in discussion together and respect other people’s viewpoints. Tutors K and R also mentioned the differences between the expected standard of postgraduate and undergraduate students and that undergraduate students would go to many more lectures than the postgraduates and do writing at a lower level. Postgraduate students also spent more time in the library and did more reading. Moreover, tutors would expect postgraduate students to work quite independently; for undergraduate students, they might be required to take less responsibility for learning. The table below sums up the characteristics of students’ roles expected by these tutors and their own expectations towards the roles of teachers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tutors’ Expectations of Students’ Roles</th>
<th>Tutors’ Expectations of Their Own Roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- think critically, be critical</td>
<td>- be a good listener, a helper, an organizer, a guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- be independent, use initiative</td>
<td>- a facilitator or provider, an interpreter of course content to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- know what to do, work things out for themselves, be responsible for their learning</td>
<td>- be accessible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- be hard-working, be a good planner</td>
<td>- be a challenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- be punctual, be courteous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8-1  Tutors’ expectation of students and their own roles
8.1.4. Ways of Communicating between Tutors and Postgraduates

Regarding the ways of communicating between postgraduates and tutors, Tutor O expected that students should come to see tutors if they had any problems. In her department students could put their names on a list, which was put on tutors' office doors for further discussion if they wanted to. Tutor R felt that it would be very important to have as much interaction as possible within the classroom. His colleagues and he himself believed that interaction at postgraduate level is a much more effective way of learning for students than the traditional model, in which teachers speak and students listen passively. Through interaction, tutors could learn lots from students and also reflect on their own teaching practices; interaction also enabled students to share experiences from different international perspectives. Verbal discussion might encourage students' autonomy in learning and learners' emancipation. He also felt that interaction is a kind of test to check if students understand the discussion or not and also a way for students to present their own ideas to other students.

Tutor S indicated that most postgraduate students usually have their basic knowledge before entering the course and tutors would challenge students with up-to-date research in the field. Tutors are expected to be facilitators and providers to make sure the content is delivered correctly and interpret the possible arguments. Tutors S and K also made a clear distinction between communication in different contexts: "lecture", "seminar", and "tutorial". In lectures, students are expected to be note-takers, being active listeners but not interrupting the lecturers. Seminars are usually small groups, and students are
expected to contribute and asked to speak or give their own papers for further
discussion in the group. A “tutorial” is often one-to-one and students have to
explain how they are managing their studies.

Tutor K mentioned before that the most important issue in British academic
culture is learning and the work produced and that British academic culture is
based largely on written work. For postgraduate students, most assessment is
done through their written work. The following section discusses how British
tutors mark their students’ written work and what marking criteria they use.

8.1.5. Marking Elements in Written Assignments & Feedback Given

There were specific marking categories indicated on feedback sheets from each
of the tutors’ departments, giving them some general guidelines to follow. Tutor
O mentioned four categories, which were resources, critical analysis, linking
between different arguments and the need for a good writer to be able to provide
critical arguments. She said she would put comments on the assignment, and the
comments would be typed not handwritten. If the assignments were good, the
comments would be short. If not, they would be longer and more detailed. If
students failed, she would ask students to come to see her.

Tutor S felt that the content should be written critically, the writer should
understand the essential readings and provide useful resources which were
relevant to the title and supported the arguments. She mentioned that she would
give feedback to students from the language courses or Pre-sessional courses on
the “macro” level, the overall relevance of the title, coherence through the
paragraphs (if the assignment achieves its purpose), accurate citations and paraphrasing, the use of English, and read through students’ drafts and make sure they understood the feedback.

Tutor K thought that the most important thing would be the content because it showed whether the writer had read the relevant books and how the writer proved that they understood the relevant literature and provided logical arguments and clearly structured progression. He usually gave students at MA level feedback both before they wrote their assignments and after they wrote them. Students could come and discuss with a tutor the title and structure and he would read students’ drafts if they wanted him to. In his department, feedback was on a printed sheet with the grade agreed by two markers.

Tutor R considered five categories when marking students’ essays, which were “structure”, “research”, “analysis”, “communication” & “conclusion”. For each category, the range was from ‘excellent’, ‘very good’, ‘good’, ‘fair’ to ‘poor’. Tutors usually used a tick for each category and then wrote the comments. The feedback was also given by two markers in his department, which is similar to the process in Tutor K’s department. He would give students written and verbal feedback when he saw them in tutorials.

Therefore, from the above points mentioned by the tutors, the following chart indicates the most essential elements selected by these tutors:
I now turn to the general impression of tutors on Taiwanese students’ performance either in class and of their written work; moreover, what the perception of these tutors would be to help L2 learners with their writing.

8.2 Tutors’ Impressions of Taiwanese Students’ Performance

There were four categories which tutors were asked to comment on here: “Taiwanese students’ performance in class”, “Taiwanese students’ performance in written assignments”, “students’ home culture and its possible effect on their written assignments”, and “helping L2 students with their writing”. Tutor R pointed out that it was really hard to answer and difficult to generalize because of the small number of Taiwanese students in his department and the variation between individuals. However, the feedback from most of these tutors does give us a picture of the attitudes they hold in relation to their teaching experiences with international students, including groups of Taiwanese students.

8.2.1 Taiwanese Students’ Performance in Class

Three tutors (O, K, and S) indicated that Taiwanese students seemed
hard-working, ambitious and highly motivated. However, some of them thought
Taiwanese students were often shy or silent in discussion and would need more
couragement to speak in class. Tutor S suggested that they might be afraid of
losing face or making mistakes in front of other people. She also mentioned, with
regard to English Language courses, that Taiwanese students were not used to
exchanging information with other students, for example, when doing pair work.
Some Taiwanese students would prefer to learn correct English from teachers,
not talk to their classmates. This idea of some Taiwanese students might accord
with their image of teachers as knowledgeable authority figures. However, Tutor
S felt that learners should sometimes take a risk in learning for themselves,
which did not mean that teachers made no effort. Meanwhile, teachers also
worked hard to give students feedback.

In order to solve the problem that students might not pay attention in discussions,
Tutor R suggested everybody should say something in class; therefore, students
would not be able to avoid doing it. This would also make talking a norm, which
would make the situation easier for students.

8.2.2 Taiwanese Students' Performance in Written Assignments

Tutor O felt that Chinese students were much better at writing than speaking
because they were often shy in class. She also felt that having an adequate IELTS
test score (6.5), was very important for the standard of students' English. If
students did not have IELTS 6.5, then they might not even be able to follow the
course. Tutor K mentioned that the Taiwanese system was based on the
American style, in which students did not tend to write long essays but short paragraphs or sentences. Therefore, they might have difficulties in writing longer essays. This point accords with the comments of Tutor O about American students' performance in writing longer essays. They have not been trained to do academic writing, so they have to practise and study for it. Because of a lack of practice, some Taiwanese students normally found it difficult and hard. Tutor K and Tutor R agreed that British academic culture was based on learning to critique, which could be difficult for students who came from different academic traditions. Tutor K emphasized that it would not be good enough to write exactly what teachers said or follow the prescribed readings in British academic culture. He said that “in some cultures, you don’t argue with the authority but in the British academic culture, nobody is an authority who can not be criticized”. Tutor R felt that students from Far Eastern countries (like Taiwan, Korea, and Japan) sometimes found it difficult to be critical because their education systems were more deferential than the British system and therefore discouraged argument against the authority figure. Therefore, he tried to encourage students to see themselves as ‘valued’ and to have more faith in their own opinions.

Tutor S gave more detailed information about Taiwanese students’ performance in written assignments, which covered the unconnected relationship of cause and effect, coherence, vagueness, a circular and repetitious style (not the more linear structure required in the English writing style), the tense system, rhetorical styles, and avoiding plagiarism through learning about skills of paraphrasing, direct quoting, and indirect quoting. She suggested that students who had these
problems should try to give more description and details to help readers to understand the points made and show the reader the development of the linear structure from the beginning, and middle to the end. In English, she said that it was important to make a statement and narrow it down, give some illustration or contextualization and then finish and connect to the next point. It is crucial that students should be familiar with the British system in order to survive their course. Tutors should try to make sure students understand the grade descriptions used which could help them realize why they get lower marks and so on. Tutor K felt, not only with regard to Taiwanese students but other international students as well, that all students had a few problems with British academic style, even some British students. He thought that being objective was required in British academic culture because writers had to prove their arguments to readers and use supporting evidence.

8.2.3 The Effect of Students’ Cultural Backgrounds on Their Written Assignments

All tutors felt that students’ cultural backgrounds did affect their performance in the UK education system. The L1 writing system of some international students was completely different from that of English, although for some European countries the system might be quite close to the British one. Tutor K felt that students from many different nationalities might in fact have problems with British academic writing. There might be two reasons for this problem: either they have not been taught in the British educational system, or they have been influenced by their own culture. For example, it could be found that students
from a Confucian-heritage society might find arguing and expressing doubts
difficult or not feel comfortable about challenging authority. In Arabic culture,
people often learn religious texts by heart and reproduce these texts in exams
which could get them a pass with high marks, but this would not be workable in
the British exam system. Tutor R also supported this idea, but he pointed out that
some English L1 students might feel reluctant to use critical skills as well (i.e.
they might write too descriptively).

8.2.4. Helping L2 Students with Their Writing

When the researcher asked the tutors if it was part of their job to teach L2
students how to write appropriately in the discipline they were studying at
Leicester, the feedback varied. Tutor O felt that it was not her job to teach
students how to write appropriately because in her department a professional
English language tutor was responsible for that, which also was the case in Tutor
R’s department. Tutor O asserted that lecturers were not here to teach students
any English at all. Tutor K held the same opinion as Tutor O and said “if it is a
language problem, it is not the tutor’s problem”, but he would still offer some
help to students with their writing. He explained that students had to learn and
practise academic writing. Tutor R had a positive view, saying “we’d like to
encourage all students to write appropriately”. He would give students comments
on their written essays and students would know and do better for the following
assignments. Tutor K and R, along with Tutor O (mentioned previously),
asserted that students should achieve the necessary IELTS (6.5) or TOEFL
(250/600) scores to be allowed into their departments and this requirement seems
to guarantee that students will have fewer problems in following the course.

8.3 Learning about Students' Cultural & Educational Background

All four tutors felt that it was important to have some knowledge of their students' background and culture. Tutor S mentioned that respect for and curiosity about students' culture would make the best atmosphere for teaching and students' learning. It was important to integrate these principles into the teaching methods. Tutor R felt that it was a good way to get international students to talk in class and tutors could get international feedback from students. This approach also made them more “internationalized” through interaction in order to learn about students' cultural and educational background. When the researcher asked if supporting training courses would be workable for them, all tutors welcomed the idea. However, Tutor O felt that it might be difficult to know different cultures individually because the nationalities of students would vary in the large classes taught in her department. She said, for example, that "there are like 80 students in the large class in the department, probably 70 different countries, we can't have the individual country culture training like that". Tutor K felt that most of his departmental colleagues had experience of working abroad; therefore, it might not be necessary to have special training.

8.4 Further Comments

Three tutors (O, K, and R) mentioned that all Taiwanese students in their departments had passed successfully to date and shown good progress through
the year. Tutor O and K emphasized that Taiwanese students were usually highly motivated and hard-working. Tutor O supported their idea that Taiwanese students were extremely ambitious, really hard-working, extremely willing to study and perform well and she felt this was true not only of Taiwanese students but of all Chinese people. Specifically, Tutor K said that:

The improvement is usually quite good. You only need to show them once and they can do it. Students would say “nobody has told me that before!”.

Sometimes they would say “I understand now!” then they do understand.

However, Tutor S at the ELTU pointed out that the improvement of Taiwanese students in academic adaptation did take some time, especially with regard to their academic writing. It would normally take 6 months before the students made a go of it. She felt that Taiwanese students showed progress but it was slow compared to French and German students whose educational system was closer to the British one. She suggested that Taiwanese students should “try to do an essay plan and work out how this relates to the table of contents and do each part of the assignment separately and not take it all at once.” She also suggested that Taiwanese students should get to know other international students and try not to stick to their own cultural group all the time; try to use the resource centers as much as possible; try to go and ask their personal tutors if any problems arose. She had the impression that Taiwanese students were quite shy about asking for help and they might have some difficulties communicating in a public forum.

Because the entry requirement in Tutor K’s department (MA in Applied
Linguistics and TESOL) is quite strict, he said "once they get here, they are usually very good. It is very difficult for students to get into this department. For example, we require 2 years of teaching experience and an IELTS score of 6.5. It is difficult to get 2 years teaching experience in Taiwan. When they get here, they are usually very good students. They have got good qualifications and are highly-motivated. Their English proficiency is good." It seems that students might have more problems in adapting if they have not gained an adequate IELTS score (6.5) for entry to postgraduate study. However, I would argue that an adequate IELTS score is, in any case, no guarantee of "academic adaptation", only of reasonable English proficiency and this English proficiency might help with the adaptation. This case applied to Beth, Elaine and Jenny because they still had some difficulty in their studies although their English proficiency was up to standard. Tutor R emphasized again that it is important for postgraduate students to work independently and try to argue and find resources to comment on.

8.5 Summary

In the above sections, I have discussed the perspectives of British tutors towards some characteristics of British academic culture, the expected roles of students and tutors and communication between the two parties, the criteria used in marking students' assignments, the general impression of Taiwanese performance and how they might help L2 learners with writing. The discussion provides an insight into how these L2 students are asked to behave and what they are expected to achieve in the British system. Next, Chapter 9 will consider what
happens when these two parties meet.
Chapter 9

When These Two Parties Meet

Having discussed the feedback from the Taiwanese students and British tutors, I will turn the focus to comparison of the expectations held by these two parties. In this chapter, several outcomes of the comparison will be addressed. First, the dissimilar expectations of these two parties will be reported regarding roles of students and tutors. Secondly, some attention will be paid to the discussion of difficulties these subjects experienced in their academic writing and the evaluation from the British tutors of students’ academic writing. This chapter serves to highlight the problems and to anticipate some of the possible solutions, which will be brought up again in the final chapter.

9.1 Different Expectations

This study has looked at the case of the five Taiwanese students who came to the University of Leicester for their Master’s courses with specific regard to their learning and writing. Over a year, the researcher interviewed each of them three times in order to investigate their adaptation to academic study in England. From the data of three individual interviews for each respondent, it was found that these five subjects faced some difficulties in emotional and academic adjustment, such as problems in English language proficiency, struggling with their academic writing both in the first assignment and final dissertation, and coping with
culture shock.

Winnie mentioned the following about her emotional stages in the UK: firstly when she arrived, she felt afraid of the new environment, and then she felt amazed by the differences; in her language course, she felt bored because she did not learn what she expected to; afterwards, in her Master’s course, she felt pressured and then frustrated with her studies, although she did try her best. From the case of Winnie, studying in a foreign country, one’s mood is always affected by the interaction between the host culture and home culture. On the other hand, it is argued that the lack of a clear perception of the expectations of the host culture might adversely affect their performance either in their daily life or academic studies. Next, after the discussion of students’ perspectives, the feedback from the British tutors towards British academic culture will be explored.

9.1.1 The Characteristics of British Academic Culture

In Chapter 8.1.1, all British tutors gave some opinions about the main characteristics of British academic culture. Although the feedback varied, it did present some general ideas of British academic culture, which these tutors hold. There were two aspects of their replies: one concerned with the tutors’ jobs within the university context and the other with the basic understanding of British academic culture. It was suggested (by Tutor O and Tutor R) that more demands are being made on tutors for doing more research, teaching better, and at the same time managing administration, which made tutors feel pressured.
Besides, it was important to notice the differences between departments: some departments focused on the aspect of theory-teaching (e.g. Pure Chemistry Department) and some (e.g. Department of Museums Studies and School of Education) with more practical training. In this regard, students should have a better perception before their application of their interests, since different emphases occurred between departments. Having a better idea about their departments before the application, which might help students without the background to follow up easily.

Two other tutors pointed out that British academic culture is a “critical” culture, based on reading (of the previous literature) and then producing one’s own written work, being able to argue and being objective. They also claimed that it was different from other cultures that pay more attention to past classics. As discussed above, the idea of evaluating or criticizing past theories and creating new knowledge might be the main focus of British academic culture, compared with the praising and obeying of old masters in Chinese culture.

Besides, it is also important for students to gain more prior knowledge about the expected responsibilities of these participants (tutors and students) within the British academic context, which Taiwanese students’ come to study in and should try to adapt themselves to.

9.1.2 The Expectations of Different Roles and Ways of Interaction

First of all, the following figure shows the British teachers’ views of tutors’ and
students' roles and then the expected communication pattern between them:

**British Teachers' Views of Roles of teachers and students**

**Teachers' Roles:**
- be a good listener, a helper, an organizer, a guide
- be a facilitator or provider, an interpreter of course content to students
- be accessible
- be a challenger

**Students' Roles:**
- think critically, be critical
- be independent, use initiative
- know what to do, work things out themselves, be responsible for their learning
- be hard-working, be a good planner
- be punctual, be courteous

**Expected Communications between Tutors and Postgraduates**
- expect students to see tutors if any problems
- expect to have as much interaction as possible within the classroom
- expect postgraduates to have some basic knowledge before the entry to course
- different contexts of communications: lecture, seminar and tutorial

Figure 9-1  British teachers' expectations towards the roles of tutors and students along with the communication pattern

As shown in Figure 9-1, the five Taiwanese subjects felt that British teachers might tend to be like a friend to students, a guide (who helps to give advice), to be at ease in accepting criticism and to welcome discussion; meanwhile, British tutors also expect students to manage and to be responsible for their own learning. In contrast, the image of Taiwanese teachers might be like a parental and authoritative figure, taking care of students and transmitting knowledge to them (Ho and Crookall 1995), which these student subjects acknowledged. Faye
mentioned that she felt the relationship between teachers and students in the UK might not be as close as it seemed in Taiwan. This could provide the reasons for the reciprocal relationship between students and teachers in Chinese culture: the teacher teaches and cares for student and students respect and obey the teachers (Cortazzi and Jin 1997: 85).

As mentioned in Chapter 5, the authoritative teacher figure might create fear in students of approaching teachers. Four out of the five subjects often chose to help themselves with their questions if they had some doubts with their studies, instead of approaching their tutors, seeing that as their last option. From the above pattern of communication, British tutors expect students ask for help if any questions occur. With this distance built from the fear of teachers and reluctance to ask for help, these Taiwanese subjects tended to try to solve their own problems. This might leave an image for British tutors that these Taiwanese students might not have any problems with their study or they might have some idea that these students were a bit distant.

Almost every subject felt that ‘listening’ and ‘speaking’ skills were regarded as the most difficult ones for them while they were in Taiwan. The reasons provided for this were because of no contacts with native speakers and most of the exams focus more on reading and writing. In addition, other reasons might be the big class sizes (40+) and teacher-centred environments. However, this situation did not change too much when some subjects came to UK. Two subjects (Faye and Winnie) lived alone in their accommodation and one subject (Elaine) lived with her own family. It seemed that they did not have frequent daily contacts with
native speakers outside the classroom. Moreover, Winnie suggested that she would often stick to the same ethnic group. This situation was different with Beth and Jenny who lived with international or native speakers in halls of residence. Without a supportive linguistic context, if their language proficiency was originally lower, the stress might have become bigger for them.

Within the classroom, tutor R and his colleagues believed that interaction at postgraduate level is a much more effective way of learning. This thought is widely recognized within the Western educational context, students learn through talking and writing, and through processes of social interaction (Cortazzi and Jin 2002: 51). For these five subjects, 'listening' and 'speaking' were regarded as the most difficult skills for them. They had to adapt to the different accents (mainly the British accent, different from the American accent which they were used to); they might have felt awkward at first about being asked to speak out their opinions in class and argue with other classmates instead of listening and obeying teachers' words as they were used to. Elaine mentioned that she felt under pressure when she was with her fluent English-well-speaking classmates. Supporting this statement, some tutors mentioned that Taiwanese students were often shy or silent in discussion and tutors had to encourage these students to speak out more in class and made speaking as a norm. Biggs and Watkins (1996: 281) also suggest that teachers might find more opportunities for those international students to collaborate with native speakers of English to work on the tasks together in order to create a collaborative context.

Two subjects (Faye and Winnie) constantly mentioned that they had not studied
the subject of their Master’s course before; that was why they found it hard to adapt or follow the course. Tutor S mentioned in the interview that most subjects would have some basic ideas about the course before their entry. However, this did not apply in the cases of Winnie and Faye. Therefore, it might be helpful that tutors could offer some support or provide some useful handouts (as Winnie suggested). For students, it would be necessary for them to gain a better understanding of the new subject and the requirements from their departments before they started their courses in order to solve the problems of unfamiliarity.

9.2 Problems of Academic Writing

Three tutors (O, K, and R) indicated that students must have reached the required IELTS (6.5) or TOEFL (250/600) score in order to attend their Master’s courses. The obligatory score of IELTS or TOEFL seems a necessary indicator of future success. However, for the subjects of Taiwanese origin in my study, although they finally achieved the necessary entry requirement and were accepted by the department, they still encountered problems in their studies, especially in writing a piece of longer composition (e.g. an assignment or a dissertation). It is known that in the TOEFL test, the writing section is not usually a compulsory one. In IELTS, although a writing test is unavoidable, two short writing texts (e.g. 150 words and 300 words) are mostly required but longer writings are not. Therefore, the satisfactory IELTS or TOEFL score is a basic requirement, but not regarded as a guarantee of definite success in their studies.

Later on in these subjects’ Master’s courses, being EFL students themselves,
most of them found writing an essay or dissertation difficult because they had never encountered this before in their previous education. This situation did not apply only to EFL students, but also to some English native speakers from the USA, according to Tutor O. For example, there has been certain rules expected in students' academic writing; however, students do not always know what these rules are (Lea 1994; Lillis 1997; Street 1999).

At the beginning of writing for their first assignment, most of them struggled with choosing the appropriate topic, efficient reading preparation, clear arguments, sufficient supporting references, appropriate L2 academic terminology, and appropriate use of academic writing skills. Among the tutors' feedback, the most often mentioned comment was that Taiwanese students were not familiar with being able to argue and criticize, which British academic culture required most. However, for students from the collectivistic cultures with more emphasis on agreement, harmony and face, this seemed hard for them (Jin 1992, Jin and Cortazzi 1993; Cortazzi and Jin 1997). Moreover, Tutor S indicated that Taiwanese students should try to provide more details in order to help readers to understand the arguments made by the writers, which accorded with the points made by Reid (1988) that the reader-responsible preferences were often found in Chinese (cited in Grabe and Kaplan 1996).

The tutor-written feedback on student work was examined along with the student subjects' reflections in this study. Lea and Street (1998: 169) support the idea that "the feedback genre ... works both to construct academic knowledge and to maintain relationships of power and authority between novice student and
experienced academic”. The careful feedback could direct students to develop and write their academic knowledge in very specific ways within particular courses and also reflect the requirement from the tutors (as mentioned in Chapter 8.1.5). However, as in Winnie’s feedback, most was with short comments and often not clearly written. This might cause confusion and unclear guidelines for her further essay writing and also miscommunication around academic writing between students and tutors might arise (Lea and Street 1998).

Moreover, some British tutors in this study mentioned that it would not be their job to teach students how to write appropriately although some tutors showed the willingness to help with students’ writing. In some departments, a professional English language tutor or the English Language Unit would take charge of teaching students’ writing. However, it has been argued that the contents of some language courses or the Pre-sessional courses were not subject-specific or specific to the particular genres required but were only teaching general writing techniques, skills and grammar (Baynham 2000). Therefore, Street (1999: 198) argued that “this represents a different challenge to tutors than simply sending students with ‘difficulties’ to a ‘study skills’ unit, whilst they get on with the job of ‘teaching’ academic knowledge.

9.3 Adaptation

From the first interview data, it was found that Winnie was often grouped with students of the same ethnic background in an English-speaking environment and they used the same language for communication, which accords with the
comment of Tutor S that Taiwanese students should try to get to know other international students and not to stick to their own cultural group most of the time. Such a tendency might hamper the level of adaptation to the target culture although it is understandable that a feeling of shared concerns and activities is valued (Cushner and Brislin 1996). Tutor S also suggested that international students should try to ask for some help if any problems occurred. In Winnie’s case, she would not ask her supervisor to clarify the confusion after their conversation in the tutorials because she was afraid that her supervisor might think she was not studying hard or clever enough. She said that “because he didn’t explain very clearly, you know we Chinese students, how can I ask him or tell him I don’t understand. That would make him feel I am stupid.” Therefore, from this situation, with the aspect of Chinese face saving, students may not gain the help from tutors if they are reluctant to ask. Moreover, it is suggested that in Westerners’ assumption of individual autonomy: if one needs help, one will ask for it (Gao & Ting-Toomey 1998: 77). If the help is not wanted, it may cause the help-provider some embarrassment. Consequently, Western teachers may not know what problems students actually have if students do not ask for help. Therefore these Taiwanese students should try to conquer their fear of the image of teacher-authority and speaking in public forums in order to gain some help.

Winnie also indicated that Taiwanese teachers were more responsible for students’ full understanding than British tutors because most Taiwanese teachers expect to be an authority in terms of knowledge; they would take charge of the textbooks, teaching fully and making all points clear to the students (Henderson
et al, 1993: 386). This idea contrasted with Confucius' traditional idea that ideal teachers were supposed to be guides during the process of students' thinking and comprehension (On 1996); most importantly, this also confronted the Western tutors' expectations that postgraduate students should be independent, responsible for their learning and work things out by themselves. If these students were not aware of the situation and tutors did not indicate their expectations, failure in their studies might easily result.

9.4 Conclusion

This chapter has concluded a description of the difficulties these Taiwanese students encountered in their postgraduate studies in the UK and the possible relations to their previous cultural background. Being aware of the expectations of the roles between students and tutors, ways of interaction and academic writing conventions within the British academic context would certainly have been helpful to them in achieving success in the postgraduate studies.
Chapter 10

Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

Above, interviews with Taiwanese students and British tutors and tutors’ feedback were used to examine students’ difficulties in writing, and relate these to the L1 culture and British academic expectations. This current chapter will start with a summary of the outcomes of the study. In Section 10.2, a model of possible difficulties encountered by the Taiwanese students regarding academic writing and adaptation within the British academic community will then be presented. This model would show the relationships between participants’ L1 and L2 learning expectations and from it the writer derives some recommendations for future Taiwanese students. Section 10.2 will be followed by a discussion of limitations of the study, applications and recommendations for further research and some final remarks.

10.1 Summary of Findings

In this study, three interviews with five Taiwanese students were carried out at three stages (the start of their Master’s course, after their first assignment and during preparation for their dissertation). Three interviews with each student were to examine their initial conception of a different culture and their reflections on the process of preparing for their written work within the British context. By contrast, the follow-up interviews with British tutors revealed their
perspectives on British academic culture and their impressions of Taiwanese students’ performance both in class and academic writing. The feedback on students’ written work (the first assignment and dissertation) was used to show the development in students’ writing and requirements from their tutors.

In this section, I will attempt to answer the research questions and provide a framework that addresses them.

10.1.1 How do Taiwanese Students Perceive Studying in the UK?

This research question is mainly dealt with in Chapter 5.2. The result showed that most subjects had similar difficulties in terms of speaking, listening, language shock and culture shock and noticed differences in teaching styles between their host culture and home culture.

When asked the best strategy for Taiwanese students in the host academic culture, most subjects proposed that students should be open-minded towards differences and learn to be flexible. Most of the subjects believed that being in a different culture could enhance self-growth and increase one’s personal flexibility although some negative effects might occur. In order to minimize the difficulties, learners should learn to be prepared for such challenges either in academic life or daily life. Henderson et al (1993: 387-388) suggest: “be mentally prepared”, “be culturally prepared”, “be linguistically prepared”, “be involved with hosts”, “be creative and experimental”, “be culturally sensitive”, “be patient and flexible”, “be realistic in expectations”, and “accept the challenge of intercultural experiences”. It would be helpful for Taiwanese students to have a training
session before departure for the host country (Jin 1992), which could instill in the students host cultural perspectives so as to be aware of the main difference both in the aspects of study and daily life.

10.1.2 What Problems do Taiwanese Students Encounter When They Approach Their First Assignment and Final Dissertation?

This research question will be answered in two parts. First, what problems these Taiwanese students encounter when they start to write their first assignment. Secondly, what problems occur for these students in preparation of their final dissertation?

Chapters 6 and 7 provide accounts of students' writing processes, the transition from their L1 writing to the longer English writing and the related reading and writing skills in preparation to answer this research question. Moreover, tutors' feedback was adopted in this study in order to provide an explicit framework of requirements in their written work and Chapter 8.2 offered the tutors' impressions of Taiwanese students performance both in class and written work, which reflected traits of their home culture compared to the host culture.

10.1.3 How do British Tutors See British Academic Culture?

Chapter 8.1 indicated the feedback from these tutors on their beliefs about British academic culture, in terms of the main features, the roles between postgraduate students and their tutors, the ways of interaction, and marking
requirements of written assignments.

This research question addresses the expectations from tutors within British context towards postgraduate students' performance and tutor-student responsibility, which reveals some different expectations from the perspectives of the Taiwanese students in this study.

10.1.4 Important Features

Chapter 9 illustrates these important features with regard to different expectations between the Taiwanese students and tutors at British universities towards the different roles expected within the British academic culture, problems of students' written work and the suggestion for their adaptations. The analysis shows that both parties should respect the two different cultures in order to try to help these Taiwanese students to adapt to the British academic community appropriately and become familiar with the required conventions of academic writing.

10.2 Proposal for a Model

Based on the present study, a model of the writing and learning processes for the induction of Taiwanese students to British academic culture is proposed here. This model attempts to show the difficulties these Taiwanese students encountered regarding the preparation of their written work, the influences of their home culture on their performance and the learning expectations of the host academic culture.
The model shows the central focus of Taiwanese students' writing and learning combined with other variables presented in the boxes. The arrows show a direct influence. British academic culture influences teachers' feedback, students' writing and learning, planning for writing and other aspects of learning. Through teachers' feedback, students try to alter their planning for writing, reinforce their learning and then the product of students' writing and learning. Other factors and students' cultural background also play important roles.
British Academic Culture

By British academic culture, I refer to the roles of teachers and students, the characteristics and ways of interaction in the academic community. The interview data with British tutors offered general advice for Taiwanese students to follow. For example, what the tutors think the roles of tutors and postgraduates are, which would make the interaction smoother and more successful.
Teachers’ feedback

Through feedback given by tutors, students would know what the required elements are from the assessment. In this study, there were six essential criteria required from tutors, which were “English language”, “resources”, “arguments”, “structure”, “linking” and “referencing skills”.

Planning for writing

There are two main activities involved: difficulties and deficits. When planning for their first assignment, most students found difficulty in dealing with reading and vocabulary, choosing the appropriate L2 words for expression, and with the skills of reading and writing, etc. When preparing their dissertation, students found it hard to manage this big project, something they had never done before.

‘Deficits’ could be illustrated from both the interview data of students and tutors. For example, British tutors found that Taiwanese students were not familiar with writing the long essays and learning to critique. In tutors’ feedback on students’ written work, unclear arguments and summary of literature without arguments would often be mentioned.

Learning

Students should learn about writing (e.g. paraphrasing and the use of quotations) and study skills (e.g. reading skills), and how to interact within the British academic context and to know what differences occur between these academic cultures. Most importantly, students from a teacher-centred culture should try to
take more responsibility for their own learning; for example, Tutor S suggested that students should try to use the resource centers as much as possible.

Other factors

Factors such as contacts with the host environment and English language proficiency influence the performance of students; for instance, lack of the contacts with L2 environment (e.g. knowing few international students, sticking to the same ethnic group). Although most of the students had reached the requirement of IELTS and TOEFL test, the score could only reflect an approximate level of language proficiency, and was not the only indicator of future success.

Students' cultural background

This part deals with students' past learning experience and their L1 rhetorical pattern. In this study, in students' past learning experiences, because of the fear of teachers as authorities, they tended to solve their problems themselves instead of asking for help from tutors directly. On the other hand, without the full conception of L2 writing requirements, students tended to approach their written work as they would have done in their L1.

The model proposed above refers to a small-scale study of Taiwanese students in their writing and learning within the British academic context. I do not and cannot claim generalizability from the model. However, the model could be applied to similar contexts and can be adjusted accordingly. For example, what
would become of the model if the subjects were from other nationalities? Could it also be applied to doctoral students with a longer period of study?

10.3 Limitations of the Study

It has just been noted that generalization is not claimed for the study because of the small sample of Taiwanese students and British tutors. However, this in-depth investigation shows consistent and therefore probably typical variations and similarities between individuals, and its findings can contribute to ongoing research, e.g. in intercultural communication.

It might have been beneficial to the study if class or tutorial observation had been undertaken. However, due to the different courses, and variable times of tutorials the participants attended, observation was not included in the research methods used.

Moreover, due to the different subjects these participants were pursuing and small numbers of them in the chosen courses at this university, the researcher did not choose to investigate specific discipline-related writing requirements, which is beyond the scope of this paper. With more time allowed and larger numbers of participants, it would be beneficial to look in more detail at the “discipline-related” context of academic writing by international postgraduates.
10.4 Application and Recommendations for Further Research

After the one-year postgraduate course, these five subjects of Taiwanese origin finally "survived" and achieved their goals of gaining a postgraduate degree. They are all now working in Taiwan. It is noticeable that more and more Taiwanese students are coming to the UK for their undergraduate or postgraduate studies. It is acknowledged that more attention should be paid to the aspects of students' writing and learning within the specific academic context, i.e. the UK context.

From the results of this study, it is suggested that students could be given a "pre-departure" training back home in order to acquire more knowledge of the different expectations of the target culture and to make suitable adjustments more easily. This could also reflect their own L1 common standard of perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting in order to maintain their home identity.

Further research into Taiwanese learners' autonomy, into student expectations of good teachers in different cultural settings, investigation of specific cultural dimensions, and the process of cultural adaptation of different nationalities of overseas students, might throw more light on this important area. Moreover, a survey of Taiwanese students in Taiwan could be considered with regard to their conception of the roles between tutors and students within the different context of learning; for instance, elementary school, junior high school, senior high school and the university settings.
10.5 Final Remarks

In this study, I have uncovered some general trends or patterns amongst the same ethnic group of learners, undergoing the same experience in a different culture in terms of their writing and learning. However, the general trends or patterns do not necessarily apply to every person of the same culture, and may possibly occur in other cultures as well. Moreover, it is worth remembering that “there are no better cultures, there are only different cultures” (Henderson et al, 1993: 387).

To conclude, this study is a first step towards an overall understanding of writing and learning from the perspective of Taiwanese students. This research was undertaken in the hope that it would help both Taiwanese students and British tutors to acknowledge and appreciate their cultural differences in an academic context, and to enable them to work more successfully together.
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# Appendix

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Appendix A: Interview Questions for Taiwanese students

& British Tutors

There are three sets of interview questions for Taiwanese students and one set of interview questions for British tutors. Following, the interview questions for Taiwanese students will be presented:

**The 1st Interview Questions for Taiwanese Students**

1. What is your subject at this university?

2. How long have you been in England?

3. a. Do you use English every day?
   
   b. Do you read or listen to English every day?
   
   c. Think about today. When have you used English? And how?

4. a. How much time do you spend talking in English per day?
   
   b. Do you often talk with native speakers (or non-native speakers)?
   
   c. How long do you spend speaking English outside your classroom generally per day?

5. How many years have you studied English? (in Taiwan and then in England)

6. Which skill (speaking, reading, writing and listening) do you think is the most difficult one for you when you learned English in Taiwan? Why?

Now I’d like to ask you some questions about the pre-sessional course. I’m particularly interested in your reactions to the way of studying here in the
7. a. At the beginning of your pre-sessional courses (or language courses), which skill (speaking, reading, writing and listening) was the hardest for you?
   b. How about now?

8. a. What do you think about your pre-sessional courses (or language courses)?
   b. What were the useful parts?
   c. How could it be improved (any suggestion)?

9. a. How do you compare the English teachers and Taiwanese teachers (friendliness, approachable, how they teach)?
   b. What do you think are the main differences?

10. a. How do you feel about the lectures/seminars in your courses? (reactions to the teaching methods?)
    b. How about the lectures and seminars in Taiwan?

11. What do you do if you do not understand something in a lecture?

12. a. Please describe your ideas about Chinese academic writing? How about English academic writing?
    b. How difficult do you find it?
c. How do you write it?

d. How do you learn academic writing? (in English/in Chinese)?

e. How do you think you learn to write more effectively?

f. Do you feel any difference between Taiwanese (Chinese-ethnically) and British writing styles?

g. If so, how have you learned English writing styles?

13. a. What are your reactions to the pre-sessional course? Useful?

b. Are you enjoying your textbooks? (reading)

c. Do you feel any difficulty reading them?

d. Do you use some skills (e.g. skim or scan) for your reading?

e. What other skills do you use?

14. a. Do you speak as much as you want to in the class?

b. If not, why not?

15. Do you translate from Chinese in your head? When?

16. Do you learn new words by heart? (e.g. from your reading) How? What kinds of words?

17. Do you have any strategies for learning new words? How do you do this?

18. a. Why do you want to come to Britain to study? (improve English?)

b. Future plans?

19. a. Do you think some people are better at learning a second language than others?

b. What kind of person do you think is better learning a second language or a foreign language? (e.g. introverted, extroverted, or intelligent, etc.)

20. Do you think that age is the important point when learning a second language
or a foreign language? Please describe.

21. a. Do you have any learning strategies to overcome difficulties in learning English?

   b. What kind of difficulty?

22. What kind of characteristics do you think a good language learner should have?

23. Can you give some brief words for describing your academic life in the UK since your arrival?

24. Does this apply to you when you firstly come to U.K.? Which parts? Tell me about it.

**Language Shock**

☐ L2 speakers feel that they will look comic in speaking L2

☐ Feel criticism and ridicule

☐ Have doubts as whether their words actually reflect their ideas

☐ Lose Narcissistic gratification\(^4\) (losing attention and praise)

**Culture Shock: the shock of the new**

☐ Surprise, anxiety, even disgust and indignation after becoming aware of cultural differences.

☐ Confusion in role, role expectations, values, feelings and self-identity.

☐ Feel stressed, strained (due to the effort required to make necessary psychological adaptations).

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\(^4\) This phrase is favoured by Strengal (1939) and the writer has adapted it, but took care to paraphrase it to the subjects in English and Mandarin Chinese.
Being rejected by/and or rejecting members of the new culture.

A sense of loss and feelings of deprivation in regard to friends, status, profession and possessions.

Feelings of impotence due to not being able to cope with the new environment

*Do you think the above situation applied on other Taiwanese students as well as far as you know?

*Culture shock may be important for self-development and personal growth. Please describe your feelings about it. Any benefits?

25. What would you suggest to help Taiwanese students avoid language shock? How to improve this as you suggest?

26. What would you suggest to help Taiwanese students avoid culture shock? How to improve this as you suggest?

27. Do you have any ideas/opinions about research interviews? (types..)

28. Can you tell me your impressions of this interview (as a research interview)? Purpose? Outcome? Have you told me what I want to know? Why? If not, why not?

29. I have no further questions. Do you have anything more you want to bring up, or ask about, before we finish this interview?

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5 Here understood as the subjective feelings caused by operating solely in L2, carefully paraphrased in English and Mandarin Chinese to the subjects.

6 Here understood as the subjective feelings caused by operating in a different culture, carefully paraphrased in English and Mandarin Chinese to the subjects.
1. How did you choose your topic?

2. Where did you get your ideas to write?

3. Do you try to read everything before writing? Can you tell me the process such as reading, then writing, and then reading again?

4. How do you decide that you’ve read enough?

5. How do you use your reading in writing?

6. Do you take notes when you read?

7. What sort of notes? In the way of Chinese or English?

8. What do you do with the notes?

9. Do you discuss your written work with friends? Or your tutors?

10. Do you write an outline first and then expand the outline, or do you write without an outline and then redraft?

11. How many drafts do you write?

12. Did you quote a lot? Do you like quoting?

13. How did you quote? Can you tell me how to quote from a book or an article?

14. Do you acknowledge quotes? How?

15. Do you use a spell-checker and a grammar-checker?

16. Do you ask somebody to check your grammar, vocabulary, or presentation before you hand your assignment in? What sort of advice/feedback do you get?

17. What sort of feedback did you get from tutors?

18. What do you do with your feedback? Do you read through it or just leave it?
Why?

19. Do you understand the feedback? If not, why not?

20. Do you think the feedback was helpful? Or fair?

21. How is feedback useful?

22. Has the feedback made any changes in the way you approach writing?

23. Do you approach the task of writing in English differently from the way you approach it in Chinese? Please describe.
The 3rd Interview Questions for Taiwanese Students

1. How did you choose your topic for your dissertation?

2. Where did you get your ideas to write?

3. Did you try to read everything before you write? Can you tell me the process such like you read, then write and read again...?

4. How do you decide that you’ve read enough?

5. How do you use your reading in writing?

6. Do you take notes when you read?

7. What sort of notes? In the way of Chinese or English?

8. What do you do with the notes?

9. Do you discuss your written work with friends? Or your supervisor? Or not at all?

10. Do you write an outline first and then expand the outline, or do you write without an outline and then redraft?

* Can you tell me what the structure of your dissertation? (Category: Structure of her Dissertation (3) in Appendix C)

* Do you follow the scheme of “Situation-Problem-Solution (Response)-Evaluation”? If not, why not? Please describe. (Category: Scheme
What sorts of problems in writing are you encountering at the moment?

11. How many drafts are you going to write?

12. Did you quote a lot? Do you like quoting?

13. How did you quote? Can you tell me how to quote from a book or an article?

14. Did you acknowledge quotes? How?

15. Did you use a spell-checker and a grammar-checker?

16. Are you going to ask somebody to check your grammar, vocabulary, or presentation before you hand your dissertation in? Why?

17. What sort of feedback did you get from your supervisor about your drafts?

18. How do you do with your feedback? Will you read through it or just leave it? Why?

19. Did you understand the feedback? If not, why not?

20. Did you think the feedback was helpful? Or fair?

21. How was feedback useful?

22. Has the feedback made any changes in the way you approach writing in your redraft?
23. Do you approach the task of writing in English differently from the way you approach it in Chinese? Please describe.

24. Can you tell me about your experience after this 9 months (12 months)?

25. What’s your future plan?

26. Can you briefly tell me how you feel about the difference between Chinese academic culture and British academic culture?
The Interview Questions for British Tutors

There are 15 questions for British tutors:

1. Which department do you work for and what subject do you teach? Roughly how long have you been a university teacher?

2. I understand that you have some experience of teaching international students, including those from Taiwan. In which contexts have you taught Taiwanese students? Roughly what percentage of your classes has been Taiwanese up to now?

3. In relation to teachers' roles, what do you think is normally expected of a lecturer in the British university?

4. In relation to students' roles in the learning context, what do you think is normally expected of a student in a British university?

5. In relation to ways of communicating, what kind of student-teacher interaction is normally expected in a British university?

6. How would you describe the main characteristics of 'British academic culture'?

7. In general, what have you noticed about Taiwanese students' performance in class in comparison with that of other students?

8. In general, what have you noticed about Taiwanese students' performance in
written assignments in comparison with that of other students?

9. In general, what have you noticed about the level of improvement shown by Taiwanese students over the academic year in comparison with other students?

10. What elements do you normally pay attention to when marking students’ assignments (all students)? What kind of feedback do you usually give?

11. Can you identify any “particular” problems that you have encountered in marking Taiwanese students’ assignments? If so, what do you think are the most significant?

12. Do you think cultural differences in their educational background affect L2 (second language) students’ written assignments? If so, can you describe any specific cultural differences that you think have this effect?

13. Do you think it is part of your job to teach L2 (second language) students how to write appropriately in the discipline they are studying with you at Leicester?

14. Do you think it is part of your job to learn about the cultural and educational backgrounds of Taiwanese and other international students?

15. Finally, are there any further comments you would like to make, based on your knowledge or experience, about how Taiwanese students work and how they are taught in the British university context?
Appendix B: One Sample Transcript

Elaine’s 2nd Interview

I: 你可以用英文或中文回答都可以，你假如覺得好就好. [you can use either English or Chinese to reply my interview questions, which you feel more comfortable with.]
A: 中文是比较容易一点 [it is easier to use Chinese for answers]

I: How did you choose your topic?
A: I wanted to write something which is related to my specialty as a teacher in Taiwan. And speaking, 我覺得是感覺台灣學生比較弱的一環，至少我是覺得我自己感覺比較弱的，所以一方面也是希望幫助我了解一下自己的困難怎麼去解決. [I think that speaking is the weakest one for Taiwanese students. At least, for myself. So I like to know how to solve my own difficulty in speaking.]

I: 好 [ok], where did you get your ideas to write?
A: 你是講 general, 還是這篇? [you mean ‘in general’ or this assignment?]
I: 這篇. [this one]
A: Readings 我就看一些書, 先做. [I will read some books first.]

I: 什麼書? [what kind of books?] 是老師 bibliography 裡面的? [Are these books from the tutor’s bibliography?]
A: 對, 是老師 bibliography 裡面的書 [yes, they are.]

I: 所以你就邊看邊收集, 邊念這樣子? [so you read and collect the important points together at the same time?]
A: 對. [right]

I: Did you try to read everything before you write?
A: Yes, before I write, I usually do skimming 大概看一下, 沒有看得很詳細, 可是當我大綱出來的時候，我要寫關於什麼部分, 有關的, 我就會精讀. [normally I read roughly first and I don’t read in details at that time. After my outlines come out, I will read the details of some information related to my topic.]

I: 所以你是先 skim 完之後, 然後把大綱弄出來? [so you mean after you skim, you will have the outlines constructed afterwards?]
A: 沒有, 我會先看一些比較 general 的東西, 看完之後, 我就寫大綱, 大綱寫完之後, 我再看, 這次我就把我看的東西丟到大綱裡面去，譬如說這個東西我在哪一個章節內可以用，我就把它丟進去，對，就是這樣 [no. I will
I: read some general stuff, after that, I will construct my outlines. After the outlines, I will read again, then put what I have read into these outlines.

I: 之後你就開始念，念完之後再開始寫？[then you will start to read again and after finishing the readings you will then start writing again?]
A: 好，沒有，我就一邊念，一邊念囉。[no, I will write and read together.]

I: 好 [ok], how do you decide that you have read enough?
A: When I feel bored, I stop reading. 我覺得很煩的時候 [when I feel fed up with the readings]

I: 那你會不會開始去寫？[so will you start to write if you feel so?]
A: 不是，我就是開始寫的時候，我就沒有再念了，我就只有念我之前看過的東西要放進去的這樣子。[no, before writing the assignment up, I would finish all reading. I only read something I have read before and these stuff are what I am going to put into my assignment.]

I: How do you use your reading in writing?
A: 我會怎麼講呢？[how can I describe?] 有些要引用的，就引用呀 [if it is for quotation I will quote], paraphrase 或是直接引用 [or direct quoting], 那其他就是說譬如說我看到一些東西會 stimulate some ideas [some others might stimulate some ideas which might be similar or not similar to what I have read, which could become my argument], 這個東西，可能有些是跟我唸過的某些東西是類似的，可是還是不一樣，就可以變成我自己的 argument. 不過我覺得最重要的基礎是 reading, [but I think the most important foundation is reading] 再來就是我寫的都是有關於我的經驗 [then I will write about my own teaching experiences], 所以說我觀察我的經驗然後配合這個理論，然後形成我的 argument 這樣子，[so I will evaluate my own teaching experiences and then combine them with the theories I have read for building up my argument.]

I: 好 [ok], do you take notes when you read?
A: Yes.

I: What sort of notes? I mean in the way of Chinese or English?
A: English

I: 你就是寫 notes 寫 English.[you will write notes in English?]
A: 對，寫英文 [right, notes are written in English]

I: 那你會寫什麼樣的 notes? [What kind of notes will you make?]
A: 嗯，譬如說我要引用的，其實很簡單，我就會把它大概的 idea，它的出處在哪裡，寫在我的大綱下面 [for example, for the quotes, I will write their general ideas, their resource under my outlines.], 譬如說這個章節 [for
I'd like to talk about speech and the difference between spoken language and written language. For example, I got the information from Brown & Yale, I would write down their ideas and note its page down.

I: OK. What do you do with the notes?
A: I would write down where I get the information from. For example, I got the information from Brown & Yale, I would write down their ideas and note its page down.

I: Do you discuss your written work with your friends or your tutors?
A: When I construct my outlines, I would show the outline to the tutor but not in the later writing process. Some tutors will read your draft. If he/she likes to read, I will show the draft to him/her. He may have some suggestion so I will follow the suggestion and redraft again.

I: Do you write an outline first and then expand the outline or do you write without an outline and then redraft? Or both?
A: I would write down where I get the information from. For example, I got the information from Brown & Yale, I would write down their ideas and note its page down.

I: 還是會 redraft 這樣子？[then you will redraft it?]
A: 是的 [yes].

I: 細心 [you are very careful with your writing.]. Did you quote a lot?
A: Quote a lot...嗯, 有些章節會 [in some chapters, I will quote some.], 你要看題目 [it depends on the title of the assignment.], 因為像我寫 ELT Methodology, 因為看的書比較多, 所以我用的 quote 也比較多一點 [when I wrote about my ELT methodology assignment, I have done more readings; therefore, more quotes were found in this assignment.], 某個章節, 因為我想說可能要 quote 多一點, 表示我讀很多書 [initially I though if I put more quotes in my assignment, that means I did a lot of readings.], 但是後來我看他們的 comment, 我發現不需要 [but later from the comment of tutors, I don't think it
is necessary to put lots of quotes in. In one section, they mentioned that this part rely a lot on the quotation. [如果我在這部分寫到，其中一個部分，他們就說我這個 part, rely a lot on the quotation, 那我如果重寫這個章節，我會用很簡短的綜合意見，然後把所有的作者都列在後面，其實他們表達是同一個概念，只是我覺得我這樣一直重複，一直重複，表示比較有力量，但是後來我發現好像不是，我那個章節有比較多，那其他比如說我有講到 [if I rewrite this section, I would use a short concluded opinion for expression and then put all authors' surnames who hold the same idea after that. Before, I felt if I repeated and repeated the same concept again, this concept seemed to be more powerful. But later I found out that it is not necessary to do so.]

I: 你現在覺得要怎麼做了呢？[so you know what to do now? Is it better to paraphrase than quoting?] 要 paraphrase 而不要去 quoting.
A: 你現在是講 direct quoting? [now you mean direct quoting?]
I: 對 [right]
A; 是，我覺得 paraphrase 會比較好 [I think paraphrase is much better.]
I: 然後把作者的名字，很多作者講過這種事情 [then add many authors’ surnames who have mentioned the same ideas…]
A: 把他們都放在一起 [put them all together.]
I: 你覺得這樣會比較好去 quote 文章好？[so you feel it is better to do this way?]
A: 會比較好，只是有時候怎麼講，他用的文字很好，你沒有辦法用的比他更好，[yes. But sometimes if the writer’s words are so beautiful and you can’t change it.]
I: 所以你會說用直接 quoting 比較好？[so at that time, you would feel it is better to use direct quoting?]
A: 對，有些東西比如說他(Atkinson) 說過度仰賴 mother tongue 會有四個問題，其實他用的文字是很簡單的，如果我再寫，我就會 paraphrase. [right, if some sentences are much simpler, I will paraphrase the writer's sentences. Like what Atkinson said there are four problems of using mother tongue, the words he used to describe things are quite simple, so I will paraphrase them.]
I: 那你可以不可以告訴我說 do you like quoting? [can you tell me, do you like quoting?]
A: Quoting? 其實怎麼講喜不喜歡呢?[quoting? How can I say if I like it or not?]
paraphrase them? Will you look them up in some thesaurus dictionaries?

A: I will, 可是我現在怎麼講, 其實我覺得跟 Wasyle 有學到一些東西, 以前我覺得很困難, 現在其實你 paraphrase 的話, 譬如整段, 你就可以用一個句子來 paraphrase, 譬如說它講那個 Canadian Swan 的 communicative language teaching, 它的 four principles, 他就用一個句子或兩個句子, 其實那個是三面的東西, 現在我也會抓, 就是把主要的 concept 講出來就好了 [I will try to find out the main concepts to paraphrase them], 我以前會很害怕說如果 paraphrase 我會 miss 掉某些論點 [before I was afraid of using paraphrase because I was afraid that I may miss some points], 我現在覺得沒有關係, 就是把主要的 concept 講出來就可以了, 就是用自己的話來講 [now I feel I can do it. Just try to using my own words to express the main concept], 以前會想說改一下它的結構, 主動變被動呀, 或者單字換一換這樣子現在就是會想怎麼樣變成濃縮這樣子. 就是簡短, 這樣你就會改整個結構跟用字, 我發現這樣比較有幫助. [before I would try to change its structure or verb form or synonym, but now I will try to condense or simply them which I find helpful.]

I: OK, do you acknowledge the quote?

A: Yes, I do.], 只是有時候我會看到一個句型很好, 我會把它抄下來, 只是我會用同樣的句型表達不同的觀念, 那變成說那是我自己的觀念, 只是我會用它的句型. [sometimes when I read some good sentences, I will write them down and use that sentence structure to express different stuff of mine.]

I: 那蠻好的 [that's good.]

A: 如果直接引用的話, 就會寫出來. [if I use the direct quoting, I will acknowledge it.]

I: How many drafts do you write for this assignment?

A: Draft, 就草稿嗎? 就只有一份. [only one draft]

I: 那你中間就修修改改小地方這樣? [that means you will change in between?]

A: 對 [right]

I: Do you use spell-checker and grammar checker from your computer?

A: Yes.

I: Do you ask somebody to check your grammar, vocabulary, or presentation before you hand your assignment in?

A: 就 tutor 呀.如果他們要改, 就讓他們改 [I will ask the tutor. If they want to check it, I will show my assignments to them.]

I: What sorts of advice or feedback did he give to you?
A: 像有些老師會幫忙改文法, 像 Peter 就會, 但有些老師就不會, 他們都會建議跟你說你這個 argument 不是很 clear, 要改呀, 或者是你要找 resource 去支持它這樣子. [some tutors may help checking your grammar but not all of them. They would suggest like your argument is not clear and you need to make it clearer or you need to find resource to support your argument.]
I: 就是說不是你自己的話去講它這樣子? [your can’t use your own words to express it?]
A: 什麼意思? [what do you mean?]
I: 就是說要去多看幾本書來支持它嗎? [does it mean that you need to read more books to support it?]
A: Mm, 不一定 [it is not always like that], 譬如說你這個論點不清楚, 你要寫的清楚一點. [For example, if your argument is not clear, you need to make it clearer.]
I: 就是寫再 clear 一點? [you mean write more clearly?]
A: 或者是說你這個 claim 應該有東西來支持它 [or you can say you need to have resources to back up your claim]. 也不一定要多看書, 可能要再翻我的 notes, 如果有相關的, 就把它寫下去 [sometimes I don’t need to read more books. I just go back to my notes and find the related information to write it down]. 如果我改, 我就加 footnote, 就不要再動結構了 [if I change something, I will add them as footnote and I will not change the structure]. 這樣改比較麻煩, 因為有時候你改這個東西, 你就變成整段要修改一下, 讓它很流暢, 看起來不會說很突兀突然出現一個東西 [because it is troublesome to change the whole thing.], 所以通常如果建議我說這個 not clear, 或者要 resource, 我就會用 footnote. 這樣就不用去改原來的東西. [if the tutor suggests that my claim is not clear or I need to provide the resource, I will put these as footnotes in order to keep the original flow.]
I: OK what sort of feedback did you get from tutors about this assignment?
A: 不是給你了嗎? (laugh) [I did give it to you, didn’t I?]
I: 我要你講給我聽, 請講給我聽 [please elaborate it now]
A: 他說比如說有些東西沒有根據, 我這個 claim 沒有根據 [He says that I don’t have the support to this claim.]
I: 就是說他必須要看看還有誰講過這些話? [so he would like to know who has ever claimed this?]
A: 對 [yes.], 比如說我講到說因爲我們中國人比較容忍 silence, 所以我們用的 hesitation device 就沒有他們那麼多, 他就說 [for example when I wrote
about Chinese people are more tolerant with silence; therefore, our hesitation
device will not used as much as that in English. Then he said...

I: 這個從哪來的？[where did your claim come from?]  
A: 對呀，你怎麼樣可以做這個 claim，有沒有論點可以支持他 [yes, you are  
right. I should find the resource. The tutor said in the feedback that how can you  
use this claim without any supports?]  
I: 你是有念過這方面的書，才會有這種想法嗎？[did this claim come from  
your readings?]  
A: 沒有，我的感覺是這樣的 [no, I feel it in this way.], 因為我覺得他們會用  
well, sort of, kind of, many things, 我的感覺我們的中文好像是嗯, 好, 就這樣  
子而已, 不會像他們那麼多東西, [because I feel British people will use ‘well’;  
‘sort of’, ‘kind of’ for hesitation device. I feel when we speak Chinese, we won’t  
use that much stuff.]  
I: 那你後來怎麼去改？[so how did you change it finally?]  
A: 因為他們不看我的 draft, 所以我後來就沒辦法改那個 comment 裡面的東  
西. [because they didn’t read my draft, so I didn’t change it.]  
I: 那如果你下次在寫別篇的 assignment 的時候，[how about for your next  
assignment? Will you do so?]  
A: 我就不會做這種 claim 了，我會想說我可以找到什麼 resource 的，或是我  
會講說根據什麼，根據我的觀察，或者是我寫書的經驗這樣子 [I would not  
do it in this way. I would indicate what resource I use, or from my observation or  
teaching experience.]  
I: 好 [ok], how do you do with your feedback? Will you read through it or  
just leave it?  
A: 我真的是看蠻多次的.[I really did read the feedback several times.]  
I: 就是說它講到什麼就會去翻這樣子？[following the comments, read every  
single one?]  
A: 對對對 [right].  
I: Did you understand the feedback?  
A: Yes.  
I: Did you think the feedback was useful?  
A: Yes.  
I: How? How useful do you think?  
A: 我覺得不只是對這個 topic，也是對我寫這整個 academic 的方式會有蠻  
正面的影響, [I feel the feedback is not only useful for this topic but it has the
positive influence for my whole academic writing.]
I: 所以你幾乎每篇有 feedback 回來的時候, 你就會去看就是了? [so you will 
read every feedback from the tutors afterwards?]
A: 對對對. [yes, I do.]
I: 然後看看說有沒有辦法可以改進的? [then think about if you could 
improve your writing?]
A: 嗯 [yeah]
I: 很好 [good], has the feedback made any changes in the way you 
approach writing?
A: Yes, I think so.
I: 所以就是說你在寫下一篇的時候, 可能就不會犯這一篇的錯誤這樣子?
[so that means when you write the next assignment, you may not make the 
same mistakes from the previous assignment. Is this right?]
A: 嗯 [yeah]
I: Do you approach the task of writing in English differently from the way 
you approach it in Chinese?
A: 這很難講, Chinese 沒有寫過這樣的文章. 我想應該有吧 [it is very 
difficult to say. I haven’t done this kind of assignment in Chinese but I think I 
would approach it differently.]
I: 你覺得有? [yeah?] 假如說同一個題目, 你現在要寫中文 (in Taiwanese),
你會用同一個方式去寫它嗎? 譬如說 layout 啦? [if it is the same topic and 
you need to write it in Chinese, will you use the same way to write it? Such as 
layout?]
A: 我想應該會. 我覺得多少會受... 因為我寫第一個 academic assignment 的 
經驗是從英文來的, 我想多少會有影響, 我會有很清楚的 outline 先出來這樣, 
照著寫. [I probably will. I think my writing would be affected because my first 
academic assignment was written in English. So I will have a clear outline first 
and then follow the outline to write it up.]
I: 你覺得還有不會有什麼地方會有點影響? [what other parts do you think 
will be affected?]
A: 用詞遣字會比較好. [I think my word expression would be much better in 
Chinese.]
I: 比較 academic 一點? [more academic?]
A: 不是, 就是說中文方面, 我們 have a better command of our mother 
tongue.[no, we should say in Chinese writing, we have a better command of our
mother tongue.]所以我覺得在vocabulary的變化上，表達上會 [so I feel for
the usages of vocabulary, we will express...]

I: 會比較優美一點? [more elegant?]

A: 對, 會比較 precise. [right, more precise.]像我覺得會受限在我們的英文能力，所以一個概念我就會必須遷就於我的字彙，句型來表達。[when we write
in English, our English expression is limited by our English ability.]

So do you think what’s the main problems of your writing as personal?

Writing? (think)

I: 有人是說 original, concept, vocabulary, 或是 grammar 呀 [some people
would mention something like original, concept, vocabulary, or grammar?]
What do you think?

A: 我是覺得 vocabulary 跟 grammar 還好啦, 因為最主要是你對這個題目的了解程度。[I feel vocabulary and grammar are all right for me. The main thing is
how much do you know about this title?]

I: 所以到現在你覺得 writing 是還好, 沒有多大的問題咧? [so you feel your
writing is all right and not too much problematic for you?]

A: 我不能這樣講 (both laugh), 我覺得最困難, 最難產的也就是你要決定一個
topic, 可是一旦 outline 出來之後, 我就覺得比較..., 一旦開始寫作, 就很快了.
最辛苦就是在唸的時候, 最花時間是 reading, 還有就是你那個整個概念
成型之前, 那個是最辛苦的, 寫的時候倒是還好, 不過寫完的時候, 我就希
望說有人可以幫我看一看, 對。[I don’t agree with you. I think the most difficult
stages is what topic you are going to choose. But after the outline comes out, my
writing is much quicker. The hardest part is when you do your readings and it
takes a lot of time and also how to build up your own argument. The writing
process is all right for me but I prefer to show my draft to someone to check after
finishing it.]

I: 所以你覺得就是剛開始那一部分說要去找 idea 的時候比較難? [so you
feel the initial stage, like finding the ideas, is more difficult for you?]

A: 對,你要決定題目, 要寫 outline, 一開始比較難, 還有剛開始寫前半段得
時候比較難 [you are right. It is more difficult what topic you are going to
choose and the construction of the outline. The beginning is much harder.]

I: How about now?

A: 你現在到底在問什麼? (both laugh) [I got confused, what you are asking
now?]

I: 對不起, 我問錯了, 應該是你寫第一篇的時候, 你的 main problem 是什
 hiểu? [sorry, I asked the wrong one. For your first assignment, what’s your main problem of writing?]
A: ㄡ，是這樣子，剛開始寫第一篇ㄡ，這不是第一篇嗎？第一篇是 formative，這一篇最困難的是什麼?那時要決定 topic 到是要寫 reading 或是 writing 的時候. Oh, reading 或是 speaking 的時候. [ok, firstly when I wrote the first one. The first one is ‘formative assignment’. At that time, the most difficult stage was I didn’t know which topic (reading, writing or speaking) I am going to choose.]
I: 就想的蠻久這樣? [you spend more time on thinking about it?]
A: 也不只想, 也看了很多 reading 方面的書, 花了很久的時間, 又很害怕沒有辦法在 deadline 之前寫完. [not only spending time thinking, I also read a lot of books and it took me a long time and I was so frightened that I couldn’t finish the assignment by the deadline.]
I: 除了這個之外, 應該都還好囉? [apart from this, how about others?]
A: 再來就是一開始我寫了一段去給 Julie 看, 她就跟我說你不能只有做 reporting, 一開始最難的就是你要有自己的 argument, 這比較難, 因爲以前都是寫報告, reporting 就好了, [then I wrote something to show it to my tutor. She suggested that I can’t only do reporting from my readings. I need to have my own argument which is the most difficult one at the beginning stage.]
I: 所以你覺得那個是蠻難的? [so you feel constructing your own arguments is very difficult for you?]
A: 一開始 [yes, at the beginning stage]. 後來就發現什麼樣的理論, 你都可以拿到你的 context 裏內去測試, 你會發現說因爲文化的不同, 因為我們學習態度學習策略的不同, 很多理論都不是能行的通. 你就把那個理論跟你教書的經驗應證, 你就會發現還是有很多地方可以發揮 [later I found that you can use some theories to test out in your cultural context. You will then find, because of different culture; different learning attitude, different learning strategies, some theories might not be worked out in our culture. Also you need to put the theory and your teaching experience together and you will find you have a lot to write about.]
I: 好, 我們完成了. [OK, this interview is finished.]
Appendix C: Second and Third Interviews

Beth: Second (2) & Third Interviews (3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</table>
| **Key:** | (2)= 2nd Interview  
|           | (3)= 3rd Interview |
| **Topic Chosen for First Assignment** (2) | 1. related to her work experience  
|       | • read some relevant materials before  
|       | • chose her topic from the topic list provided by the tutor  
|       | • felt interested in the topic and maybe the topic was easier for writing  
|       | 2. from the reading list  
|       | • from some websites or from some books relevant |
| **Topic Chosen for Dissertation** (3) | 1. related to her four-year work experience in radio station and her personal interests in classic music  
|       | 2. from books, interviews, internets |
| **Reading Preparation** (2) | 3. did not read everything before writing  
|       | • skimmed the outline, the title or sub-title of every book or articles, picked up the relevant titles and then read it exactly and precisely  
|       | • outline → reading → writing  
|       | 4. felt enough of her reading then started writing and estimated the words if it's enough, then stopped. If the word number wasn’t enough, she would read more  
|       | 5. picked some relevant stuff (positive, negative angles or opinions creative or sensible) then paraphrased it in her own language to make sure she understood  
|       | 6. she took notes while reading  
|       | 7. mostly in English but outline sometimes in Chinese; took notes from books and lectures  
|       | 8. classified them into several kinds of category; keyed them in the computer or wrote on the papers |
| **Reading Preparation** (3) | 3. did not read everything before writing  
|       | • checked the contents of the books, picked up the titles which she
wanted and then read the chapters and then checked the index to find the keywords and then read again
• after reading, wrote something which she thought it could be related to her dissertation
• if she felt something not enough, she would read again
4.
• checked the computer see word counts; if it is not enough, she would read something more or add something more or looked up the books again
5.
• She would rewrite the notes into her own words, in her style of writing and then put them into each section
• if the readings were not difficult to understand, she would rewrite them into her own words; but if the readings were really heavy or really professional, she couldn’t rewrite them, she would quote directly
6.
• she took notes while reading
7.
• took notes in English in order to practice English
8.
• she would rewrite the notes immediately and put them into her section of writing in her dissertation.

| Process of Writing (2)                          | 9. • Yes, discussed the outline with lectures; discussed about grammar or spelling check with the language tutor  |
|                                                  | 10. • wrote the outline first then expanded the outline                                           |
|                                                  | 11. • twice                                                                                     |

| Process of Writing (3)                          | 9. • yes, discussed with both her friends and supervisor                                           |
|                                                  | 10. • she would make an outline and then expanded it. When she wrote she would modify if she found something special. If she could not find something special, she would follow her original outline |
|                                                  | 11. • two or three. But it depended on the section. Some sections needed more modification so she would have more drafts over the section but some sections might only need one draft. |

| Structure of the dissertation (3)               | • Introduction: the purpose, the methodology, the introduction for each section                  |
|                                                  | • Methodology: data gathering                                                                 |
|                                                  | • Definition: background information of radio stations                                         |
|                                                  | • Literature Review: definition of classic music, mechanical production on music industry, history of radio in Britain |
• Subjects: the history of radio 3 and classical FM for their aim, competition, and programming
• Findings: comparison between radio 3 and classical FM for the choice of music (how they choose music and the requests)
• Secondary data: the audience research of the radio 3 and classical FM
• Conclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern (S-P-S-E) (3)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No, she just followed her supervisor’s suggestion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Originally, she put literature review after the methodology and after the background of radio 3 and classical FM and the comparison between the radio 3 and classical FM; her supervisor suggested her put the literature review before her subject background</td>
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<tr>
<td>She said “actually, she forgot what she learnt in pre-sessional course”. She never thought about this scheme for her project.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Quotation (2)</th>
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<tr>
<td>12. no, she didn’t like quotation but sometimes it is necessary to do so. “I need a quotation because what I know is limited and not very much…tutors won’t believe it’s all my idea”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. picked up the paragraph and then explained it…if some sentences were really necessary, really important or really creative, she just quoted directly and explained it with the author’s opinions and her opinions → in order to let her tutors understand she did the readings and understood the theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. yes, she knew how to acknowledge quotes</td>
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<th>Quotation (3)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. she didn’t like to quote all the time in her writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. she would paraphrase or rewrite it. She knew how to quote.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. yes, she would acknowledge quotes</td>
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<tr>
<th>Editing Strategies (2)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. only spell-checker, she didn’t trust the grammar-checker of the computer</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. asked the language course tutor to check— the suggestion from her language course tutor: he suggested Beth to quote the heavy terminology from books directly and explain it in her own words; her tutor thinks Beth is using “Chinese Paraphrase”— “change a word” doesn’t mean “paraphrase”. Beth thought she rewrote it so she didn’t need to put the citation on but the tutor felt it was not “paraphrase”, it was a copy from somebody’s work. The language tutor said that he could tell the first half part of the sentence came from her own writing but the rest of the sentence, he could tell it came from the book.</td>
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<tr>
<td>for her second essay, the language tutor said she was a good writer, her essay didn’t show any grammar and spelling problems but Beth said “I never believe him said good. It is a kind of encouragement for students to go forward and keep going.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Editing Strategies (3) | 15.  
• yes, she did. She didn’t trust the grammar-checker and she felt that she didn’t need the spelling-checker because she didn’t have spelling problems.  
• she followed the suggestion of the language tutor to leave her written work for a couple of days and went back and then read it. She sometimes found something strange and quite Chinese so she would correct it. (correct by herself)  
16.  
• she would but she couldn’t afford the proof reading charge.  
• she felt that “some parts in my work, look like very Chinese cause I just stay here a year, not for a long time. I am not quite sure if I’ve done right. Done right about what is the very formal academic work so I would like to get someone to look this for me but if it is possible.” |

| Feedback (2) | 17. (1) Firstly, her first marker said “don’t do the question before the lectures, otherwise, she won’t benefit” (she didn’t have the tutorial with the first marker). But Beth felt she gained similar things from other lectures and previous working experience. Her second marker was all right with the outline and ideas and her second marker gave her two articles to read.  
(2) The first marker felt the statistics provided in Beth’s essay wasn’t relevant, but Beth thought it was relevant.  
(3) The first marker thought Beth should discuss the theoretical and political context of violence but Beth thought they were not relevant.  
(4) The first marker felt that Beth’s bibliography was inadequently narrow but Beth didn’t know why because she almost finished all her reading list.  
18. • Read through it.  
19. • yes, she understood but she didn’t know why she should do like this. She didn’t talk to the two markers afterwards because she didn’t have time and no courage to talk to the first marker.  
20. • yeah, maybe.  
21. • she thought it was cultural difference. In her undergraduate years in Taiwan, her tutor always asks the students “contribute your own opinions as much as possible or contribute your creative ideas as much as possible”. She thought from the comment of her first assignment, her tutors wanted her to put more quotations in from the books not from her own opinions.  
22. • Definitely. For the marks, she would change to put more quotations from the books not from her own ideas. But her classmate (also from Taiwan) would insist her writing way like contributing her opinions as before. |
### Feedback (3)

17. Firstly, her tutor was impressed about she could put the tables and charts into her work. Secondly, her tutor said there were still some English mistakes in her work but it was not her tutor’s role to correct them for her so she needed to get someone to check her writing.
- Her tutor didn’t give much feedback
18. Followed her tutor’s suggestion
19. Yes
20. Yes, it was helpful.
21. Her tutor pointed out one weakness of her research so she followed the suggestion.
22. Yes, she followed the feedback. She said “…I think the point is I never done this kind of job. Normally I will follow the supervisor’s instructions”.

### Reflection on Experience (2)

23. She firstly clarified that “in Chinese, I think, I am not sure if I am right.” “In Chinese, we can use the active tense, I think.” “we think” is better than “I think”…like “we believe”, “we think”.
- “but in English, it is not recommended to write like “I think” or “we think”, these kinds of active tense.”
- “language habits” 語言的習慣 — “when I write, it is right in grammar but English people don’t speak like that” — Pragmatics Competence — e.g. Beth said to her British flatmate that “why don’t you pour hot water to melt the coffee then pour milk?” Her flatmate laughed that British people don’t say ‘melt the coffee’, they will say ‘just make coffee’.
- Her problems of writing are she can’t get used to write in the way of academic writing and some difficulties with citation, quotation, page number and paraphrase.

### Reflection on Experience (3)

23. She said that “I think the similar process is the way to gather[ing] data, the way outline”
- She didn’t think about what orders of the chapters should be put
- When she wrote, she would regard herself as a reader to see if she could understand her written work or not. Just like to tell people a story that she wrote. Her description of a written work should be like situation-problem-solution-criticism (evaluation) even thought she said she forgot about S-P-S-E.
- She didn’t have any experience in writing English dissertation before in Taiwan
- She felt that her rewriting skill was not good enough that’s why her tutor sometimes got confused about her presentation or probably her supervisor was not good in her research area
- Her tutor didn’t have problems with her dissertation structure
24. • She had learned how to write the academic writing such as organizing, to present her arguments and did such a big project she had never done before. 
  • she felt for her short essays, her tutor only wanted to see what reading they have done and they didn’t care you need to show something new, probably in dissertation but not in short essays.  
25. • to find a job related to her filed such as mass communications, radio, television industry.  
26. • she didn’t know how to compare because she didn’t do the Master’s course in Taiwan. But she felt in her undergraduate course, they were not required that formally like in England.  
  • She felt that English tutors said things more politely and they won’t embarrass students face to face even if students have done an awful job. She felt teacher in Taiwan said things more directly. She said “British lecturers will say: well, basically, this part in your essay is interesting, or this part is interesting, but…then the word after ‘but’, you can tell how terrible job you have done. I think this is the difference.”  
  • she felt that British tutors got the office hours which students could ask questions to seek help. But in Taiwan the situation wasn’t the same. She felt maybe because of the class size. In Taiwan, normally teachers need to take care of lots of students but in her MA course, only 30 students. That’s the difference.

| The Main Problems of her Writing (2) | • her problems of writing were that she couldn’t get used to write in the way of academic writing and some difficulties with citation, quotation, page number and paraphrase. |
| Problems in Dissertation Writing (3) | • she felt some her readings for the literature review were quite heavy because there were some difficult terminology inside so that she said “...if the structure of the sentences are very difficult, I really don’t know how to rewrite it in my own words, in my style”.  
  • she didn’t know how to manage or organize the formal academic writing.  
  • She still couldn’t avoid thinking in Chinese ways. The language tutor still thought she got some Chinese paraphrase in her writing but the language tutor said her writing had been improved than the last one. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</table>
| **Topic Chosen for First Assignment (2)** | 1. • related to her context as a teacher in Taiwan  
• speaking she thought is the weakest one among Taiwanese students  
• for her, speaking is also the weakest one; therefore, writing this assignment could help how to solve this problem  
2. • from readings |
| **Topic Chosen for Dissertation (3)** | 1. • followed the proposal  
2. • related to her teaching situation in Taiwan  
• related to her previous assignment |
| **Reading Preparation (2)** | 3. • before she wrote, she usually do skimming; then wrote the outline; then read thoroughly and clearly about what she wanted to write and got the related information from readings and put it into chapters of her outline  
4. • when she felt bored, she started writing  
5. • she made quotation and paraphrased from her readings.  
• did the reading and combined with her teaching experience to build up the argument  
6. • yes  
7. • put the notes and resource (author and page no.) into each chapter of her assignment outline  
• she made notes in English  
8. • when she wrote, she would read the notes first; if she forgot about what the notes were about, she would check the resource |
| **Reading Preparation (3)** | 3. • skimmed all readings → choose the topic and make the outline  
→ focus on the direction of writing → writing → reading and writing together (read for some time and start to write)  
4. • made a plan of writing: how many words in a day she needed to finish? (had the target first- if she couldn’t finish the day target, she would feel worried) |
5. • in her dissertation, she did the data analysis first because the finding would be relate to the literature review to make two parts coherent.

6. • yes

7. • she made the notes in English
• she skimmed the articles and made a tick; after the outline out, she would read the articles again and got the information related to her outline and then made the notes on the computer

8. • she would roughly note the related information down and gave the notes a little topic
• Then, she would review the notes with reference and the topic and then paste them under her outline

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process of Writing (2)</th>
<th>9. • showed the outline to the tutor; if tutors would like to check her assignment, she would show them and follow their feedback</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. • wrote the outline first and then redrafted during the writing process.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11. • only one draft</td>
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<tr>
<th>Process of Writing (3)</th>
<th>9. • she discussed her written work with her supervisor; if her supervisor wanted to read her draft, she would show it to him</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. • She would make the outline first but she might change the outline later on if she put more readings in.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. • she would show the supervisor every two chapters for feedback</td>
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| Structure of the Dissertation (3) | • Her tutor showed them the previous dissertation written by seniors so that she knew how to write the format: literature review, study, methodology, result and discussion |

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<tr>
<th>Pattern (S-P-S-E) (3)</th>
<th>• she didn’t actually answer this question</th>
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<td></td>
<td>• she said she learnt how to signpost and make links between chapters (coherent)</td>
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</table>

| Quotation (2) | 12. • she thought “more quotes mean more reading she has done and it’s more powerful”                                      |
|               | • but from the comment provided by the tutors, it was not necessary to make lots of quotes; now she would use paraphrase instead |
|               | • sometimes the author’s words were so elegant and perfect and it is not easy to paraphrase them beautifully, therefore, she would rather use direct quoting. |
|               | • she found that she use less and less direct quoting; she claimed that she would paraphrase the resource to support her argument; would not use direct-quoting often |
| 13. | • yes  
|     | • paraphrase: catch the main concept, change the structure and vocabulary; before, she was afraid of missing some points if she paraphrased  
| 14. | • yes  
|     | • if she found a good sentence structure, she would write it down and use the sentence structure to express different ideas  

**Quotation (3)**

| 12. | • she did a lot quotation in her literature review chapter but less quotation in methodology and discussion  
| 13. | • She quoted less quotations and she tended to use paraphrase; she paraphrased in order to let the flow of her assignments smooth and keep her own voice; direct quotation from other people would change the tone in her writing  
| 14. | • yes  

**Editing Strategies (2)**

| 15. | • Yes  
| 16. | • if tutors are interested in checking her written work, she would be happy to show them  

**Editing Strategies (3)**

| 15. | • yes  
| 16. | • only asked a person to check her grammar; she really concerned about her correctness  
|     | • her tutor asked people to get proof reading or peer proof reading  

**Feedback (2)**

| 17. | • some tutors would help checking grammar; some would suggest that she needs to make the argument clear or find resource to support the claim; she would add the footnote to illustrate the resource without changing the whole paragraph flow and make the whole paragraph smoothly  
|     | • for this assignment, her tutor said that there is no resource to support some of her claim; She would follow her tutor’s feedback and make a change for her next assignment (finding some resource to support her claim or according to her teaching experience)  
| 18. | • she has read the feedback several times  
| 19. | • yes, she understood the feedback  
| 20. | • yes, she thought the feedback was useful  
| 21. | • the feedback could help her not only with this topic writing but give positive influence for her academic writing  
| 22. | • yes. She thought so  

**Feedback (3)**

| 17. | • her supervisor gave her the feedback on her contents and writing skills (such as links); one of her tutors suggested that she need to have proof for what she expressed in her writings  
|     | • her supervisor wanted her to be more critical and do more arguments; but she felt difficult to do so because it was hard to
challenge the authorities; it was important to prove and support your argument when you criticize somebody

- she felt that it was hard for Chinese learners of English to criticize because they tend to think all books show the right things and they often do reports not assignments, therefore, they would tend to report instead of arguing

- Because of the cultural difference, she thought for Chinese learners of English, we need to have confidence to criticize and the confidence probably comes from readings; from the various criticism, we could develop ours. It sounded hard but training would be helpful for developing the arguments.

- her grammar checked suggested her to balance her arguments; in order to balance her argument, she needed to show the awareness of other opposite ideas from hers

18. • she would read through the feedback several times and carefully
- she preferred the feedback was for her contents not for her grammar
19. • yes
20. • yes
21. • the feedback could help you improve and pay attention to some parts you hadn’t noticed before
22. • after the feedback, she knew that she would pay more attention to signposting and made a conclusion in the end

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<tr>
<th>Reflection on Experience (2)</th>
<th>23.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• It was difficult to say because she hasn’t written this kind of assignment in Chinese</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• if using the same topic but in Chinese, she said she would follow the English way to write the outline first</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• if writing in Chinese, she felt that her expression of vocabulary would be more precise because she had a better command of mother tongue</td>
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<tr>
<td>• she thought that “reading is time-consuming” and she was afraid that she couldn’t finish the assignment before the deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>• the main difficulty of her writing—vocabulary and grammar are o.k. for her; but the most difficult period of writing is to make a decision about the topic and build up the main argument. Before, she only did “reporting” without her own argument.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• she found that it was useful to use the theory (from her readings) to put in the different-cultural context (e.g. Taiwan) and to see if it was workable</td>
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<th>Reflection on Experience (3)</th>
<th>23.</th>
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<tr>
<td>• she felt that academic writing is quite similar to Chinese treatise but she felt the thinking of Western people were more logic</td>
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</table>
and clear; but for Chinese treatise, people wrote from general to specific parts and the ending part should coherent with the beginning part.

• because she hadn’t done this long academic writing before (before she only did about 600 words in Chinese treatise), it was hard for her to make a comparison between Chinese and English writing styles.

24.

• she found a great help on developing her English ability
• she felt that her reading speed was much quicker than before and she made a great progress in her writing, reading and speaking skills.

25.

• she hasn’t thought about her future plan; she probably would continue to be an English teacher; she would like to apply her learning through this year on her teachings and made some changes instead of following the routine
• now she would notice the differences between students that’s what she learnt from her Master’s course; she would try to make students feel interested in learning English and encourage students to become autonomous language learners
• Chinese people believe “rigorous teachers would have excellent disciples”. This lead to reduce students’ autonomous interests on learning and make them dependent on teachers. Student may not learn by themselves after finishing their course.

26. • Chinese learners tend to depend on teachers; for our exams, we tend to copy from books without our own ideas; this would cause we don’t have confidence to show our own thinking and ideas; we tend to think all books are right, therefore, without the training of being independent and criticizing, we feel no confidence to express what we thought and we couldn’t learn things independently.
• because of exam-oriented system in Taiwan, all learning purpose are more instrumental; therefore, it is hard to inspire students’ learning motivation
• teachers in Taiwan often lack teacher training (teacher education)
• advantage:
  --Chinese students are more diligent (but it is hard to say so)
  --parents’ expectation and devotion on children’ education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Main Problems of her Writing (2)</th>
<th>• vocabulary and grammar are o.k. for her; but the most difficult period of writing is to make a decision about the topic and build up the main argument. Before, she only did “reporting” without her own argument.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Problems in Dissertation Writing (3) | • because of time limit, she felt pressured  
| | • she felt at the beginning of her writing dissertation, it was very hard to construct the ideas  
| | • she thought feedback from her supervisor was important, too  
| | and don’t be afraid of asking help if any difficulties occurred |
## Jenny: Second (2) & Third Interview (3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key:</strong></td>
<td><strong>(2)</strong> = 2\textsuperscript{nd} Interview  \hspace{1cm} <strong>(3)</strong> = 3\textsuperscript{rd} Interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Topic Chosen for First Assignment (2)**     | 1. • chose the familiar topic  
2. • looked up some reference and discussed with the tutor, so then discussed with some of her coursemates                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| **Topic Chosen for Dissertation (3)**         | 1. • her option course gave her idea that she would write something about presidential election in Taiwan  
• she was familiar with the culture background and the political system  
2. • found information (editorials and critiques) from the websites about the presidential election  
• also discussed with her supervisor and other tutors who were experts in advertisement and politics                                                                                                                                                                                |
| **Reading Preparation (2)**                   | 3. • tried to read everything before writing (most of the reference reading was done before she wrote)  
• from the reading, she could find some questions or some problems she couldn’t figure out before discussing with the tutor  
• when she started writing, still the reading was not enough, she would try to find another reference and even asked the help from her tutor  
4. • asked the teacher from the language centre to check her essay and got some advice. Then she looked back and compared her reference she read to see if it was enough. Also she checked the words account  
5. • she read the reference, digested, then finally wrote it down as her own language. It was like a translation because she translated into Chinese and wrote it into a Chinese way  
6. • took notes in a Chinese way.  
• took notes beside the paragraph  
7. • half notes were written in Chinese, half written in English  
8. • when she read it, she translated it into her mind to understand it. “so sometimes it is not exactly what the author mean, because I translated by my own thinking”  
• she re-put the usage into English when she wrote it
| Reading Preparation (3) | 3. • no, she didn’t try to read everything before she wrote. She said “because too much word to write so I read, write, read and write again.”  
4. • normally, she asked her supervisor and asked him if she needed to put more things in her dissertation.  
• she said “to be honest, till the last day, the day before handing in, I still tried to find some reference because I need something to support my point”.  
5. • she used some reference for supporting her opinions  
6. • yes  
7. • she tried to make notes in English. She made an outline first. Then when she read, she typed the notes into computer which was more convenient for her to write.  
• why she made notes in English this time? Because she said “if you have to translate from English to Chinese, then translate it back again, sometimes the meaning would be changed during the translation so I don’t want to lose the real meaning of it.”  
8. • keyed in her computer directly which would save her time. She said “if I want to directly quote it, I just copy it then attach it so I don’t have to write on the paper then key in again. This is easy.” |
| --- | --- |
| Process of Writing (2) | 9. • she discussed her written work with her friends and tutor  
10. • wrote an outline first (even discussed the outline with her tutor)  
11. • two |
| Process of Writing (3) | 9. • yes, she discussed with them  
10. • yes, she wrote an outline first  
11. • three drafts |
| Structure of the dissertation (3) | Chapter 1: the introduction of Taiwan political system and the environment  
Chapter 2: Taiwan campaign  
Chapter 3: American models and make a comparison between Taiwan advertisement and American Campaign  
Chapter 4: the analysis of advertisement of presidential campaign this year  
Chapter 5: Conclusion and the appendix |
| Pattern (S-P-S-E) (3) | • she said her dissertation scheme was more like Chinese Model “qi-cheng-zhuan-he” |
| Quotation (2) | 12. • the percentage of quotation would be like 40%  
• she didn’t like quoting but she said “Since reading English and to understand it is quite difficult for me, well, especially when the time is not that much. It will be convenient to quote directly, but I tried my best to avoid it”.  
13. • she said “like the definition and some points that is quite strong, so I don’t like to rewrite or to reproduce cause their words seem to be more persuasive so I quote it. If not, I will try to write in my own way”.
14. • yes. If she needs to quote directly, she would put author, the year of publishing, and the number of the page. |
| Quotation (3) | 12. • for the first two chapters, yes, because they were history part; but not for the rest of her dissertation  
13. • N/A  
14. • N/A |
| Editing Strategies (2) | 15. • she would use a spell-checker and grammar-checker from the computer  
16. • for the first essay, she asked the teacher from the language centre and her housemate who is a British to checked.  
• the teacher checked her structure more carefully but not too much on grammar; then her housemate checked the grammar and the usage of English. |
| Editing Strategies (3) | 15. • yes  
16. • her supervisor checked her dissertation structure, grammar and even the usage of English. |
| Feedback (2) | 17. • she said “I think that I have to improve my English”.  
• the course tutor felt that some words she used would make him confused  
• Jenny could tell her course tutor read very carefully through the whole piece of her essay  
18. • she read through it carefully  
19. • she understood the feedback  
20. • she thought the feedback was partly helpful because she said 21. “cause some opinions that I didn’t agree with because obviously the tutor has his own stand for this topic but my stand is a little bit different from his. I can’t agree with that but other opinions are quite helpful because of my English, some usage of words”.  
22. • she would follow the comments |
| Feedback (3) | 17. • she said “for the history part, he likes me to put more things about America”; but for the third, fourth, the conclusion chapter, her supervisor said it was very good so she didn’t make much changes. |
• her supervisor corrected her English
18. • yes, she followed her supervisor’s suggestions
19. • yes
20. • yes
21. • sometimes she would argue with her supervisor over her dissertation but she said “I think we get the balance”
22. • she just added more things and changed some grammatical mistakes

Reflection on Experience (2)

23. • quite differently.
   • She said “for English academic writing, we shouldn’t write in list. But in Taiwan, my teacher told me that is the better way to make the whole article readable”.
   • She said “But in Taiwan, at least during my study in undergraduate, teachers didn’t ask us to find much reference, they like more opinions from ourselves. But here they ask everything, they ask support for everything so it is quite different, sometimes it is quite difficult”.
   • for the structure, she said “I think it is quite similar”. She used ‘qi-cheng-zhuang-he’ to write her English essay. She said “it is like a logic, even you use another kind of language, you can’t change the logic. So normally I do like to start the definition of the topic, or introduction to what I am going to discuss, then my opinion, then the opinion against mine, I tried to discuss both sides and finally the conclusion. Normally, I do like that.

Reflection on Experience (3)
23. • She said no, this time was not much different because my supervisor allow me to think in Chinese logic and he accepted it even he thought it is quite nice.”
24. • she said “here the attitude to academic writing is more strict than Taiwan” and she learnt a lot from this; she also said “the language, cause in Taiwan, even we have to write the formal document and the report, the use of the language is not so important”
   • In Taiwan, she said “people don’t care about your grammar or the correct usage of the word. You just make them understand your meaning. But here, you need to take care of everything, you must be careful. I think it is quite different”
   • she said “I think the British tutor they don’t actively try to support you or help you” “If you don’t ask them, they will think that you know everything you have to do. They won’t ask ‘do you need help’? ‘Do I have to do something for you?’ like that. They don’t even push you unless you have to give me the draft like that. It is quite free but maybe for some students, it will be too loosen. (she liked this attitude because she didn’t like to be pushed)
• she said in Taiwan “the teachers take care of everything. They push you and they ask you and every time they meet you so somehow it might be good. But for me, I don’t like it”  
• she thought “I learn another way of organizing the articles. Cause British got British logic, British model.”  
• she said we seldom did ‘problem-solution’ scheme in Taiwan because we were taught the logic like ‘qi-cheng-zhuan-he’. So she felt that she might adapt British model to think about things in the future.  
25.  
• she would like to go find a job related to advertising or public relationship in Taiwan  
26.  
• she said “I think here the tutor won’t, they don’t feed you, they like you to find out the reference by yourself. Then discuss during the class. But in Taiwan, teachers will push you to read the things. Like they will be more strict, in the class, they may point out somebody and ask him questions to test him if this one read the reference before the class”  
• "but here, we just discuss the experience and what you get or what you got from the reference. If you didn’t do anything before class, the tutor they don’t say anything about it. On one hand, it is free then but on the other hand, students might not get enough. Cause you know, students are always lazy.”  
• she thought her course duration was shorter than other department courses. She preferred her course to be longer; therefore, she could have more chances to discuss with others and even with tutors.  

| The Main Problems of her Writing (2) | • the conventions of English academic writing should be noticed (like: to write in list)  
• finding references for your own writings  

Problems in dissertation writing (3) | • she found Chinese was difficult because some reference was in Chinese and something she downloaded from the websites is Chinese, too. She said “It is quite difficult because sometimes I can’t find the proper translation” (“...I know the meaning of Chinese but I can’t find the due word in English, so that’s the first problem”)  
• different interpretation for analyzing the data: she needed to consider her supervisor’s interpretation (tried to reach the agreement)  
• she said “we never wrote such this big academic writing before although we have done several essays”  
• she also said “I might forget thing I mention before so you have to always look back your structure and your outline, too. Make
sure the way you write is follow your direction. It will be little bit difficult” (such as organize all resources)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic Chosen for</strong></td>
<td><strong>First Assignment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(2)</strong></td>
<td>1. chose from a list of topics provided by her department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• she always started her essay very late</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic Chosen for</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dissertation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(3)</strong></td>
<td>1. firstly, she went to the library to read people's dissertations and then she found an interesting topic ‘museum logo’ and then she made an outline to show her supervisor but her supervisor felt that this topic was not big enough for a dissertation. Her supervisor suggested her to write something about ‘cooperation identity’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• the resource of her topic was limited so she read some business books but not enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• it was hard to find the definition of her topic and she didn't know how to construct and organize; Then, finally she found a book which provided four sections of corporation image. She followed it and construct her dissertation structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading Preparation</strong></td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. for the first essay, she tried to read articles and books before she wrote it but she thought it was not a good idea; after that, she said “I found the better way is writing, typing on the computer and reading at the same time”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. she found the structure (the outline) first and put the contents into the outline</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. only took a few notes: gave a word to represent the whole paragraph or made the mark on the important paragraph</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Preparation (3)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. • sometimes in Chinese, sometimes in English</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. • put the notes into different section of the outline</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. • at the beginning, she tied to read through all books borrowed from the library.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Then she found this would take so much time (waste time) and she would forget easily</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>after reading them and this was not good for organizing, either. Finally, she followed</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>the structure (outline) and find some related information to support so she read and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrote together</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. • little resource but finally she found a book and followed it</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. • she found some supported information following her dissertation structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. • yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. • she used both ways (English and Chinese) to make notes. If she could clearly</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>understand what the author means, she would make the notes in English and also give a</td>
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<tr>
<td>little topic for it. But if she couldn’t understand it (couldn’t find the keyword or</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>topic), she would make notes in Chinese with longer description</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• sometimes if she didn’t know how to express the notes in English, she would use</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese to make notes</td>
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<td>8. • notes (written in Chinese or English single word) could help her review the whole</td>
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<tr>
<td>reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>• she still couldn’t understand the whole English paragraph just skimming it</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process of Writing (2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. • talked with friends and got some suggestion; she didn’t have time to talk to the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tutor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. • wrote the outline first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. • one draft but read 2 to 3 times and made some changes (link words, paraphrase if</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without quotation) to make the whole assignment smooth and readable</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process of writing (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. • yes, both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. • yes, she made the outline first and then showed it to her supervisor and then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>followed her supervisor’s suggestion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. • she wrote for different chapters at the same time; she showed her supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncompleted version of her different chapters several times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure of the dissertation (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: the definition, process and benefit of cooperation image (cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: cooperation identity on museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Case study of cooperation image-National Museum of Marine biology and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquarium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4: Conclusion and recommendation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern (S-P-S-E) (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She felt that her dissertation was more narrative (situation) but not too much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>focused on problem and solution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation (2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. • she did quote but not sure if she quotes a lot or not; she likes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Quotation (3) | 12. • yes, she quoted a lot. She liked quoting because it was helpful for word counts  
13. • yes, she knew how to quote  
• she seldom using paraphrasing  
14. • in her dissertation, she forgot to put the quotation marks when she did the direct quoting |
| Editing Strategies (2) | 15. • yes, but her computer prefers American English usage not British one  
16. • no, because she didn’t have time to ask people to check |
| Editing Strategies (3) | 15. • yes, she preferred using British spelling system; she didn’t trust the grammar checker of computer  
16. • yes, she asked one Singaporean guy to check her dissertation because she felt his English was better than hers and she felt secure if somebody could check her dissertation |
| Feedback (2) | 17. • her tutor said “this essay is good introduction to the topic”  
• she felt that British tutors often gave students positive feedback, maybe for the encouragement. She said that “I felt it is not too bad because he said “good, good” I feel a bit happier but after that I found it is not so good, but it is o.k. for me, I don’t mind”  
18. • she read through it. She would forget what she wrote after finishing the assignment  
19. • mostly she understood the feedback but sometimes she couldn’t recognize their handwriting; she dare not ask the tutors what the handwriting was about  
20. • the feedback was short and she didn’t know what’s the tutor’s standard for assessing students’ work; she didn’t think it is helpful but the comments wrote beside the paragraph might be helpful  
21. • her tutors would give the feedback (such as good or poor) for five sections of structure (planning, research, analysis, communication, and conclusion). She didn’t know what the standard is so she just glance it and then forgot  
22. • she easily forgot what the feedback said and she would not read the previous feedback again so she thought the feedback is not that helpful for the further assignments |
| Feedback (3) | 17. • her supervisor gave her some suggestion on the contents (to talk more about it) and grammar  
• her supervisor suggested her that she need to have a little introduction and conclusion in the chapters and between |
18. • followed her supervisor’s suggestion
19. • yes but sometimes she couldn’t understand her supervisor’s hand writing
• sometimes she couldn’t understand what he meant but she would ask him again in order to understand
20. • yes, the feedback was helpful
21. • her supervisor’s suggestion made sense (like linking part and write more about the contents)
22. • write more to make the points clear

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflection on Experience (2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23. • the difference is on the grammar structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• if she reads a Chinese article and tries to write it into English: she would read through and digest the meaning of it and then rewrite it in English, then the English article would have less Chinese influence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflection on Experience (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23. • she felt that “一開始要寫英文的東西，難免還是會用中文的寫法去寫，可是我覺得後來經過這一年，我會比較知道說可能要用英文表達方式的話，應該怎麼寫，會比較清楚，不敢說很好，可是比一年前好多了” [when I first started to write something in English in my degree course, I couldn’t avoid using Chinese ways for English writings. But after the training of this year, I have known better and clearer how to write in better English. I can’t say I am good at it but at least my English writing is better than last year.”]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• she said “我會去考慮到英文的文法跟句子的結構...這個寫法中文不太一樣” [I will consider how to do a good presentation for the grammar and sentence structures in English...because the styles in English are different from Chinese.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• she would notice the difference if it was Chinese style of English writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. • she felt she had a great progress in her listening skill but she still felt her speaking was still not good enough; but she would not be afraid of speaking (she was afraid of speaking before); she felt that her reading and writing had been improved as well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. • find a job which is related to her subject: museum work, culture or art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. • she felt the relationship between students and teachers was different; in UK, she felt that after the class, she felt no relation to British tutors; but in Taiwan, closer relationship between Taiwanese students and teachers (parental system) like they would have after-class activities together (such as BBQ activities or saying the greetings for New Year, 送禮 [giving gifts])</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• in her department, people prefer immediate discussion after one hour lecture (ask students for immediate response)
• but in Taiwan the discussion seemed quite rarely happened; teachers would arrange time in advance for students for discussion; therefore, students have more time for preparation
• the system in the UK seems more free: if you hand the essays or dissertation in on time, there will be no troubles; but in Taiwan, teachers would call a roll (independent learning)

| The main problems of her writing (2) | • it is difficult for her to construct the outline (she thought it is very helpful to have the outline first when she writes)
• she has difficulty with the reading comprehension; she would use skim first but she couldn’t find the keywords immediately (lack of the scan skill); if the paragraph is important, she would read through it; often she couldn’t understand well for the first time, she needs to read twice; she thinks note-taking would be helpful to solve this problem; she is lazy about reading |
| Problems in dissertation writing (3) | • problems with the article (the), preposition, singular and plural number |
### Winnie: Second (2) & Third Interview (3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Key:**                                      | **(2)= 2nd Interview**  
** (3)= 3rd Interview**                                                                                                                                  |
| **Topic Chosen for First Assignment (2)**     | 1. • the tutor set the topic and gave students instruction how to analyze the topic  
2. • the tutor gave students instruction how to analyze and how to do the charts                                                                 |
| **Topic Chosen for Dissertation (3)**         | 1. • related to her interests; easy access to database; from reading people's dissertations; found one topic that she could handle  
2. • from English and Chinese articles, dissertation written by others                                                                                   |
| **Reading Preparation (2)**                   | 3. • read first then wrote, and then read and wrote together  
4. • finished three charts analysis and counted the words if they were enough  
5. • knew how to analyze the data (the analysis skill)  
6. • yes  
7. • first translated it into Chinese and wrote it down; later she took notes in English  
8. • wrote the key notes on a piece of paper and then put the paper separately into the certain pages of the book |
| **Reading Preparation (3)**                   | 3. • she made the proposal without reading lots of information and her supervisor changed her outline; therefore; she felt that she needed to read some articles before writing  
4. • because of time limit, she would judge herself when she have read enough  
5. • she took notes and tried to paraphrase it; before she would prefer direct-quoting  
6. • she would take notes when she read because at the beginning she didn’t make notes so she all forgot what she read  
7. • In English. But for some difficult articles, she would translate them and make her understand  
• she felt that British books were more difficult to understand than American ones because American books would directly present what the writer wants to express  
8. • put the notes into her dissertation                                                              |
| **Process of**                                | 9. • discussed with her coursemates; seldom asked the tutor                                                                                                                                             |
because she was afraid of asking the tutor directly and secondly she felt that she hadn’t done enough reading; she preferred finishing her reading first and at the very last, she would ask the tutor (why not asking the tutor?)

10. • she preferred systematic writing that was to make the outline first (like 1, 1.1, etc.) and put words into each chapter
• she spent a lot of time to digest the reading and made the outline; therefore, it is very important for her to make the outline
11. • she wasn’t used to writing the drafts; she often made changes during the writing process until she finished it

9. • yes, both
10. • made the outline first
11. • only one draft

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process of Writing (3)</th>
<th>Chapter 1: Introduction (wrote this part in the end because she didn’t know what the data analysis would come out)—what’s her purpose, what research question she would like to address; situation of Taiwan electronic industry and the trend of world</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 2: Literature Review—what theories to support the financial ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 3: Data Analysis—how to gather data, how to analysis data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure of the dissertation (3)</th>
<th>Pattern (S-P-S-E) (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| | • She found out that she needed to follow a certain module for writing her assignments. She said “像我以前念自然組的時候，我們以前寫 assignment, 作業, essay 都有一定的模式，就是說假設，提出問題，作出實驗，實驗結果，討論，有沒有證明你的假設，一定都是這樣子” [before I studied in Science for my undergraduates, when we wrote our assignment or homework, we need to have a certain structure which we need to have the hypothesis first, secondly we raise our questions from the hypothesis, thirdly we do the experiments and then the result of finding come out and then we discuss if the finding supports the hypothesis. It's always like that.]
• she said “我以前都覺得說社會組的東西 this subject base on the theory, 就是你只要把道理說出來就好了... 爲什麼還要做一些 empirical...可是 Finance 不是這樣，它一定就跟那些自然組的很像，我假設了嘅，那我假設狀況是怎麼樣，那我第二點是我先找理论, hypothesis, 提出問題, A 說什麼, B 說什麼, C 說什麼, 第三個是我做點實驗來證明 [before I thought for social science, this subject bases on the theory and you only need to describe the theories...I don't know why we need to do some empirical...when you are doing assignments in Finance, you need to follow the structure of science assignments. You need to hypothesize first and find some "theory" to support it, raise some questions and then do experiments to verify your hypothesis.]
• “我自己在做 empirical module 也是根據我的東西來設定的, 所以如果你沒有 run 這些東西的話, 你根本沒有辦法寫 analysis” [my empirical module was come out from my hypothesis. If you don't run this hypothesis, you can't have the analysis.]

• followed the scheme of S-P-S-E: “...都是走同樣這種模式, 就跟自然組一樣, 一定是假設問題, 提出問題, 之後解決問題, 就是證明問題然後提出結論, 我覺得大概都是這樣, finance 10 篇 article 大概有 10 篇都是這樣子寫” [I think most of the assignments of Finance always follow the scheme of 'S-P-S-E' that is: hypothesis, questions, verifying the questions and then conclusion.]

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**Quotation (2)**

12. • not in this assignment because this assignment relied on personal analysis of accounting and financial statements; it was very important to have a personal view and individual opinions

13. • she didn’t like direct quoting, she preferred paraphrasing

14. • the situation when she did the direct quoting:

(1) she didn’t exactly understand what the author said; therefore, she didn’t want to change it

(2) when time is limited and the direct quotation could give strong support

• she would acknowledge the quote (put the quotation mark, author surname, and which year)

**Quotation (3)**

12. • seldom; she would quote form the theories

13. • yes

14. • yes

**Editing Strategies (2)**

15. • yes, but she felt they are not useful; she said that spell-checker is o.k. but not the grammar-checker

16. • no

• her department focused more on her ideas not on her language correctness

**Editing Strategies (3)**

15. • yes

16. • no

**Feedback (2)**

17. • the tutor asked her to do more analysis

18. • she read through it and liked to know what the feedback was about

19. • she found it is really hard to recognize the tutor’s handwriting (the same as Faye)

20. • she felt that it is hard to write her personal opinions correctly; if she quoted from books and the tutor would say “this is a good piece of work of summary”; it was very hard for her to get
21. • she found the feedback is useless because she felt that the feedback was sometimes given without cares

22. • yes, she would rather write the standard answers without her own argument or opinion because her own view might be wrong

**Feedback (3)**

17. she felt that her supervisor might criticize her data analysis was not deeply investigated because she was not familiar with the theories and the reality; moreover, she didn't use the questionnaire to find a strong evidence to support; she only used her own opinion to guess what the situation might be

18.-22. • she would follow her supervisor's feedback to make some changes but she was afraid after the changes, her supervisor would forget why she needed to do so

• “要去摸索說你要用什麼數據來做這個，做出來可能要有什麼結果，做出來要怎樣解釋這樣” [you need to explore what literature your research is based on, what results you may have and how you are going to explain the results.]

**Reflection on Experience (2)**

23. • yes

• if she writes in Chinese, she will pay more attention on the syntax structure if it is elegant or not

• it was easier to understand Chinese and get more personal opinions

• when she wrote in Chinese, she didn’t need to write the outline first (not like English writing—should be systematic)

• she felt more confident writing in Chinese and it was hard for her to find the right words to express her own ideas in English

**Reflection on Experience (3)**

23. “像我以前念自然組的時候，我們以前寫 assignment, 作業, essay 都有一定的模式，就是說假設，提出問題，作出實驗，實驗結果，討論，有沒有證明你的假設，一定都是這樣子” [the same as Scheme S-P-S-E]

24. • 我覺得大部分時間要靠自己唸書什麼的，我覺得他們並沒有教導我們蠻多的東西，或者是給我們一個很明確的方向 [I think most of time studying here, we need to rely on ourselves. I don't think British tutors taught us a lot or gave us a clear direction.]

• 他講的東西假設你已經知道了，他就講一個大概的東西，或者是直接要你提出你的感覺...他已經不是 talk about the theory, 他已經是拿這 theory 去 imply 這樣的 case...你如果不是 background 很強，或者是 theory 不強的話，你會覺得聽了是一頭霧水，而且時間很短暫，逼迫你這樣的時間寫出那樣的東西出來 [British tutors taught roughly. He didn't talk about the theory. Moreover, he applied the theory in some cases. If your
background and literature review are not strong enough, you will feel so confused. And the time for preparing the assignments is so short. You are pushed to write the assignments within such a short time.] (she didn’t have the background of Finance + you should know something (theories) before going to the Master’s course)

• Therefore, Winnie felt 沒有學過財務，應該要先學點东西 before going to the Master’s course [therefore, Winnie felt that she didn’t receive complete instructions and the course pace is always rush.]

• she would not be afraid of English writing: got more confidence in it
• she felt she needed to improve her speaking and English
• she felt her reading had been improved

25. • would like to find a job related to English and her subject: Finance

26. • she said “我的指導教授和我以前的指導教授不同。我的指導教授是西方人，雖然他在這裡教書，教學方式有明顯的不同。他有自己的教學系統，教學生。他會根據學生的問題去解釋。但他會有一個系統來幫助你了解這些東西。但身邊的老師就覺得你來的時候你就要知道了 [she said I felt Eastern tutors are more responsible. I don’t mean that tutors here don’t do the preparation before the lectures...my supervisor is an oriental. Although he holds a teaching post here, his ways of teaching are different from other British tutors. He got his own system for teaching. He teaches students basing on his system, which will help students understand about the course content. However, here British tutors would expect you to know something in advance before you attend the course.]

• she felt “對台灣學習來說, 老師比較累, 學生比較輕鬆。老師給我, 我就把它背起來, 老師給我我就了解這樣” [she felt in
Taiwan, because teachers provide most of the learning stuff which makes students feel they don't need to find those stuff by themselves. Some students in Taiwan may think we (students) just accept all of knowledge teachers pass on.]

| Main Problems of her writing (2) | • With difficulty in words and sentences (don’t know how to express the sentence well and modified)  
• it was hard for her to choose the right and academic words in writing |
| Problems in dissertation writing (3) | • problems of communication with her supervisor: because only two tutorials, her supervisor often forgot what she was doing for her dissertation; sometimes he asked her to change something in her dissertation but in the next tutorial her supervisor would often forgot his words for those changes  
• because of misunderstanding between her supervisor and she:  
因爲他講的不是很清楚, 那你也知道我們中國學生, 我可能這樣講, 他可能覺得我笨, 我怎麼可以問那麼清楚呢? [because he didn’t explain very clearly, you know we are Chinese students, how can I ask him or tell him that I don’t understand. That would make him think I am stupid.]  
• she didn’t know if it is correct to use her own ideas to analyze her data |