Chinese EAL Learners' Perceptions of Academic Writing Practices in a Canadian University

by

Lihui Guo

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

The University of Manitoba

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

ABSTRACT

In research on English for academic purposes (EAP) writing, English as an Additional Language (EAL) students' perceptions of academic writing practices play an essential role in helping to better understand their academic literacy development processes and in meeting their actual learning needs in second language (L2) EAP writing (Leki, 1995). However, there is a scarcity of research in this field pertaining to pre-university EAL students' perceptions of academic writing learning experiences in English-medium higher education settings.

Accordingly, this study investigated pre-university EAL students' perceptions of coping strategies of academic writing practices with specific references to Chinese students in an EAP program: AEPUCE (Academic English Program for University and College Entrance) in a Canadian university. Findings from a multiple case study research approach indicated that Chinese EAL students in this study employed different coping strategies to deal with their EAP writing challenges. These included sociocultural strategies, adapting strategies, previous Chinese writing or past English learning and writing experiences applying strategies, individualized strategies, and self-improvement strategies. Chinese EAL students specified that they needed to improve their EAP writing skills, to be offered appropriate EAP reading materials and authentic EAP writing models, to acquire university provided technology and to be provided with effective EAP writing tutoring. There was also a need for more communication between EAP writing instructors and Chinese EAL students and their EAP writing experiences needed to be connected to their future disciplinary writing requirements in the pre-university setting.

The findings of this research serve to create a broader knowledge base of the experiences of Chinese EAL students' academic writing practices in pre-university EAP programs. This knowledge will help EAL academic writing instructors gain a more comprehensive understanding of Chinese EAL students' academic writing processes and the students' perceptions of successful academic writing. It is hoped that these findings

will also help EAP program administrators access knowledge of the rhetoric and culture of international students (Silva, 1990) and ultimately impact teaching objectives and practices in pre-university EAP academic programs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Paul (Dongsheng) Mao, who always valued education, has been loving, sacrificing, encouraging and has devoted himself to support me in reaching this personal goal for more than 10 years.

My father, Kaiwu Guo, and my mother, Zixiu Zhong, have been providing support and encouragement for me throughout all of my educational pursuits.

My cute little son, Timothy (Tianmu) Mao, who is understanding and considerate, gave me enough time to work on my thesis.

Without them I would not have been able to complete my research project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF CHART

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Research Background

In recent years, many scholars in North American higher education settings, for example, Leki (1995a; 1995b; 2001; 2007), Leki, Cumming and Silva (2008), and Leki and Carson (1994), have advocated that English as a Second Language (EAL) learners' learning experiences and voices play vital roles in better understanding their academic literacy developing process and meeting their actual learning needs in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) writing. In particular, Leki's (1995, 2007) research on coping strategies in Second Language (L2) EAP writing concluded that EAL students' coping strategies -- developed from their learning experiences -- not only assist them to successfully complete their various EAP writing tasks across the curriculum, but also articulated their actual learning needs. In addition to Leki (1995a, 2007), some scholars also focused on L2 students' problem solving behaviors in their EAP writing processes. However, those scholars employed different terms to describe those of L2 EAP writing coping strategies. These include Sasaki's (2004) writing-process strategies, Cho's (2004) local knowledge, Zhu's (2004) general writing skills transference, and Cheng and Fox's (2008) socio-cognitive approaches to learning problem-solving behaviors.

However, the majority of these L2 EAP writing studies have focused on undergraduate or graduate students. Exceptions include research by Yang et al., (2004),

Li (2004) and Demirkan-Jones' (2006) research on pre-university students. There is a scarcity of research in this field pertaining to pre-university EAL students. Nevertheless, pre-university EAL students' coping strategies and their potential influence on academic writing practices could provide insight as to how they negotiate their linguistic and cultural knowledge developed from their lived learning experiences. Such coping strategies may assist these EAL learners' successful EAP writing across the disciplines in their future studies. Further, conducting research in this respect not only sheds light on EAL learners' perceived EAP writing learning needs generally, but can also potentially inform current second language (L2) EAP writing instruction and program administration at a pre-university level. Following this, I will illustrate the reasons why I chose to explore pre-university EAL learners' perceptions of coping strategies and their influences on their academic writing practices.

Pre-university EAP program: AEPUCE program. Each year, universities in North America welcome new students from all over the world. Most international students who come to Canadian universities to pursue their university degrees (Bachelors, Masters or Ph.D) experience similar admissions processes. First of all, a successfully completed English Language Proficiency Test with required minimum scores is necessary. The following Table gives examples of such tests and the required minimum scores by most Canadian universities.

Table 1

Examples of English Proficiency Admission Requirement by Canadian Universities

TOEFL	IELTS	CAN-TEST
Internet-based Test: total score 89-99 +19 - 21 on Writing; Paper-based Test: total score 573-597 + 4.5 on TWE	An overall band of 6.5, with no band below 6.0.	total score of 4.5, and no part below 4

A number of universities will also admit some pre-university international students who do not yet meet the minimum English language proficiency requirements but who are studying in an English language program. Aiming to assist such international students to enter their desired universities, some Canadian universities (including the university where my current study was conducted) have established an Academic English Program for University and College Entrance (AEPUCE). Generally, a minimum score of 500 on TOEFL (173 computer based), CanTEST Band 3.5 or equivalent is required for admission to the AEPUCE program.

According to the objectives of the AEPUCE program (Fast, 2006) on which my study focused, students practice academic functions which are required for them to be successful in university. These include listening to lectures, taking notes, discussing topics in depth, reading for analysis and using the library to write a research paper. In fact, the aim of the program is to help students acquire new skills in thinking, studying and learning in order to meet the demands of Western higher education. The AEPUCE program aims to develop EAL students in becoming independent learners who can

adopt a critical approach to their EAP learning materials and to participate in their classroom discussions. It also aims to socialize EAL students' L2 use in pre-university contexts. When learning in the program, each EAL student is assessed on both assignments and in-class tests. Students who have attended 80% of the classes and achieved a score of 65% in each of Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking have met the English language requirement for university or college entrance. As these percentages have been regarded as the baseline for English language proficiency, its scores may replace other admission English language proficiency tests such as TOEFL, IELTS or CanTEST in the university where my study conducted.

How EAL students in this pre-university EAP program cope with their learning challenges in a Canadian university and their perceptions of the EAP writing may affect their learning experiences and influence their future academic success. In particular, the EAP writing proficiencies required by different Canadian universities all more or less emphasize international students' academic writing competency. The minimum writing scores in TOEFL, IELTS, or CanTEST illustrate this point (See Appendix A). EAP writing skills are "crucial to academic success in both English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classes and content courses" (Schmidt, 2001, p. 1), and also vital to their successful participation discourse communities activities when they enter their desired fields (e.g., Leki, Cumming & Silva 2008; Swales, 2004).

L2 learners' EAP writing: The research context. Increasing numbers of EAL learners in English-medium higher education settings have led to numerous research studies on

L2 EAP writing pedagogies. According to Leki, Cumming and Silva (2008), in the past 20 years, most scholars and researchers in EAP writing have found that EAL learners' English language proficiency scores were not always equivalent to their EAP writing proficiencies. This can be partially attributed to the fact that they all encountered different problems, difficulties and challenges in their EAP writing practices (e.g. Hinkel, 2002a, 2005; Leki, 1995, 2007; 2008; Swales, 2001, 2004). As a result, research in this field mainly concentrated on identifying the factors that influenced EAL learners in achieving successful academic writing. The research included L2 learner's linguistic accuracy and L2 efficiencies at sentence-level, lexica-level (e.g., Hinkel, 2005; Leibowitz, 2005; Storch, 2005, 2009) and at discourse-level, the rhetorical structure of L2 EAP text (e.g., Dooey, 2010; Swales, 1990, 2004). Research also investigated how L2 writers in English improved their EAP writing competence and developed learning strategies as well as coping strategies to deal with their linguistic and cultural challenges in EAP writing in English-medium higher education settings (e.g., Correa, 2010; Crosby, 2009; Dooey, 2010; Leki, 2003; Storch, 2009; Tardy, 2005, 2006; Terraschke & Wahid, 2011). Mostly, these studies focused on L2 learners' EAP writing products, writing processes and social context (Hyland, 2002). My study investigated L2 learners' perceptions of EAP writing practices in a certain cultural contexts. Therefore, research examining L2 learners' EAP writing experiences within social contexts -- for instance, research on L2 learners' strategy development and how they coped with their EAP writing challenges -- will be reviewed briefly in this section.

The trend of writing as contexts aimed at investigating learning strategies employed by L2 learners in the specific sociocultural contexts. Most of these studies identified the types of learning strategies that L2 learners used through survey methods. These strategies were categorized by O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) and Oxford's (1990) inventory of language learning strategies: cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies and social/affective strategies (e.g., Bourmot-Trites & Seror, 2003; Gao, 2006; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Sasaki, 2004; Wong, 2005). However, these studies gave little evidence to indicate why those L2 learners preferred using particular strategies. In addition, it seemed that no evidence was presented as to how they used such strategies flexibly in different contexts, or to what extent these strategies assisted them to accomplish successful EAP writing tasks. In this regard, some critical EAP scholars have argued that the purposes of doing L2 EAP writing was not only to help the L2 learners meet the requirements of academic communities in various disciplines, but also to further inform L2 EAP pedagogies that might satisfy learners' needs in their academic writing (e.g., Benesch, 2001; Carkin,2005). Furthermore, with respect to needs analysis, Carkin (2005), Leki (2001), Matsuda (2001), and Silva (1997) argued that most of these studies relied narrowly on the researchers' perceptions of EAL students' problems, leaving the students' voices, educational backgrounds, successful experiences, and perceptions of L2 EAP writing out of the research.

Research has covered many issues related to L2 EAP writing. Few studies, however, have taken pre-university EAL students' academic writing experiences and practices in

EAP programs into consideration. At this point, only research by Demirkan-Jones' (2006), Li (2004), and Yang et al. (2004), have explored pre-university EAL students' academic experiences.

Therefore, in an effort to encourage teachers in the L2 EAP writing field to reflect the voices of EAL learners in their language teaching approaches, EAL writing researchers such as Benesch (2001), Canagarajah (2006), Leki (1995, 2001, 2003, 2007, 2008), Leki, Cumming and Silva (2008), Matsuda (2001), O'Neill, Crow and Burton (2002), Parks (2004), Pavlenko (2004), Pennycook (2001), Roebuck (2001), Silva and Brice (2004) and Zhu (2004) have all proposed that EAL writers' past educational experiences and current EAP writing experiences should be explored to comprehend how they negotiate their linguistic and cultural knowledge in the process of academic writing. These scholars assert that L2 EAP instructors are well served when they are aware of EAL writers' prior writing practices. Additionally, developers and practitioners of EAP writing programs for L2 learners can be informed in their work. Nevertheless, some related questions arose. For example, who should be participants in such research? What aspects should be investigated from the participants' learning experiences?

To respond to the identified gaps in existing L2 EAP writing research, my thesis study employs a case study method to investigate Chinese pre-university EAL learners' perspectives of academic writing practices in a Canadian university. First, my research is informed by Leki's (1995) research on L2 writers' EAP writing coping strategies and L2 EAP writing research findings from existing EAL academic writing teaching and learning.

These will be briefly introduced in this section and discussed in greater detail respectively in Chapter 2. Second, my research is informed by the significant numbers of Chinese EAL learners in language pre-university programs in Canadian universities and colleges, making the research significant and timely in the L2 EAP field.

Coping strategies research. Coping strategies have been widely defined in different academic domains. The term was initiated by Lazarus (1978) several decades ago and research has been mainly centered on coping skills and processes (Seiffge-Krenk, 1986, 1990), styles of coping (Lazarus & Launier, 1978) and environmental influences on coping behavior in adaptation and heath research areas (Seiffge-Krenke & Samet, 1987). However, in the field of SLA, Leki (1995) argued that this term referred to the processes that students employed to cope with the problem of studying in a language in which their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills were not well-developed. Currently, the most thorough research on L2 students' coping strategies in EAP writing from students' perspectives has been that of Leki (1995, 2003), Leki and Carson (1994, 1997) and Spack (1997). Furthermore, in the past ten years, some research has documented L2 learners' rhetorical, linguistic and cultural challenges in meeting disciplinary academic writing demands. It has also identified some potential coping strategies that students developed and employed to improve their EAP writing in English-medium higher education settings (e.g., Correa, 2010; Crosby, 2009; Dooey, 2010; Ferenz, 2005; Kibler, 2010; Krishnan & Kathpalia 2002; Tardy, 2005, 2006; Terraschke & Wahid, 2011; Yang et al., 2004). Clearly, there are more issues related to EAL writing strategies that have

been studied. I will discuss these issues in more detail in the literature review chapter.

Leki's (1995) case study investigated the coping strategies of EAL graduate and undergraduate students in writing tasks across a U.S. university. Her study identified a set of ten specific coping strategies that EAL students used: "clarifying strategies; focusing strategies; relying on past experiences; taking advantage of the first language/culture; using current experience or feedback; looking for models; using current or past EAL writing training; accommodating teachers' demands; resisting teachers' demands; and managing competing demands" (p. 240). It was Leki's (1995) study that made me begin to reflect on my current learning experiences as an L2 learner of EAP writing in a Canadian university. Upon reflection, I found that I had frequently used some of these coping strategies, both unconsciously and consciously, in my EAP writing processes. Specifically I can remember relying on past experiences, taking advantage of my first language/culture, looking for models and using my EAL writing training. To some extent, these coping strategies positively influenced my performance on those assignments within my discipline. In particular, in one of the required courses, the professor encouraged us to relate our previous experiences to critical commentary writing on Second Language Acquisition (SLA) literature. When I related the literature to my own learning and teaching experiences, there were many ideas and themes that came to my mind when I wrote the outline of those research papers. It provided me with more related points to critically review SLA research by comparing and contrasting English learning in EFL contexts. As a result, I received higher grades with excellent

performance. In the current research, I assumed that Chinese pre-university EAL learners in the AEPUCE program would have developed some coping strategies from their lived learning experiences. Moreover, my experiences -- teaching English essay writing for TOEFL test candidates in my home country and my academic interest in L2 EAP writing -- gave me the confidence to attempt to conduct a study to explore how a group of pre-university EAL students with a common ethnic Chinese background used their previous and current learning experiences within a Canadian university. From their lived learning experiences and by listening to their voices, I sought to identify the coping strategies that they developed and how they perceived the roles that these coping strategies played in their EAP writing practice in a Canadian university.

Furthermore, Leki and Carson's (1994, 1997) study specifically emphasized L2 EAP learners' needs and discussed how EAL writing courses should strive to meet students' needs in EAP pedagogy. Therefore, in my study, I will address Chinese pre-university students' learning needs in EAP writing from their own perspectives.

Significant Numbers of Chinese EAL Students in Canadian Higher Education Settings

According to *Canada Facts and Figures: Immigration Overview Permanent and Temporary Residents*, and compared with international students from other countries, Chinese students enrollments in Canadian universities were highest from 2007-2010 (http://www.cic.gc.ca /english/pdf/research-stats/facts2010.pdf). Also, In the EAP programs in the Canadian university where I conducted my research; the percentage of Chinese EAL learners has always been over sixty percent in recent years.

Chart 1 Total Entries of International Students by Top Source Countries 2007-2010
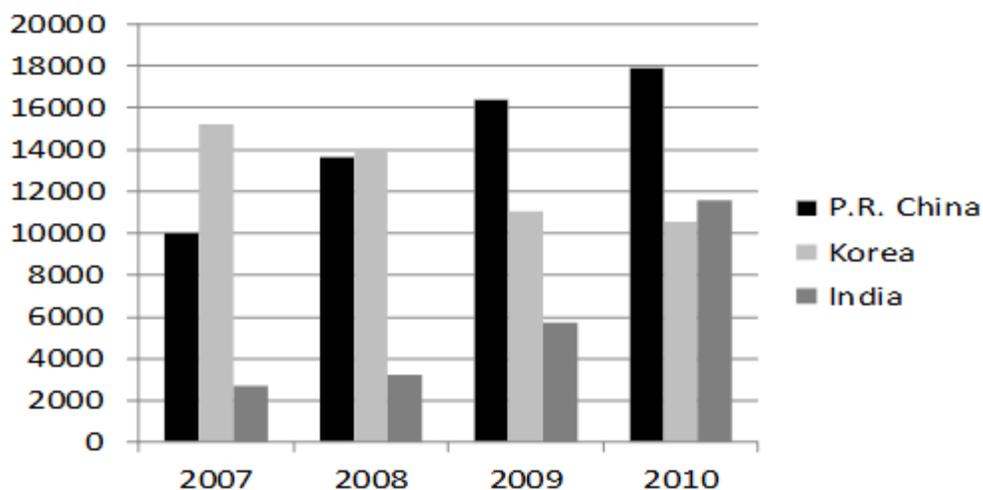
With the increasing numbers of Chinese students coming to Canadian universities to pursue their degrees, more scholars and researchers in the field of SLA have conducted studies to document Chinese international students' L2 academic literacy developments (e.g., Hooley & Horspool, 2006; Li, 2004; Hu, 2000, 2003; Shi, 2009; Yang & Shi, 2003). As a result, L2 EAP practitioners better know this group of international students which has considerable implications in L2 EAP pedagogy. Among other studies, Li's (2004) study explored four Chinese EAL students' transitional experiences from Chinese high school to Canadian high school and then further to Canadian university. Li recorded their challenges that they had to face surviving in new linguistic and sociocultural educational contexts. Their L2 academic literacy development experiences are quite similar to my Chinese friends whom I got to know during my observation of an EAP writing class in a pre-university EAP program in a Canadian university. As a result, her research also

motivated me to examine those pre-university Chinese students' perceptions of their L2 EAP writing in a Canadian high education setting.

Research Questions

In terms of the learning, research and social context of Chinese EAL academic writing learners discussed above, I conducted research on Chinese EAL learners' perceptions of the coping strategies from their lived learning experiences in Canada and explored their potential learning needs in a Canadian EAP learning context. Accordingly, I developed the following research questions for this study:

1. What are Chinese EAL learners' perceptions of coping strategies in a pre-university academic English context?

2. What coping strategies for academic writing have Chinese EAL learners used and developed within a pre-university academic English context?

3. To what extent do Chinese EAL learners coping strategies influence their academic writing practices in the pre-university EAP context?

4. Regarding the employment of these coping strategies in EAP writing practices, how do Chinese EAL learners identify their learning needs generally?

Purposes and Significance of the Study

From Chinese learners' perspectives, the purposes of this thesis are to identify what role, if any, coping strategies play in their academic writing practices and how learners perceive successful academic writing and their learning needs, and further to inform L2 EAP writing in AEPUCE programs in Canadian universities or colleges. To

achieve these purposes, an interpretive case study methodology has been applied to investigating, describing and analyzing the participants' EAP writing learning experiences in a Canadian university. The research has been modeled around Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning. Specifically, the relationships between language and thought, the roles of lived learning experience during learning, and principles of ZPD and mediation have been used to explain the influences of coping strategies on Chinese EAL students' academic writing practices.

From various points of views in the past 30 years, many scholars have studied how to improve EAL students' EAP writing. My study may offer EAL academic writing instructors additional insight about how to address diverse EAL learners' linguistic and cultural learning needs so that they can improve their EAP writing practices. However, in this study, Chinese EAL learners' voices were the fundamental concern, allowing their thoughts, feelings, practices and concerns to emerge with respect to pre-university EAP learning and pedagogy. As a result, the current research findings indicated that Chinese EAL students skilfully employed various coping strategies to deal with their EAP writing challenges in a pre-university context.

According to my research participants, "success" in their L2 EAP writing indicated that they had mastered genres for writing summaries, critique, essays and research papers, enlarged their EAP vocabulary size and made fewer errors in English grammar and other mechanics. They all thought that they acquired some basic EAP writing skills and produced their own satisfactory EAP writing with higher grades than they had

received in their previous works. Although a number of the coping strategies that participants used in this study were similar to those used in previous studies (e.g., Leki, 1995; 2007; Yang et al., 2004), some new approaches emerged in the current study such as sociocultural strategies and self-improvement strategies. These strategies offered positive solutions to their EAP learning problems, helped the students deal with some of their learning challenges and improved their EAP writing skills. These strategies will hopefully provide some new insights to current L2 EAP writing research.

Additionally, in terms of these coping strategies, the participants identified a number of learning needs for their EAP writing in the pre-university context. These included the need to enlarge their EAP vocabulary size, improve grammar accuracy, select appropriate reading materials for EAP reading, and have authentic EAP writing models to follow. Although participants in my study attempted to employ different coping strategies to respond to these EAP learning needs, they still hoped to get sufficient assistance from L2 instruction so that they could improve their EAP writing more efficiently. These findings have pedagogical recommendations regarding pre-university academic writing in Canadian universities. For example, what EAP writing models are appropriate for students to follow? How to assist students to understand the current EAP writing requirements and how to connect those requirements to their disciplinary courses writing demands? What's more, these research findings may help EAP program administrators to access knowledge of the rhetoric and culture of international students and colleagues with whom they interact, as called for specifically

by Silva (1990). Such recommendations could also impact the curriculum of teacher education programs by adding some related culturally and linguistically specific background information about international educated students to enhance the future teaching staff in this field.

Outline of the Chapters

This thesis includes five chapters. Chapter One provides the background to this study and the study's purposes and significance. Chapter Two presents a theoretical framework for the study by reviewing current literature on L2 EAP writing research conducted by EAP writing scholars. Chapter Three explains the methods that have been employed for conducting the research and for data analysis. Chapter Four constructs case profiles for each participant and reports the results of interviews, field notes, and document analyses on the themes of coping strategies and learning needs by cross-case analysis, grounded in research within a sociocultural theoretical framework. Chapter Five draws conclusions from those findings, proposed some recommendations to L2 EAP instructors and administrators at pre-university EAP programs, and finally, outlines limitations of the study and provides suggestions for future research in this field.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review section consists of two parts. The first part is the theoretical framework. In this part, I will present the theoretical tenets of sociocultural theories of learning and illustrate why these social constructivists' perspectives have been applied to L2 EAP writing in my proposed study. The second part is a literature review regarding existing EAL academic writing teaching and learning research which informs my research. In this part, I will first briefly introduce the contexts, questions and findings of this research. I will then evaluate them, paying particular attention to the leading research which impacts my current study.

Theoretical Framework: Sociocultural Theory

Compared with other research issues in second language acquisition (SLA), the field of EAP is relatively new. However, its development draws from the most influential theories in the language research domain: "linguistics; applied linguistics; sociolinguistics; communicative language teaching; writing across the curriculum; learning theory and genre studies" (Benesch, 2001, p. 4).

My study attempted to investigate the roles of coping strategies developed from Chinese EAL learners' academic writing learning experiences. It examined the self-assessment of using these strategies and considered those learning needs perceived from their L2 EAP writing practices within a certain social context - an English medium higher education setting. Writing -- whether composed in one's L1 or L2 -- embodies a

close relationship between language and thought and it highlights more one's logicality

of his/her thought. In this regard, I consider that the sociocultural theory of learning first

originating with Vygotsky clearly illustrates the relationship between language and

thought. What's more, sociocultural theory has emphasized the importance of one's

lived experiences which are the stepping stones of one's literacy development. Also, the

principles of the "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD) and "Mediation" do indeed

delineate the relationship between learning and development. The advantages or

benefits of their pedagogical implementation within L2 EAP writing have been identified

by researchers. In this study, discussion of the findings is informed by the above

mentioned aspects of the sociocultural theory.

Language and thought. Within sociocultural learning theory, Vygotsky (1986)

illustrated the close relationship between language and thought. He argued that:

> Thought is not merely expressed in words; it comes into existence through them.
>
> Every thought tends to connect something with something else, to establish a
>
> relation between things. Every thought moves, grows and develops, fulfills a
>
> function, solves a problem (p. 218).

At this point, some scholars -- for example, Bruffee (1984) – viewed that there is a

close relationship between thought, writing and talk: "If thought is internalized public and

social talk, then writing of all kinds is internalized social talk made public and social again.

If thought is internalized conversation, then writing is internalized conversation re-

externalized (p. 641). Therefore for Bruffee, Vygotskian learning theory has important

implications for English composition teachers in those cases where collaborative learning classroom activities are designed to make students realize that writing is a social artifact that the thought produces.

In addition, based on Vygotsky's viewpoints, Wink and Putney (2001) argued that we use language as a tool for developing thought, and that we develop language through thought when we interact with others. Therefore, the interaction of thinking and speech would result in an experience for the learner, and Vygotsky viewed this experience as a key factor in further impacting the relationship between thinking and speech. Meanwhile, Vygotsky argued that mental functions -- reasoning, attention, and memories -- are "activities of consciousness, which are originally social and are mediated by cultural tools, mainly language, thus becoming intra-psychological" (Wink & Putney, 2001, p. 48). Within the sphere of academic writing, teacher researcher Ray (1992) pointed out that development of language was crucial to the development of the mind. Thus when we taught students to use language for academic thinking, we might refer to academic literacy: "to examine and identify; to question and clarify; to make comparisons; to see relationships between concrete and abstract, specific and general; to define, classify, and differentiate" (p. 172). Moreover, L2 EAP learners' coping strategies which developed through their academic writing practices were examined in Leki's (1995a) study. Some research participants in Leki's study used their first languages as a tool for developing some other coping strategies and further improved their English acquisition. Therefore, as Vygotsky noted, "Additional language acquisition is facilitated and enhanced by first-

language learning (Wink & Putney, 2001, p. 48).

The close relationship between language and thought and Ray's (1990) definition on "academic literacy" made me consider whether the research participants in my study would use their L1 and L2 to think, negotiate, question, identify, compare, and reason to develop their L2 EAP writing skills and coping strategies. The relationship between language and thought illustrated in Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory may provide theoretical explanation of the L2 EAP writing coping strategies developed by the Chinese participants in my study.

Lived learning experiences. "Learning, for Vygotsky, is assisted performance, whereas development is the ability to regulate mental and social activity as a consequence of having appropriated, or internalized, that assistance" (Lantolf, 2005, p. 336). Lantolf (2005) argued that human learning is always mediated through others -- parents, peers and teachers. These interactions are further mediated by cultural tools and artifacts since humans use cultural tools and artifacts such as speech, literacy, or computers to mediate their interactions with others and with their environments, which are, in turn, reflected from one's learning experiences. Vygotsky valued the role that experience plays in constructing knowledge during our learning process. He showed that "learning is both individual and social, at the same time, it is natural and cultural. Our lived experience surrounds and touches each of us in different ways, and, in turn, influences our learning." (Wink & Putney, 2001, p. xxix).

Moreover, Wink and Putney (2001) emphasized that "we realized the value of

verbalizing our thoughts, recognizing that we came from differing perspectives because of our lived experience" (p. xxx). This makes, learners' cognition level greater and more enhanced if they "could talk and problem solve with others, who had more experience or knowledge in specific areas" (p. xxx).

As a result, thinking, as Vygotsky stated:

> denotes nothing less than the participation of all of our previous experience in the resolution of a current problem, and the distinctive feature of this form of behavior is simply that it introduces a creative element into our behavior through the construction of every possible connection between elements in a preliminary experience, which is what thinking is essentially. (as cited in Lantold, 2005, p. 175).

From a Vygotskian perspective, Wink and Putney (2001) reiterated that the learning process is also a problem solving process which is constantly consulting the learner's individual experiences or other's experiences. To a great extent, SLA -- within the EAP writing process -- embodies how L2 learners use English language to express their problem solving process in terms of their academic values (literacy). Therefore, Vygotsky emphasized that not only our thought and language interact actively, but also our sociocultural experiences influence the development of our thought and language. In turn, language informs thought, and thought comes to life through language (Wink & Putney, 2001). Such interaction process embodies the three elements -- language, thought and experiences -- within a social context. Thus, "it is through the fusion of thinking, speaking,

and our experience that we construct our knowledge…. As we think and discuss through our experiences with others, our learning expands and deepens our knowing and our development" (Wink & Putney, 2001, p. 43). However, Vygotsky also noted that our experience is complex when we use it to help us create knowledge (Wink & Putney, 2001). In addition, Wink & Putney (2001) argued that "We must acknowledge the primacy of experience in thought and language. However, even if you have had the experience, you have to have the language to express it …. learn new thoughts and language to express our experience, past and present" (p. 47). At this point, Vygotsky highlighted that sociocultural context is closely related to learning and development which shows what people construct in their minds, and such thought is influenced by their lived experiences. It allows learners' lived social, cultural, historical, and political context of their lives to show through (Wink & Putney, 2001).

In sociocultural learning theory, Vygotsky theorized that thinking and speech are "two essential components of verbal thought that dynamically work together as we make meaning with others and make sense for ourselves through our experience" (Wink & Putney, 2001, p. 85). He further recognized that our thinking has been advanced when we use the cognitive function and a cultural function of the language. Meanwhile, Vygotsky pointed out the complex and dynamic relationship between thought and language: "our use of language determined our learning; and our learning determined our use of language" (Wink & Putney, 2001, p. 59). In other words, our social/cultural/historical selfhood recognized that our ways of being, and further influenced how we thought and

spoke, which in turn impacted our learning and development (Wink & Putney, 2001).

Additionally, sociocultural learning theory enhanced the significant roles that a learner's previous experiences played in the learning process. Wink and Putney (2001) viewed that the most authentic and meaningful experiences always took place in the community of families -- in the neighborhood, in barrio, in migrant camps, in suburbs, and in housing developments. Hence, they advocated that educators should be encouraged to:

> risk the safety of the context of the academic world by seeking authentic experiences in the real world of the students. In order to bring the power of the funds of knowledge to the schools, educators need to understand through experiences. By sitting together and reflecting on their individual histories, teachers and families can begin to create a new collective experience that incorporates and values the unique histories of each person, and, simultaneously, creates a new whole, which is qualitatively changed by the act of joining together (Wink & Putney, 2001, p. 100-101).

The above mentioned aspects of sociocultural learning theory informed me how my own learning actually processed. It aroused my interest in examining whether or not L2 EAP writing learning in the research participants in my study experienced the same process. By investigation, the participants in my study emphasized their learning experiences in their previous and current educational contexts. Their learning was mediated with interactions within each of their individualized sociocultural environments. At the instant when the participants in my study reflected on how they had developed

coping strategies when faced their EAP writing challenges, they constantly related to their living experiences in different sociocultural contexts, i.e., China and Canada. They also emphasized the important roles that their lived learning experiences played in their EAP writing practices in a Canadian university.

Furthermore, for my Chinese participants' learning experiences -- the sociocultural theory of learning provided a discourse to help me understand how they coped with their EAP learning challenges. It also helped to identify their learning needs in terms of their authentic EAP writing learning experiences in that pre-university EAP context. This may provide information and evidence for professionals to set more appropriate norms in order to adapt their practices to meet their identified learning needs in this study.

Zone of proximal development & mediation. For Vygotsky, the relationship between development and learning is dynamic, reciprocal, and interrelated. In his notion of quality teaching and learning, classroom teachers have the power to create a supportive sociocultural environment in which students are called on to be active participants in their own learning and development (Wink & Putney, 2001).

Vygotsky (1978, 1986) conceptualized a zone of proximal development as a way of viewing what children were coming to know. He recognized that children could solve problems beyond their actual development level if they are given guidance in the form of prompts or leading questions from teacher, family members, peers who are at more advanced level (Wink & Putney, 2001). Therefore, Vygotsky (1978) defined the zone as: "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent

problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem

solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (as cited in

Wink & Putney, 2001, p. 86).

Sociocultural learning theory values learners' past experiences and views that one's

past experiences continually transformed and may be seen as the foundation for the

next wave of development for this person. Also, sociocultural learning theory enables us

to see the cultural component of language use in relationship to thought, and the

individual in relation to others. By viewing the context as an integral part of our

experience, this lens shows us learning through problem-solving situations, but not

necessarily in problem-solving situations. In the Vygotskian perspective, teachers are

learners, and learners are teachers (Wink & Putney, 2001).

Additionally, contemporary sociocultural researchers in L2 learning, for example,

Aljaafreh Lantolf and (1994), articulated some specific mechanism of effective

intervention within the ZPD. They argued that such intervention could be identified as

three help processes in practice. The first is graduated, which implies help provided by a

more experienced member in a joint activity and is designed to discover the novice's ZPD

in order to offer the appropriate level of assistance and to encourage the learner to

function at his or her potential level of ability. The purpose of this help process is to

ensure implicit, specific, concrete level of guidance required by the novice to successfully

perform a given task. The second level of help is contingent, which means the offered

help should be needed, and once the novice shows signs of self-control and the ability to

perform a given task independently, any help should withdraw as soon as possible. From these two levels of help, continuous assessments make us know the novice's need, thus ensuring that they receive effective help. This leads to the third level of help, "a dialogue activity" (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994, p. 468), which suggests unfolding between more capable and less capable individuals. As a result, Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) argued that discovering the potential development level of the novice and providing appropriate help accordingly highlighted that "dialogue is an essential component of Vygotskyan theory, and hence of the ZPD. Without dialogic negotiation, it is virtually impossible to discover the novice's ZPD" (p. 468).

Studies of peer interaction in a foreign language context have found that differential competence among peers allows a ZPD to emerge in groups (Donato, 1994) or pairs (Anton & Dicamilla, 1998; Ohta, 1995, 2000), or adult learners (Foster & Ohta, 2005), even when no true 'expert' is present.

According to Lantolf (2000b), the central and distinguishing concept of sociocultural theory is that "higher forms of human mental activity are mediated" (p. 80). Vygotsky conceives of the human mind as a functional system in which the properties of the natural or biologically specified brain are organized into a higher or culturally shaped mind through the integration of symbolic artifacts into thinking. Accordingly, language is continuously remolded by their users to serve their communicative and psychological needs. Here, "the task of psychology, in Vygotsky's view, is to understand how human social and mental activity is organized through culturally constructed artifacts" (Lantolf,

2000b, p. 80).

Generally speaking, mediation has been classified as social mediation, peer mediation, self mediation (Lantolf, 2000b) and computer mediation. Among them, peer mediation emphasizes the collaborative learning between experts and novices, such as between teachers and students, native speakers and non-native speakers, advanced learners and lower level learners. Peer mediation depends on face-to-face interaction and shared processes, such as joint problem solving and discussion, which interpret some unique individual learning styles, i.e. refer to activities and techniques that learner uses to learn. Within a certain sociocultural context, such activities and techniques can be acted together with others, thus making the learner's potential learning development possible.

Wink and Putney (2001) argued that for Vygotsky, learning develops when language and action are used as tools of mediation. When mentioned in terms of our abilities to reorganize our thinking, our language come to us as a cultural heritage through our interactions with others. There is a reciprocal relationship: when our language is actively used, it changes our thinking; our thinking and actions in turn change language. Language as a tool makes students mediate their experiences and makes meaning for their learning. From a Vygotskian perspective, the "classroom would have teachers and students learning together through exploration and collaboration in an inquiry-based curriculum" (Wink & Putney, 2001, p. 29).

Sociocultural teaching and learning regard that the educational process is active at

three levels: in which students are active, teachers are active, and the environment, for example, classrooms are active as well (Vygotsky, 1997). As a result, the students' learning and development should be a product of the interaction of many factors in that case, including the "student's language and cultural background, the educational setting, and the wider sociocultural influences" (Wink & Putney, 2001, p. 77).

Accordingly, these aspects in sociocultural theory informed my study by considering learners' lived learning experiences. For example, the interview process helped to show how they mediated their previous and current learning experiences to improve their L2 EAP writing. Another focus was on classroom activities. This helped to design more applicable classroom observation protocols in order to observe how my research participants involved themselves in those L2 EAP writing classroom activities and how they achieved their ZPD by peer/teacher mediation. In my study, findings from multiple data analyses: classroom observation data, interview data, as well as the participants' writing samples all demonstrated the students' ZPD. In addition, their learning activities outside classroom environments, for example, by the creation of online learning groups, showed how my research participants mediated their social networks and internet resources to deal with their L2 EAP writing challenges. On the whole, my study attempted to demonstrate how these factors interacted to facilitate the development of my participants' coping strategies when dealing with their learning challenges in EAP writing within sociocultural context. The findings in my study will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Application of sociocultural theory in L2 EAP writing. Currently, much of the EAP writing research within the sociocultural theoretical framework centered mainly on three areas: peer response in EAL writing classrooms (e.g., Carson, 2006; Ching, 2002; Liu & Hansen, 2002; Min, 2005, 2006; Nelson & Tsui & Ng, 2000), collaborative scaffolding learning between L1 and L2 learners (e.g., Aitchison, 2003; Al-Ahmad, 2003; Antón and Di- Camilla 1998; 2004; Donato, 1994), and the activity theory approach to EAL students' writing process (e.g., Lei, 2008; Yang et al., 2004;Yasuda, 2005). The findings of this research indicated that classroom activities: such as peer reviews, pair work or group work, could provide students with a social context to converse and internalize the act and inform them about important concepts including invention, revision and collaboration. During these processes of L2 EAP writing, scholars demonstrated how such activities assisted L2 learners to explore, analyze and negotiate meaning as well as helped to solve each other's writing problems in a non-threatening atmosphere. For example, in Liu and Hansen's (2002) study, they exemplified how peer responses activities assisted EAL learners to improve their EAP writing skills.

Apart from above-mentioned studies, some research demonstrated how the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) had been involved in the collaborative work during L2 writing learning process. Among them, some researchers discussed the negative / corrective feedback (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Nassaji & Swain, 2000) of L2 learning in the ZPD. De Guerrero and Villamil's (2000, 2006) study focused on mutual scaffolding in strategies of revision in writing tasks within the ZPD in EAL classroom. The research

resulting from these studies demonstrated the effectiveness and necessity of different

levels of scaffolding from the experts (teachers or peers) which ensured the L2 writing

improvement of the novice. All these aspects in sociocultural theoretical framework

employed by these studies informed my research data collection.

Some of those studies (e.g., Ching, 2000; Liu & Hansen, 2002; Min, 2005, 2006;

Nelson & Carson, 2006) mentioned that a number of EAL learners sometimes preferred

to use their L1 during L2 EAP writing peer review revision. They thought that it could

help their peers and themselves to have better understanding in L2 writing composing

and revising. As Vygotsky (1986) noted, "Success in learning a foreign language is

contingent on a certain degree of maturity in the native language" (as cited in Wink &

Putney, 2001, p. 49). He argued that the greater the depth of first language competence,

the faster the acquisition of all others proceeds. In addition, one's L2 learning facilitates

mastering the higher forms of the native language, expanding the mental abilities in

both L1 and L2. Furthermore, this reciprocal relationship signifies the important role that

meaning plays in acquiring an additional language (Wink & Putney, 2001).

This research finding informs me in data collection when I requested those

participants to reflect how they composed their L2 EAP writing, I would notice how they

reported using their L1 and L2 during their L2 composing. For example, did they use

their first language (Chinese Mandarin to make their English learning and usage more

meaningful? If they did, this would expand their mental abilities in both languages. In

the meantime, I wanted to seek whether there were similarities or differences when my

research participants use their L1 and L2 to think or compose their L2 EAP writing. I wanted to determine the uniqueness of their L2 EAP thinking or composing process in my study. Vygotsky viewed this experience as a key factor in impacting the relationship of thought and speech. Therefore, participants in my study stated that their L1 was used to make their L2 more meaningful. At this point, Wink and Putney (2001) proposed that previously acquired knowledge was the basis for L2 learners to continue improving their newly acquired language. Learning in another environment of language and culture, for example, international students studying in English speaking counties like Canada, requires that the learners are able to apply their previously acquired L1 knowledge if they aim to improve their newly acquired L2 continuously. Some research, for instance, Leki (1992), showed that many adult learners who were successful writers in their first language were able to bring sophisticated cognitive abilities and metacognitive strategies to the task of L2 writing. In view of this, the new language was comprehensible by the inclusion of knowledge and literacy in the first language, which would support learner's academic achievement in the new language. This assists us in understanding why our use of language determines our learning and our learning determines our use of language.

Liu and Hansen (2002) stressed L2 learners' perceptions on peer review activities in classrooms. Their study informed my research questions design focusing more on my research participants' perceptions of L2 EAP writing experiences. This included all interview protocol design, their reflections on classroom activities and their L2 EAP

writing samples. Findings in my study will be illustrated and discussed in Chapter IV.

Additionally, Wink and Putney (2001) claimed there were two crucial variables for academic success: knowledge and literacy, both of which transferred across languages. First, they demonstrated "the primacy of language informing thought, and thought informing language. Second, they demonstrated "the fundamental importance of context in language and learning" (p. 49). Students used language to communicate thoughts and through the social act of verbalizing, those thoughts combined their experiences with those of others.

In addition, Vygotsky emphasized the role that imitation plays in L2 learning. His notion of imitation refers to stepping from something one knows to something new and accomplishes with someone else's assistance (Lantolf, 2005). Some research, for example, Swain and Lapkin (2008), argued that L2 learners were intentionally able to imitate features of a second language that they did not yet understand because the interlocutor gave meaning to the features. In this way, the learners came to understand what they initially did not. Therefore, Vygotsky argued that imitation is not simply mimicking, repeating, or parroting; it is a creative, transformative activity that marks the difference between what a person could achieve when acting alone and what the same person could accomplish when acting with support from someone else and/or cultural artifacts in ZPD (Lantolf, 2005). This viewpoint in sociocultural learning theory made me look back: In China, imitation is always taught as an effective way to learn English as a foreign language. It also aroused my interest to collect some data related to L2 imitation

learning, and how it was connected to the ZPD accomplishment of my research participants.

In summary, the relationship between language and thought, roles of lived learning experiences, and principles of mediation and ZPD elicit the gist of Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory. Moreover, Wink and Putney's (2001) understanding on these central elements of SCT of learning provided us vivid description on how they are interwoven to make sense of our learning. Learners, like actors in a play conducted their desired activities in a social process which involved in their individual different lived experiences from their own sociocultural contexts, past, present and future. Together they came to comprehend any actions that they were performing based on the communicative nature of learning. It is this interactive learning process that presents a theoretical framework to explain and discuss how those Chinese pre-university students in this study develop their L2 EAP writing skills in English-medium higher education context.

EAL Academic Writing Research

The increasing numbers of non-native English speaking (NNES) students in English-medium universities have necessitated that more university researchers and practitioners focus on assisting those NNES students to improve and develop their L2 academic literacy. Compared with research on L2 speaking, listening and reading skills in English, the research field of L2 writing in English is relatively young (Leki, 2008). In particular, over the last 25 years, researchers of L2 EAP writing have been devoting

themselves to seeking efficient ways to improve L2 EAP teaching and learning in Western higher education settings. Generally, most scholars in this field who wrote review articles on L2 EAP writing, for examples, Hyland (2002), Leki (2008), Matsuda (2003), and Silva and Brice (2004) shared the similar classification of L2 writing studies no matter what foci they took. They argued that L2 writing research was conducted mainly from the following three directions: writing as text, i.e., product-oriented writing, writing as composing processes, and writing as context.

L2 EAP writing studies focused on L2 learners' writing products were either concerned with how to help L2 learners improve their EAP writing linguistically or attempted to investigate problems related to L2 learner's EAP writing products within the English-medium higher education settings. For example, these include research on sentence-level or lexica-level, L2 learner's linguistic accuracy and L2 efficiencies (e.g., Hinkel, 2002, 2004, 2005; Leibowitz, 2005; Storch, 2005, 2009), lexico-syntaction (e.g., Flowerdew, 2003; Hinkel, 2003, 2004), coherence or connectives (Lake, 2004), cohesive devices (Hinkel, 2002a; 2002b; 2002c; Liu, 2000; Zhang, 2000), syntactic features (Hinkel, 2002a; Hyland, 2002, 2003), lexical features (Jarvis, 2002) and, at discourse-level, the rhetorical structure of L2 EAP text (e.g., Swales, 1990, 2004). Such linguistic features analyses on L2 EAP writing samples are not concerns in my study. This area of L2 EAP writing research will not be reviewed in this section.

The process approach to writing views L2 EAP writing as a dynamic, nonlinear and recursive process of composing (Liu & Hansen, 2002). Accordingly, cognitively-oriented

L2 EAP writing studies generally "examined L2 learners' ongoing thinking episodes or decision-making while composing" (Cumming, 2001, p. 5). The social contextual dimension of this research centered on social and cultural perspectives of learning. In this regard, Liu and Hansen (2002) argued that collaborative learning theory, Vygotsky's ZPD, was applied to construct and support the use of peer response activities in L2 writing classroom. Therefore, peer review research is more sociocultural focused and I embedded those group of studies in the area of writing as context in this literature review. In addition, according to Mitchell and Myles (2004), cognitive approaches to second language learning focused on learning strategies. My study aimed to investigate the role of coping strategies in L2 EAP writing process. In this regard, instead of coping strategy, some other terms -- for example, writing-process strategy (Sasaki, 2004), local knowledge (Cho, 2004), general writing skills transference (Zhu, 2004), and socio-cognitive approaches to learning problem-solving behaviors (Cheng & Fox, 2008) -- have been used to document L2 learners' EAP writing problem solving behaviors. In my study, I will adopt the term coping strategy (Leki, 1995, 2007) to discuss and compare the following research findings on generic composing strategies: learning strategies in the L2 writing process of brainstorming, outlining, drafting (meaning construction), rewriting (organization), and editing (style and grammar) with those of coping strategies research in *writing as context* section of this literature review.

Writing as context. The research trend of writing as context holds that L2 writing learning occurs in specific sociocultural contexts. Related literature reviewed in this

section focused on the development of L2 EAP writing and influences on L2 learners'

lived learning experiences. These studies documented L2 writers' challenges, struggles

and motivations when they faced linguistic and contextual barriers and the strategies

that they developed to deal with them. Since my study chose a higher education setting,

related research was included if the L2 writers were graduate students, undergraduate

students, or pre-university students who were the main groups of participants in L2 EAP

study context at tertiary level. In addition, in terms of different L2 writers' writing aims,

requirements and their individualized learning situations, L2 EAP writing may display

different characteristics based on EAL learners' educational level, and these

characteristics will be discussed in detail in the following sub-sections: L2 writing

research at the graduate level, L2 writing research at the undergraduate level, and L2

writing research at the pre-university level.

Before reviewing the L2 writing research, composing strategies discussed in this

section need to be clarified. The study of strategies was first contextualized in

psychology and then in the SLA (Dörnyei, 2005). In the early 1990s, O'Malley and

Chamot (1990) and Wenden (1991) conceptualized Language learning strategy as

"reflecting the learners' proactive contribution to enhancing the effectiveness of their

own learning" (p. 166). Compared to this definition, Oxford's (1989) conception

emphasized the more functional part of language learning strategies: "behaviors or

actions which learners use to make language learning more successful, self-directed, and

enjoyable" (p. 235). However, Dörnyei (2005) argued that the strategy systems proposed

by both perspectives were highly compatible and they could be categorized as: cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, social strategies, and affective strategies. In practice, Manchón (2001) reflected that L2 composing strategies enquiry included two broad types in terms of EAL writers' approaches to the problem-solving tasks. The first was to control and complete writing tasks (e.g., Cohen & Brooks-Carson, 2001; Kasper, 1997; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Qi, 1998; Victori, 1999; Wong, 2005; Woodall, 2002) which have been named as generic strategies. The second was to meet the imposed or perceived demands of the social context in which they wrote and learned to write (e.g., Dooey, 2010; Ferenz, 2005; Krishnan & Kathpalia, 2002; Leki, 1995; Leki & Carson, 1994; Spack, 1997; Tardy, 2005; Yang et al., 2004), namely coping strategies. This dimension was more "socially-oriented" and "from the point of view of the mechanisms used by the L2 writers to respond to the demands encountered in the socio-cultural context when they write and learn to write" (Manchón, 2001, p. 54). Therefore, EAP writing composing strategies research discussed in this review section follow Manchon's (2001) viewpoints on L2 writing strategies. In terms of the research participants, I will discuss related L2 EAP writing research focusing on graduate students, undergraduate students and pre-university students (because the research on pre-university students is scarce). I will then elaborate how these research findings informed my current study.

L2 writing research at the graduate level. L2 EAP writing at graduate level aims to become a member of discourse communities of their disciplines. As partial requirement of some graduate programs, graduate students and in particular, doctoral candidates, are

required to publish their research achievements in academic journals or present them to their peers in academic conferences. Additionally, they need to apply for grants or fellowship for their proposed research in their disciplines. Therefore according to Tardy (2005), L2 EAP writing at this level requires much more than linguistic ability and it demands rhetorical insight into the disciplinary community. However, graduate students may not have chance to take additional EAP writing courses to improve their L2 writing skills during their disciplinary course taking. They have two basic alternatives. They may conduct self-study on those published academic writing in English in their discourse communities, or they could get L2 EAP writing assistance from their advisors, supervisors or their research co-workers in the labs to meet certain discourse conventions.

To date, EAP writing research on L2 students' learning experiences at the graduate level mainly focuses on a number of areas: 1) peer review (e.g., Curro & Tsui, 2004; Li, 2011); 2) L2 EAP composing strategies (e.g., Beare & Bourdages, 2007; Gao, 2006; Wong, 2005;); 3) rhetorical, linguistic, and cultural challenges in meeting disciplinary academic writing demands and some potential coping strategies developed and employed (e.g., Cheng, Myles & Curtis, 2004; Dooey, 2010; Ferenz, 2005; Hansen, 2000; Hu, 2000; Li, 2004; Meng, 200; Tardy, 2005); 4) L2 writers' research achievements publication issues (e.g., Cho, 2004); 5) L2 writers' L1 literacy experiences impacts on L2 academic literacy development (e.g., Cheng, 2006; Yang & Shi, 2003) and 6) L2 EAP reading and writing connection at this advanced level (e.g., Storch, 2009; Zhu, 2005). Others explored how to become successful L2 writers either by analyzing successful academic writing criteria

or identifying some key factors, social or critical, which possibly influenced best academic writing practices (e.g., Canagarajah, 2006; Yang & Shi, 2003).

Peer review in Li's (2011) study examined what EAL graduate students learned from their peers' thesis writing and the more constructive feedback that they received from other thesis writers by attending a cooperative peer learning group. Their L2 use awareness increased and their EAP writing competencies developed in the thesis writing process. Curro and Tsui (2004) reported how Chinese graduate students acquired conference paper writing skills by joining the specific peer learning groups and how they took advantages of peer responses to cope with their EAP writing challenges in English.

Beare and Bourdages' (2007) case study -- by way of interview, participant observation, think-aloud protocols, writing samples analyses, investigated L2 graduate students' writing strategies employment in facilitating content generating and planning during their EAP writing. It then contrasted those differences between L1 and L2 writing strategies when those advanced L2 writers planned EAP writing tasks. After reviewing those L2 EAP writing strategies, the authors concluded that those advanced writers employed similar writing strategies in L2 as in L1, which also confirmed findings from some earlier studies conducted by Leki (1995, 2003, 2007).

Wong's (2005) study attempted to investigate both what and how writing strategies were employed by L2 writers to meet the requirements of their perceived intended audience and those of rhetorical purpose for performing the EAP writing tasks. Those four graduate student writers were found to employ a broad range of composing

strategies: metacognitive strategies (questioning, rereading and goal setting); cognitive strategies (drafting and revising) and affective strategies (self-assessments) when dealing with their L2 EAP writing. On the one hand, different writers also invoked the same or similar strategies to serve different purposes at different junctures of the composing process. However, after Wong's findings pointed out the issues of learner variation in strategy use, it seemed that there was no evidence to indicate what factors (i.e., their cultures, gender or disciplines) influenced participants preferred use of different strategies to deal with same composing stage or whether they employed similar strategies to cope with different composing stages. Also, he provided no evidence to link writing strategies use and L2 language proficiency level, a fact which has been pointed out by some researchers. Larsen-Freeman (2001) argued that proficiency varied with the use of certain strategies. In contrast, Chinese L2 learners at the graduate level in Gao's (2006) study claimed that their experiential writing knowledge and their mobilizing forces disappeared or were undermined in Britain. For that reason, they were unable to apply the strategies frequently used in China to their EAP writing in British universities, thus making their past mediation effects on those strategies loose, with no tentative support to their EAP writing practices.

Generally, EAP writing has been viewed as one of difficulties for L2 Graduate students in English-medium higher education context. Therefore, they developed their own coping strategies to meet L2 EAP writing demands at this advanced level. Dooey (2010) identified some EAP writing skills, such as summarizing, analyzing and critiquing,

that were challengeable to L2 graduate students in her study. However, Dooey found that those participants made use of the training from their Bridging Course to find mistakes or some benefits from the target articles to deal with critique writing. In addition, to avoid plagiarism, one Chinese participant developed strategies to record his references electronically and he also shared such skills with his friends who had similar difficulty.

Tardy's (2005) study emphasized that L2 EAP writing demands rhetorical insights into the disciplinary community. He argued that rhetorical knowledge played important roles to develop advanced academic literacy within a social group. Although she found that her research participant had some challenges in organizing his thesis, reviewing contents, choosing genre forms, drafting research process rhetorically and hesitation on boosting claims, he dealt with those difficulties by a strategy of borrowing phrases used for conveying various strategies of persuasion. He read more research paper samples and chose one of them as an EAP writing rhetoric sampler for his thesis writing. In the meantime, he took advantage of mentor collaboration, mediated bolder stances in expressing knowledge claims and promoted his L2 EAP writing in critical reviews of disciplinary texts and attended to rhetorical issues of credibility and audience.

Cheng, Myles and Curtis' (2004) research investigated L2 graduate students' EAP writing challenges at vocabulary and grammatical level in their learning experiences. They found that those participants used models of writing from journal articles or their textbooks to help them structure and incorporate various expressions and sentences

patterns into their own papers. During drafting, their L1 composing knowledge may have helped them to formulate and structure some ideas for their L2 writing. Also they sought their peers' assistance (i.e., colleagues, friends, and classmates) in proofreading their grammatical and vocabulary errors. However they argued, although L2 graduate students in their study could cope with some of their EAP writing challenges, they still needed to have specific language support to improve L2 EAP writing.

Ferenz's (2005) study explored the roles that academic social network played in L2 academic literacy socialization. Results indicated that L2 learners' interactions between learners and their academic discourse community members not only promoted L2 advanced academic literacy, but also enhanced L2 students' disciplinary knowledge. Li's (2004) case study investigated L2 advanced learner's enculturation in EAP writing. She found that her participant acquired his L2 EAP writing style from his advisor, peers, and other members in the discourse community. Different from above mentioned studies, Hansen (2000) described the conflict between content knowledge, audience and L2 EAP writing purposes that one advanced L2 EAP writing learner experienced in her writing course. He found that one student, a well-trained advanced writer in her content course, had to meet the L2 EAP writing task's rhetorical and grammatical demands which were the important elements of grading in his study. Thus some specific knowledge skills might affect the transferability of skills taught in EAP writing course and EAP writing skills might not appear to transfer into student's work for context course.

Hu's (2000) doctoral dissertation explored Chinese graduate students' EAP writing

processes and challenges at a Canadian university by way of case study. In this dissertation, he discussed Chinese graduate students' coping strategies to solve their EAP writing problems that they encountered during composing processes. His research findings -- which included imitating model journal articles, thinking in both L1 and L2, and copying as learning or survival strategies -- were similar to what Leki (1995) discovered in her research. Meng's (2001) M. Ed thesis attempted to explore some Chinese graduate students' EAP writing practices and experiences from the epistemological standpoints. In her thesis, she described how a former excellent Chinese journalist developed into a successful academic writer in a prestigious Canadian university. Actually, within these studies, the researchers more or less mentioned Chinese EAL learners' learning experiences. Meng's work especially adopted the theoretical framework of critical pedagogy. As a result, some Chinese EAP writers' voices were heard.

Cho (2004) expressed most L2 graduate students' voices in identifying challenges in presenting or publishing their research in English on academic journals. She found that aiming to cope with those difficulties -- such as power relationship, linguistic and rhetorical difficulties, unfair feedback from editors, and rejection from target journals -- those advanced L2 writers employed many strategies. These included co-authoring, conducting certain types of research, getting assistance from native speakers of English, making the most use of local knowledge, negotiating feedback from journals, or choosing another journal and/or seeking collaboration with professors. L1 academic

literacy transference in L2 academic literacy development at the graduate level also has

been viewed as one of the potential coping strategies in L2 EAP writing. Yang and Shi's

(2003) work examined how her participants' L1 writing competence assisted with their

writing in L2 which, in turn, helped them to develop their bilingual expertise confidently.

Cheng's (2006) single case study explored a Chinese Ph. D student's L2 academic

criticism writing. He suggested that a number of factors -- his L2 academic literacy in his

home country, overseas learning and research experiences, and his unique learning

styles -- all contributed greatly to his academic writing competence and his ability to

distinguish some rhetorical factors of L2 EAP writing. Therefore, he could confirm his

status as an apprentice to a member of his research community which had a strong

influence on his engagement with academic criticism.

Intensive source text reading has been viewed as one of effective strategies

connected to L2 EAP writing in some studies at the graduate level. For instances,

Storch's (2009) study discovered that exposure to EAP reading materials may have a

certain degree of impact on L2 EAP writing when EAP writing support was not sufficient

for L2 graduate students. Also, there was some improvement in the formality of learners'

language. However, such improvement was only found at the structural level and the

development of ideas. Zhu's (2005) case study participant viewed source texts materials

as rhetorical models to his L2 EAP writing in his academic discourse community. This

also mediated his L2 EAP writing learning in making good use of section advance

organizers and end-of- section summaries. As a result, this L2 graduate student could

improve his perception of the assignment purposes and his understanding of his professor's expectations. However, findings from those studies also indicated that those L2 graduate students intended to use some strategies to incorporate source materials. As it turned out, these attempts were not successful and the material was not properly acknowledged in their EAP writing verbatim. Thus the extent to which these strategies could improve L2 EAP writing in linguistic accuracy or complexity was not readily evident in these studies.

Up to now, Leki's (1995) study probably is one of notable attempts in exploring L2 writers' coping strategies specifically. Although participants in Leki's (1995) study were graduate students and undergraduate students, research findings in her study indicated that there were some similarities in developing those coping strategies among those L2 graduate students and undergraduate students. Accordingly, Leki's (1995) coping strategies research has been reviewed at the graduate level. The list of strategies identified in Leki's study included: (a) those used to conceptualize and fulfill writing tasks (clarifying and focusing strategies); (b) the ones that involve making use of previous knowledge and experience (relying on past writing experience, using past EAL training, taking advantage of first language and culture); (c) strategies that make the most of the social context (using current experience of feedback, looking for models, using current EAL writing training); (d) taking a stance towards teachers' demands (either accommodating or resisting such demands); and finally, (e) finding ways of managing and regulating the demands (in terms of the time and effort required) of their

course and assignments. Leki's research on coping strategies aimed to offer L2 EAP instructors a better understanding on EAL students' academic writing experiences, specifically their challenges in adapting to western academic lives linguistically and culturally. She also advocated more related research to be conducted to make EAL learners themselves reflect their own L2 academic literacy experiences at different levels in education.

On the whole, findings from the above mentioned studies documented EAL learners' academic literacy experiences in western universities. These findings also encouraged me to reflect whether I employed similar coping strategies to deal with my EAP writing challenges. It also motivated me to search related studies conducted at the undergraduate level and even at the pre-university level to seek for the potential research gap in this regard. By comparing those findings methodologically, I found that findings based on case study may delineate EAL learners' academic literacy development process in more detail. Multiple sources of data collection provided stronger evidence to indicate the effectiveness of those coping strategies employed in EAL learners' academic writing practices. As a result, interviews, classroom observation and L2 EAP writing samples became the main sources of data collection in my current data. However, because the above reviewed research all centered upon more advanced L2 writers, some of those L2 writers' strategies might not be similar to or used by the novice L2 EAP writers (pre-university EAL students). In addition, Leki's (1995) research findings provided my data analysis framework and I followed the coping strategy list in

her study to categorize those coping strategies developed by my research participants. I

also added new emerged coping strategies employed by my participants to my research

findings.

   L2 writing research at the undergraduate level. L2 EAP writing at the

undergraduate level, according to Zhu (2004), aims to assist L2 students to transfer those

of acquired general writing skills to different contexts. L2 students are required to grasp

discipline specific terminology, raise awareness in their target audience and develop

logical organization in text and paragraphs. In the meantime, language requirements are

centered on clarity, sentence structure, grammar and mechanics. In this section, only

research which explored L2 undergraduate students' EAP writing learning experiences will

be reviewed. This includes studies investigating how EAP writing programs or how

instructors assist L2 learners to build up their discipline specific literacy (e.g., Cheng & Fox,

2008; Scordaras, 2009), what challenges L2 undergraduate students faced and how they

coped with them (e.g., Correa, 2010; Crosby, 2009; Leki, 2003; Spack, 1997; Terraschke &

Wahid, 2011), L1 literacy impacts on L2 writing practices (e.g., Dong, 1999, 2005; Kibler,

2010; Qi, 1998), L2 EAP writing-process strategies (e.g., Sasaki, 2004); L2 EAP writing

instructors and peer feedback (e.g., Hu, 2005; Miao, Badger and Zhen, 2006) and peer

review training or activities benefits (e.g., Hu, 2005; Liu & Hansen, 2002)

   Kavan and Wilkinson (2004) emphasized the important roles that EAP programs

played in assisting Chinese students in improving their L2 academic literacy and they

expressed their deep understanding of Chinese L2 EAP learners. They argued that they felt

uncomfortable hearing descriptions of Chinese students' writing in terms of deficits like "poor structure" and "bad grammar". In their view, teaching students to write in English using topic sentences, linear structure, fastidious grammar rules and individual thought appeared to be inherently ethnocentric. In addition they thought that Chinese students purchased their education at a cost that was more than financial. Learning to write in English also meant sacrificing their identity, which resembled Chinese author Fan Shen's (1989) description of how learning to write English meant, "not to be my Chinese self" (1989, p. 461).

Scordaras' (2009) case study research discussed two failure cases from one EAP writing program. She concluded that lower-level EAL learners could not benefit from that accelerated writing program; they needed specific focuses on improving their language skills and a longer term to improve their writing skills. In this study, Scordaras found that those lower-level EAL writers' had challenges in revising their writing and their instructors' assistance was necessary to assist such L2 learners. Cheng and Fox (2008) examined factors that characterized L2 students' academic acculturation, which was the relationship between L2 students' cultural adaption and their academic achievement. During this period, those L2 students employed a variety of strategies to meet their disciplinary requirements in their EAP writing practices. These included drawing on their strengths, circumventing their weaknesses, consulting their professors, TAs, classmates, as well as language avoidance strategies. However, L2 students in this study all described their unsatisfying experiences with writing center: they felt frustrated and did not always take

advantage of writing center in their EAP writing for course content.

Participants in Terraschke and Wahid's (2011) research highlighted learners' struggles when they dealt with the rhetorical differences between English and their native written language as well as the use of linking words and the adherence to a strict structure required for EAP writing. However, participants who attended EAP programs emphasized that study skills and learning strategies assisted them greatly in improving their academic achievements in their degree courses. Becket, Berneda and Kumar (2007) argued that writing classes were often seen as initial preparation for success in later classes. Their case study explored three EAL students' academic writing learning experiences when they took courses to enter professional programs. The research report on their experiences outlined their L2 EAP writing challenges, for example, vocabulary accuracy in expressing their ideas, and suggested some learning strategies that might help those EAL students in professional programs. It may offer ways for L2 EAP teachers to support and prepare similar students.

Although some L2 learners made great efforts to improve their English academic literacy, not all EAL learners had successful EAP writing learning experiences. For instance, in Doris' (2010) research, the participant Marina experienced challenges because she did not know how to display knowledge in ways that were accepted by the audience nor did she have the vocabulary to be able do it. She lacked knowledge on how to quote appropriately and how to incorporate her own voice during EAP writing. As a result, her EAP writing instructors commented on her writing with regards to plagiarism. Although,

she finally graduated, she still couldn't cope with these EAP writing challenges. Accordingly, the author concluded that traditional product-based approaches to L2 EAP writing instruction might not give enough support to L2 students in EAP programs.

Similarly, when EAL writers attempted to combine their voices with the voices of others to argue a point, they have been faced with challenges such as the lack of sufficient language skills and lack of familiarity with conventions accepted in the L2 discourse community. These challenges have been investigated in a number of studies. Leki's (2003) case study explored one Chinese nursing student's L2 EAP writing experiences. Leki identified this L2 learner's EAP writing challenges with regards to L2 learning context, specific writing demands in nursing, and L2 cultural and linguistic adaption. Although her participant spared no effort to improve her L2 writing in the nursing context, she had to leave nursing program for a year to take additional EAP writing programs for L2 learners to improve her L2 writing skills. Therefore Leki (2003) argued that adequate EAP writing preparation was necessary for L2 learners before disciplinary learning in order to be successful academically. Attempting to investigate the roles that EAP programs played in preparing EAL students for their disciplinary courses work, Leki (2007) conducted three to five years of case study to document EAL undergraduate students' challenges and the complexities of their academic literacy development. However, Leki's (2007) research findings indicated that her precious writing class only played a relatively minor role. The extent to which those L2 learners benefited from their EAP classes was disappointing: some grammar, vocabulary, transition words but little knowledge on rhetorical structures

of academic genres.

Frodesen (2009) reported that L2 writers' challenges in EAP writing were mainly syntactic and lexico-grammatical accuracy, and misquotes. The L2 learners in this study worked hard on language errors to improve; meanwhile, they would take advantage of their first language and culture to meet their disciplinary EAP writing demands. In addition, Frodesen indicated the L2 EAP writing instructor's important roles played in improving L2 writers editing skills, enlarging their vocabulary size and developing their syntactic complexity. In another study, Crosby (2009) identified L2 learners' EAP writing challenges at the lexical level, grammatical level: lack of prior experiences with understanding of diverse EAP genres and lack of background knowledge about topic reading and writing. Accordingly, in order to improve their L2 writing competence, those L2 learners in Crosby's study followed their EAP writing instructor's feedback, sought instructor's assistance by email and used more rhetorical devices to their writing practices.

In addition, Chinese EAL learners' academic writing practices were also explored by some Chinese researchers who used to study in similar environments. Within these studies, most of them investigated Chinese EAL students' academic lives at different Western universities. For instance, Hu's (2003) research focused on undergraduate students. The findings highlighted that Chinese EAP writers in Canadian universities had some challenges in making sentences flow. They could distinguish the different formats of each EAP writing task; for example, they would compose an essay at its macro-level format overall and then write each paragraph following its micro-level. Furthermore, he

challenged the traditional notion of plagiarism, arguing that language re-use could be re-conceptualized as a textual strategy in the development of EAL students learning and using disciplinary language and content. Additionally, Miao, Badger and Zhen (2006) concluded that Chinese EAL undergraduate students used teacher and peer feedback to improve their writing but that teacher feedback was more likely to be adopted and led to greater improvements in the writing. Hu (2005) conducted a three year action research to seek the best instructional approaches to facilitate Chinese EAL students' acquisition of academic writing skills. In this study, Hu designed three interventions of training activities and follow-ups of peer review in his L2 EAP writing classroom. The research findings indicated that such training activities helped students understand better and thus benefit more from peer review.

By far, most research on composing strategies centers on what and how undergraduate students applied their learning strategies to the act of L2 writing. In this respect, a number of scholars aimed at delineating a holistic picture of L2 writers' writing practices. Manchón (2001) generalized such EAL writing phenomena as using of the L1 (e.g., Cohen & Brooks-Carson, 2001, Qi, 1998), *backtracking* (Manchón et al., 2000a, 2000b), or *restructuring* (Roca & Manchón, 1999) when planning, formulating, and revising their texts. "Restructuring is the search for an alternative syntactic plan once the writer predicts, anticipates or realizes that the original one is not going to be satisfactory for a variety of linguistic, ideational or textual reasons" (Manchón, et al., 2000b, p. 13).

Some research, for example, Kibler (2010) discussed EAL learners' L1 use in L2

writing practices. It emphasized the important role that L1 plays in their L2 writing skills development. Although his study discussed language code switching, taking advantage of first language in L2 EAP writing has been viewed as one of coping strategies in some L2 writing research (e.g. Leki, 1995, 2007; Spack, 1997; Dong, 1999). Dong (1999) investigated EAL students' native literacy learning experiences and how those students made good use of their L1 literacy skills to improve their L2 EAP writing learning. Qi's (1998) case study was specifically devoted to identifying the reasons for language switching in L2 writing. He found that cognitively demanding tasks were associated with increased use of the L1 in a variety of composing tasks performed by a highly proficient Chinese-English bilingual. According to Qi, L1 was used for initiating an idea, for developing a thought, for verifying the meaning of a word, and for compensating due to the complexity of the writing task. Sasaki (2004) investigated L2 writing-process strategies, writing styles and their characteristics. He found L2 learners employed local planning, translating from L1 to L2, and rhetorical refining (refining the L2 expressions) during L2 composing.

Cohen and Brooks-Carson's (2001) study investigated undergraduate students' alternative approaches to short essay writing on language assessment tasks. In this study, they chose 39 intermediate learners of French to complete two essay writing tasks: writing directly in French as well as writing in the first language and then translating into French. They found that two-thirds of the students did better on the direct writing task across all rating scales; only one-third did better on the translated task. Also, qualitative

data and retrospective verbal report data indicated that they were often thinking in English when writing in French, suggesting that the writing tasks were not necessarily distinct in nature. Therefore, the researchers argued that the findings suggested that direct writing in French as a target language may be the most effective choice for some learners when under time pressure. Cumming (1999) and Zamel (1996) perceived that this characteristic of L2 writing was related to EAL students' L1 writing proficiencies -- the higher the better. They also concluded that the ability to engage these effective strategies appeared to be independent of writers' L2 language proficiency.

Cognitively, L2 EAP learning strategies have been termed as backtracking, restructuring. Manchón, Roca and Murphy (2000a) investigated the types of backtracking (cognitive strategy) that EFL undergraduate education students employed when L2 composing. The findings also indicated that the L2 user's L1 helped to act as a problem-solving device in coping with communicative task demands. However, this study emphasized the textual and linguistic aspects of L2 writing processes. Participants merely objectively did their retrospective reflections during L2 composing. Different from the above discussed studies, Manchón, Roca and Murphy (2000b) analyzed how Spanish learners of English used restructuring in their L2 composing processes. Results indicated that *restructuring* had different functions in L2 composing processes: it could compensate for the lack of linguistic resources typical of L2 learners, but it could also serve stylistic, ideational, textual and procedural goals. Findings also indicated that L2 proficiency seemed to play a role in determining the focus of concerns of restructuring in L2

composing. A restructuring strategy was used "whenever the learner realizes that he cannot complete a local plan which he has already begun realizing and develops an alternative local plan which enables him to communicate his intended message without reduction" (Faerch & Kasper, 1983, p. 50). Similarly, this study paid more attention to linguistic and textual perspectives of L2 writing. It provided no illustration on the comprehensive use of L2 writing strategies. After all, it is impossible for any L2 writer to employ only one of the cognitive strategies while composing.

Contrasting these two studies, Victori (1999) specifically analyzed how differences in the beliefs or metacognitive knowledge (MK) held about writing related to differences in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing skills. The results of case studies also indicated the clear relationship that existed between the MK of the writers and the strategies that they deployed. They underscored the major role played by MK in providing a rationale for the learners' approach to writing. The findings of this study also provided a more thorough understanding of the learners' writing process regarding their motivation, self-concept and writing problems when addressing the research questions overlooked by the above reviewed studies: "Why they had made particular changes when writing; their rationale for using certain strategies while writing the essay; their perception of the writing task, a written text in general, on their usual approach to writing as well as on their perceived abilities and weaknesses; to provide more personal information such as their motivation for writing, their writing problems and writing instruction received" (Victori, 1999, p.540). However, there was no analysis on the

reasons why successful L2 learners had metacognitive writing knowledge and unsuccessful L2 learners lacked similar knowledge in this research. Green and Oxford (1995) surveyed 374 tertiary-level Puerto Rican EAL students split equally among three courses (pre-basic, basic, and intermediate). They reported significantly higher strategy use among more proficient students in the cognitive, compensation, metacognitive and social categories.

In the research line of L2 learning coping strategies, Spack (1997) discussed "strategies for success". This not only developed new strategies, but also adjusted L2 learners' strategies to achieve comprehension and production of a variety of texts. At this point, Leki's (1995) study also found her participants "displayed the flexibility needed to shift among strategies as needed" (p. 241). Spack's three-year case study documented the process how a L2 writer gradually became a better academic learner through the guided practice in which she engaged as well as through a process of self-reflection on her own learning. To some extent, these knowledge dimensions contributed to the writers' success, thus supporting Chamot and O'Malley's (1994) claim that "an important requirement for viewing oneself as successful learner is self-control over strategy use" (p. 383). What's more, Leki's (1995) study implicated what students already knew and what strategies they already consciously used were very informative to EAL academic instructors. Similarly, the following implications based on Spack's (1997) research also informed L2 writing pedagogies:

Building a course on the foundation of students' background knowledge and

experience; (b) making connections between course content and r life; (c) relating course material to multiple social and cultural situations; (d) providing handouts to help students follow what is being presented in a lecture; (e) encouraging student-teacher and student-student interaction in class; (f) being accessible outside of class; (g) allowing for writing tasks that tap into students' multicultural knowledge; (h) providing ongoing feedback on writing in progress; (i) providing comments on writing assignments that discuss content and help students' improve their styles. (p. 46)

From a different viewpoint, the participants in both Leki's (1995) and Spack's (1997) study, even at the undergraduate level, probably only represented comparatively successful L2 learners. This can be implied since first of all, their English language proficiencies have met the minimum requirements for admission to the university already. Spack's participants' TOEFL scores were *640/667* (paper test), far above the minimum requirements. Second, they were all experiencing writing program training in EAL context. Third, they were experiencing their L2 EAP writing practice in different disciplines at university or college.

To some extent, Spack's (1997) study ignored one important aspect in her participant's background culture of her literacy. When Spack discussed her findings, she thought that it was unfair for her research participant to compare her high school level writing in Japanese and their college-level writing in English in order to draw cross-cultural conclusions from the participant's experiences. However, the difference would

most likely have been that the college-level writing would be more specific and in-depth in its contents, and this should have been one of the potential coping strategies that Spack's participant employed.

On the other hand, in the field of L2 learner's EAP writing, some studies touched upon successful L2 writers. For instance, Basturkman and Lewis' (2002) three case studies investigated how individual learners constructed activities and their own successes in EAP writing courses. They found students' constructions of success differ from those of the teachers and vice versa. The study indicated that L2 learners did not perceive success in terms of external objective measures such as grades or teacher feedback, or the quality of the ideas and information they had written or in relation to certain stated course objectives. By comparison of the reports of the three students, researchers discovered the highly individual nature of their ideas of success in the EAP writing course. This study was significant in understanding L2 writer's needs for success in academic writing. It helped popularize teacher-known, out-of-class strategies such as Carla's (one of participants in their study) method of reading aloud and memorizing or Carla's beliefs about how languages were learned. Meanwhile, it could also help teachers provide more effective feedback to students on aspects of writing with which they were concerned. However, discussing perceptions on success in terms of the objectives of the academic writing courses -- without mentioning participants' academic expectations -- will not elicit consensus as whether success in EAP writing inspires great motivation. Moreover, the authors provided no explanation on whether there were

some sociocultural factors that made it possible for L2 writer to succeed at EAP writing.

The above mentioned studies clearly documented L2 EAP writers' learning and writing experiences at the undergraduate level. They also offered answers to those inquires about how those L2 writers negotiated their L1 academic literacy and L2 academic literacy by employing different individualized strategies. As Manchón (2001) argued, factors which influenced different L2 writer-internal and writer-external variables on strategy use and their L2 writing products have been discussed in the research field. On the other hand, L2 strategy research scholars as Oxford and Nyikos (1989) and Chamot (2001) confirmed the importance of investigating strategies because these strategies have been thought to be readily teachable. There are a number of reports of successful strategy training programs (e.g., Sengupta, 2000; Yang, 1999). In addition, Cohen (1998) provided very comprehensive instructions for implementing strategy training. An alternative to direct training was to embed strategies in teaching tasks and materials. It must be acknowledged that this line of research undoubtedly served to build a composite picture of the actions in which writers engaged while attempting to produce a text in a non-native language.

Liu and Hansen's (2002) monographs of peer review summarized the benefits and the constraints of that peer response in the L2 writing classroom in both EAL and EFL contexts. They argued, for instance, that on the cognitive level, peer response would focus heavily on surface structure at linguistic level and built the critical skills needed to analyze and revise one's own writing. On social level, it aimed to encourage students to

express and negotiate their ideas and thus improve students' social communication ability, though those of unfriendly or critical comments on their peers' writing would provide in that cases. On a practical level, peer comments sometimes would be negative when their works were criticized by their peers.

However, as most research findings demonstrated, students trained in peer response activities would be quite capable of making useful suggestions about their peers' drafts and would lead to meaningful revisions (e.g., Hansen, 2001; Hansen & Liu, 2000; Hu, 2005). Similarly, when Hu (2005) summarized the potential benefits of peer response, he thought that his research findings confirmed that peer reviewing in EAP writing contributed to L2 learners' developing an understanding of themselves and the learning of writing skills. Teachers also developed an understanding of teaching effective writing skills.

However, it seems that there is a research gap in L2 EAP writing area: besides L2 graduate students and undergraduate students, pre-university students are also one of groups of students in English-medium higher education settings. Accordingly, at least some other potential research concerns can be raised in terms of such phenomenon. What about pre-university students' L2 EAP writing practice? Do they have any coping strategies when developing their L2 writing abilities? If yes, what are they? Are there any differences in roles of the coping strategies employed between L2 pre-university students and undergraduate students or graduate students? If so, what roles of coping strategies play in pre-university students' L2 EAP writing? In addition, Canagarajah (2006)

proposed L2 EAP writing research should:

> study the process of composing in multiple languages, analyze L2 EAP writers' life
>
> between multiple language and cultures, focus more on the changing contexts of
>
> communication, perhaps treating context as the main variable as writers switch
>
> their languages, discourses, and identities in response to this contextual change,
>
> we would treat them as agentive, shuttling creatively between discourses to
>
> achieve their communicative objectives, and textual differences were not
>
> treated as an unconscious error but a strategic and creative choice by the author
>
> to attain his or her rhetorical objectives (p. 591).

Accordingly, research findings on L2 EAP programs at the undergraduate level motivated me to examine how EAL learners at the pre-university level perceive these programs. In particular, Leki's (2007) study made me investigate how those EAP programs benefited L2 pre-university students and met their actual learning needs from their own perspectives. In addition, findings on L1 literacy impact influenced my design of the interview questions pertaining to how those pre-university students in my study developed their L1 academic literacy (see Appendix B: Interview Protocol (I)). In addition, peer review research findings indicated that peer response training could support those of EAL students at any levels, which informed my current study on classroom observation data collection on peer learning benefits and sociocultural learning environment benefits.

L2 writing research at the pre-university level.

In terms of L2 EAP writing aims, audience, requirements, compared with EAP

writing at graduate and undergraduate levels, L2 EAP writing at the pre-university level has its own characteristics. EAP writing at this level more focuses on assisting L2 students to meet the minimum English language proficiency required for their undergraduate admission. During this English language learning process, they need to master basic EAP writing skills, rhetorical structures on summary, essay, critique, write a research paper, increase their EAP vocabulary size and accuracy, and focus upon grammatical accuracy. L2 writing at this level will not for any exporters in the field but the L2 EAP writing instructors who will identify those of above mentioned aspects need improving for their students.

So far, there are very few studies mainly focused on pre-university students, with the exception of Yang et al., (2004), Li (2004) and Demirkan-Jones (2006) research. In Yang et al.'s (2004) study, researchers applied the activity theory to explain how those pre-university students acquired EAP writing skills. Their exploration focused on Chinese and Japanese EAL learners' goals and actions related to the rhetoric of their first and second languages. Similarly, those groups of EAL students had learning challenges in their vocabulary usage and grammar accuracy. As a result, their EAP instructor designed different classroom activities to assist them to improve EAP writing skills. By such investigation, they concluded that L2 EAP writing was both an "internal process" (Yang, et al., 2004, p. 29) which referred to those EAL learners' diverse individual actions to achieve their learning outcomes and "the product of external factors" (Yang et al., 2004, p. 29) which highlighted that cooperative work between those EAL learners and their

EAP writing instructions. This study delineated those EAL learners' academic lives at their beginning stages. This provided some relevant evidences to confirm my research findings, such as their learning challenges, their coping strategies and their feelings about EAP writing practices.

Li (2004) documented four Chinese students' transitional experiences in a Canadian high school. They had just finished their secondary education in China and came to Canada to pursue their university degrees. During these transitional experiences, they experienced language difficulties in all aspects of English -- speaking, listening, reading and writing. They lacked the academic language skills to understand their lectures or classroom instructions. They had big challenges in EAP writing due to their small English vocabulary and limited knowledge of English grammar. They made an endeavor to improve their L2 academic literacy in their new sociocultural context. However, they still experienced a great deal of difficulty for an extended period of time in their pursuit of improved L2 skills in preparation for university programs. Li's data collection methods prompted me to collect some writing samples from my research participants to validate my investigation results. Demirkan-Jones' (2006) case study investigated Asian pre-undergraduate students' EAP learning experiences which described their values of EAP writing, expectations for language study skills learning, and learning difficulties and their identities in their writing. His study advocated that EAP teachers should be the facilitators for such L2 learners. However, in his study, he did not mention those L2 EAP learners' specific educational experiences, especially those used to skillfully cope with

their L2 writing difficulties and problems. These factors would probably inform their learning at different stages in EAL settings, and they would help us better know this group of EAL learners and further inform EAP pre-university writing program developers and practitioners.

Generally, L2 EAP writing research in the past 25 years gave little attention to L2 pre-university students in English-medium universities. As a matter of fact, compared with most EAL graduate or undergraduate students, it appeared that pre-university EAL learners' language proficiencies were lower. Moreover, sociocultural stances in the EAP writing study field should take into consideration when L2 learners' learning experiences are involved. Without a lived social L2 writing context, it was so difficult to discover the real factors influencing L2 writing. In the early 1990s, Oxford (1996) proposed, "Culture background affects strategy choice," and "Culture also influences strategy assessment, the measurement of strategy use." (pp. xi-xii). This may indicate the fact that research in this area should explore the relationships between L2 writing strategy employment and L2 learner's learning experiences. In view of the current situation on L2 EAP writing research, my study attempts to examine how Chinese students perceive their EAP writing experiences at a pre-university EAP program and how their past and current learning experiences have influenced their EAP writing practices. Their own voices were the important sources for this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

A review of the scholarly literature indicates a potential research gap as pre-university EAL students' perceptions of academic writing practices have seldom been investigated in English-medium higher education. Due to the significant numbers of Chinese students at pre-university EAP programs in most Canadian universities today, I chose Chinese EAL students as my research participants. In this chapter I first present the rationale for the design of the research methodology which includes the rationale for using the case study approach and choosing the participants. I then address the research setting, data collection methods and data analysis procedures. To achieve my research goals, the following research questions were asked: What are the Chinese EAL learners' perceptions of coping strategies in a pre-university academic English context? What coping strategies for academic writing have Chinese EAL learners used and developed within the pre-university academic English context? To what extent do Chinese EAL learners' coping strategies influence their academic writing practices in the pre-university EAP context? Regarding the employment of these coping strategies in EAP writing practices, how do Chinese EAL learners identify their learning needs generally?

Multiple Case Study Research

To explore the research questions concerning Chinese pre-university EAP students in

a Canadian university, the study adopted an interpretive case study approach to data collection and analysis. In the literature on case study methodology, interpretive case study emphasizes rich, thick descriptive data which is used to develop categories that conceptualize different approaches to the task (Merriam 1988, 1998). Further, Stake (2005) argued that experiential knowledge is the essence of qualitative understanding; therefore, case study facilitates the conveyance of experience and contributes to a broad understanding of the context. People make some generalizations entirely from personal or vicarious experience and we come to know what has happened partly in terms of what others reveal as their experience. Therefore, aiming to gain in-depth, understandings of perceptions – both subjective and interpretive -- of Chinese EAL learners' coping strategies, qualitative interpretative case study methods are applicable.

In my study, the research setting is an EAP writing program for pre-university EAL learners, where EAL learners were expected to accomplish academic writing tasks to prepare for their future study in Canadian universities. Consequently, every participant had unique past and present learning experiences as different realities from the various aspects of their individual lives -- different locations (home country and western university), different stages of life (younger and adult) and differences from being around different people. Therefore, their lived experiences are meaningful and only the person is the reliable source of information to answer the research questions. As Merriam (1998) argued, interpretive case study research presents reality as multiple, social and cultural constructs emerging from values, assumptions, and beliefs in a real

life context. In addition, McNiff and Whitehead (2002) argued that, "all people are potential knowers who create their own answers to practice as they investigate it, and so generate their own personal theories of learning, teaching and management from within that practice" (p.31). Following these principles, this study aims to develop an understanding and interpretation of the perceptions of EAP writing from the individual writing experiences of a group of Chinese pre-university students who experienced two contexts of second language learning, in China and in Canada. Additionally, it intends to empower their voices on how the coping strategies developed from their own learning experiences influence their ability to be successful EAP writers in a Canadian university.

In case study research application, Merriam (1988, 1998) identified four essential properties of a qualitative case study: particularistic, descriptive, heuristic and inductive. From this standpoint, within the current study, the viewpoints of Chinese pre-university EAP learners have been particularly noted because they reveal a particular phenomenon representing the specific problems that they confront. Descriptive, according to Merriam means the end product is a rich, thick description of the phenomenon under study. In this study, these three Chinese EAL learners' descriptions of their previous and current learning experience have been interwoven with the demographic and cultural norms, values, and their deep-seated attitudes and notions (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Moreover, while aiming to illuminate deeper understandings of Chinese EAL learners' academic writing practices, these students confirmed what we already know. They also led to the discovery of new meanings of their individualized EAP writing experiences and extended

the participants' understanding of their applicable coping strategies in EAP writing practices which embodied the heuristic characteristic of the case study. Finally, because the findings have been grounded in the context itself, they are inductive. Since this study centered on the Chinese pre-university EAP learners' perceptions of the roles that their coping strategies played in their EAP writing, and included their specific learning experiences and application of their coping strategies in their EAP writing practices, there are many potential benefits of the research. These could include the following: enhance a better understanding of Chinese pre-university learners' EAP writing characteristics; understand what coping strategies can be induced from their writing practices in EFL and EAL contexts; suggest development to the current EAP writing program; inform current L2 EAP writing pedagogic practices; and extend EAL writing research from this perspective.

To describe the Chinese EAL learners' academic writing practices, this study utilized a multiple case study approach (Yin, 2003). It allowed me to create a three-case profile design to chronologically document the students' perceptions of coping strategies of their EAP writing practices, to explore the roles that their perceived coping strategies have played in facilitating successful EAP writing, and to identify their actual learning needs for a pre-university EAP writing program.

Research settings. The research setting was a pre-university EAP program in a Canadian university. The interviews and observations took place at the fifth level of the Intensive Academic Program designed to prepare students for admission to one of the

central Canadian Universities. Foremost, up to now, there have been few L2 EAP research projects conducted in such pre-university contexts. One exception is Yang et al.'s (2004) research which examined how Chinese and Japanese pre-university students acquired EAP writing skills. Another is Xing's (2009) research which described how some of Chinese pre-university students developed their English vocabulary learning strategies. Additionally, this 15-week program included more than 50 hours of academic instruction on academic writing. The writing component of the AEPUCE program " is intended for a vast and intensive practice of the academic writing as part of the pre-university integrated English Language Centre program" and "it aims to make students ready to produce term papers and do other writing assignments common at universities in North America" (Writing Course outline of AEPUCE program, 2005, p.1-2).   The basic requirements for entering this program are a TOEFL score of 500 (173 CBT, 64iBT) or CanTEST band of 3.5 or equivalent. Accordingly, this pre-university EAP program has been chosen as the research context.

Participants. Three participants that represented three different educational levels among Chinese EAL students in the AEPUCE program were selected. Both Merriam (1998) and Creswell (2007) point out that a sampling strategy in case study research might select both typical and unusual (unique) cases, and thus employ maximum variation. Following this approach, Chinese pre-university EAL students chosen represent both typical and unusual cases. In terms of the significant number of Chinese students enrolled in the pre-university EAP program, they are the typical cases. However, these

three Chinese EAL students' personal lived stories make them unusual as well. From

both of these perspectives, the selected cases should have research potential. In order

to ensure the selected cases fairly represent all Chinese EAL students in pre-university

EAP program, I selected different levels of writing competencies, education levels and

gender to achieve maximum variation in multiple case study research. Additionally, one

EAP writing instructor was willing to be a participant to further shed light on the

practices of students. Next, I explain the rationale behind the selection of three Chinese

pre-university students and how the research participants were recruited.

The rationale for my choice of research participants follows. First of all, at the time

of my research according to statistics of the EAP program, the percentage of Chinese

students in the AEPUCE program was the highest. According to *AEPUCE program*

statistic reports, the average percentage of Chinese students in classes was over 70

percent, and in some classes, the percentage was even over 90 (p.1). As a result,

documenting diverse variations and identifying important common patterns (Creswell,

2007) of Chinese pre-university EAL students' academic writing practices provides some

important information to L2 EAP instructors. It further serves to enhance the

pedagogical significance of the study.

Second, according to Gall (1996), a reasonably homogeneous sample ensures that

participants who vary widely from the others do not obscure the relationships of the

phenomenon studied. Hence, the current study meets the requirements of the

homogeneity in participants by ensuring that all participants are Chinese who were born

in mainland China. They have had Chinese secondary education in China and they have been in an EAP program in a Canadian university. The range of responses was wide since two participants in my study had just graduated from traditional Chinese public high schools and one participant did not have a high school diploma before entering the AEPUCE program. However their learning experiences were diverse as a result based upon where they grew up in China and the differences in their family backgrounds. Therefore, to a major extent, they were complete novice learners of EAP writing and this diversity was necessary to provide us with the rich, descriptive details that we required.

Third, as a Chinese EAL learner myself, the same L1 communication helped clarify the meaning and connotation of the expression of the language during the whole investigation process.

In order to delineate Chinese pre-university EAL learners' academic writing experiences, some other sampling considerations included these basic criteria:

1) The three EAP learners should have at least two terms of English study at Canadian schools, which would ensure sufficient learning experiences in English speaking contexts.

2) To balance the gender of the participants, this study chose at least one male and one female participant.

After my research proposal had been approved by the ENREB based on this rationale, I went to one class in the AEPUCE program to give a short presentation to the Chinese EAL students in that class. This presentation delivered the following information: research questions, the nature and the procedures of my intended study, the criteria of

the participants and the benefits (e.g., bookstore gift cards, coffee and snacks during interviews, etc.) that they would receive from the research work. I then requested their voluntary participation in the research. In two days, I had received four responses from students who said that they would like to participate in my research. However, upon further explanation of the details of my research and the commitment required from them in terms of time and energy, one student decided not to participate given his busy schedule of work and study. Table 2 is the descriptions on these three research participants' background.

Table 2

Three Participants' Background

Participants	Gender	Education	Time study in Canada	Hobbies
Qing	Female	High school completed	Two terms	Reading, writing and traveling
Ming	Male	Grade 11 completed	Three terms	Reading
Lei	Female	High school completed	Two terms	Writing (Chinese online writer)

Data Collection

Following the principles of data collection for doing high-quality case studies, Yin (2003) proposed that: "(a) using multiple, not just single, sources of evidence; (b)

creating a case study database; and (c) maintaining a chain of evidence" (p.85) were the

most important and relevant to all six sources of evidence "documentation, archival

records, interview, direct observations, participant-observations, physical artifacts"

(p.86). Accordingly, qualitative data has been gathered from three sources: interviews of

the three chosen participants and an instructor of L2 in the EAP program, field notes

taken from direct classroom observation; and EAP writing samples for each participant

and other relevant program documents. This allowed for the investigation of how those

coping strategies influenced Chinese pre-university students' EAP writing and to explore

how they perceived successful EAP writing during their academic writing practices This

use of multiple data collection methods from different perspectives was designed to

generate different insights into Chinese pre-university EAL students' academic writing

practices, thus achieving the triangulation of data collection about the multiple cases

studied (Cohen & Manion, 1994).

Techniques and procedures of data collection. Interviewing is a major source of

qualitative data needed for understanding the lived experiences under study (Merriam,

1988, 1998; Yin, 2003; Creswell, 2007). This study used different types of interviews to

explore participants' literacy experiences "in the past that are impossible to replicate"

(Merriam, 1998, p. 72). In formulating interview questions, Patton (1980) lists six kinds

of questions that can be used to get different types of information from respondents:

"experience/behavior questions, opinion/value questions, feeling questions, knowledge

questions, sensory questions, and background/demographic questions" (Merriam Cited

in Patton, 1988, p.78). Sensory questions, which determine what sensory stimuli -- sight, sound, touch, taste, or smell -- would not relate to the current research concern. Therefore, the other five types of interview questions were taken into account when designing three different interview protocols for this study (see Appendixes B and C of interview protocols).

In this study, one-on-one interviews (Creswell, 2007) were used. Since socio-cultural theory of learning evaluated learners' previous learning experiences, the premise was that learners would develop their learning when they mediated their previous learning experiences. These interviews provided important information for the question, "What coping strategies for academic writing do Chinese EAL learners use and develop within the pre-university academic English context?" Table 3: Overview on Interview Data Collection summarizes the different interview types, interview focus, time, purposes and participants. In addition, member checking was conducted after the interview data transcription was finished.

Table 3

Overview on Interview Data Collection

Interview Type	Interview Focusing	Interview Methods	Interview Purposes	Interview Participants	Interview Time assigned
Unstructured **(Merriam, 1998)**	Participants' previous L1 and L2 writing learning experiences before the AEPUCE program	open-ended questions (see Appendix B-I) (audiotaped)	Providing participants' composing background descriptions for their case files.	Three chosen L2 Chinese EAP students	1-1.5 hours (two sessions)
Semi-structured &Unstructured (Merriam, 1998)	Participants' description of their academic writing practices; Their perceptions of coping strategies of EAP writing at AEPUCE program	a mix of more-and less-structured questions (See Appendix B-II) (audiotaped)	Investigating participants' perceptions of coping strategies of EAP writing; Their influences on their successful EAP writing practices	Three chosen L2 Chinese EAP students	1.5 hours on Essays, Research paper writing 1 hour on Summary, Critique writing
Structured (Merriam, 1998)	L2 EAP writing instructors' perception of Chinese learners' writing practices at AEPUCE program	prescribed questions (See Appendix C) (audiotaped)	Seeking the instructor's perceptions of her expectations of her students' EAP writing practice and her perceptions of the coping strategies used in his/her students' EAP writing products.	An EAP writing instructor at AEPUCE program	1 hour
Email- follow-up interview (Creswell, 2007) (after the thematic coding finished)	Overlooked aspects of the research questions	emails	Complementing some aspects of the research questions overlooked in these three types of interviews	Three chosen L2 Chinese EAP students; An EAP writing instructor at AEPUCE program	1 -2 times

Observation is also a major means of collecting data in case study research (Merriam, 1988, 1998; Yin, 2003; Creswell,2007). It gives a firsthand account of the situation under study and, when combined with interviewing and document analysis, allows for a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated (Merriam, 1988, 1998). In this part of data collecting, participants' classroom activities and interactions were viewed as socio-cultural activities in a certain socio-cultural environment. The direct classroom observations were conducted over a period of at least 12 weeks, consisting of two or three hours per week for a total of 26 hours of observation. During the process of the classroom observation, detailed field notes were taken based on an observation schedule of each week. In addition, based on the observation protocols, the observations included a "descriptive notes" section for recording a description of classroom activities in chronological fashion and "a 'reflective notes' section for notes taking about the process, reflections on activities, and summary conclusions about activities for later theme development" (Creswell, 2007, p.135-138) (See Appendix D).

Table 4

Overview of Observation Data Collection

Observation components	content-specific vocabulary development, well-structured, cohesive paragraphs writing skills enhancing phase	academic essays writing training phase	summaries and critiques of authentic academic article writing training phase	research paper writing training phase
Observation focusing	Classroom activities and participants' reactions to such activities			
Observation contents	Participants action, reaction to the contents of instruction; Individual interaction with the classmates, instructor during the classroom activities.			
Observation purposes	Investigating what potential coping strategies that the participants developed and employed to deal with their learning challenges during class time.			
Observation time	2-3 hours each week			

Additionally, Merriam (1998) noted that "data collection in case study research usually involves all three strategies of interviewing, observing, and analyzing documents" (p. 137). Moreover, Patton (1997) stressed the reason why multiple sources of data were needed:

Multiple sources of information are sought and used because no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective… By using a combination of observations, interviewing, and document analysis, the fieldworker is able to use different data sources to validate and cross-check findings (cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 137).

Thus, Chinese EAL students' academic writing assignments samples, official grade reports, and EAP instructors evaluations were used as "personal documents" (Merriam,

1998). Since this study attempted to provide information on the question "To what extent do Chinese EAL learners coping strategies influence their academic writing practices in the pre-university EAP context?", the participants were required to choose some of their EAP writing samples in order to help answer the question. Based on their performance on those chosen EAP writing samples, the three research participants were requested to reflect how they negotiated their writing skills developed from their literacy experiences to cope with the demands or challenges of those different academic writing tasks. In addition, they were asked to relate how they reacted to their EAP writing instructor's feedback and comments. Further, they were asked to provide their own perceived criteria of successful EAP writing. Finally, they identified their actual learning needs in L2 EAP writing practices. Furthermore, L2 EAP writing instructor's course syllabus and descriptions, lesson plans and handouts and other related AEPUCE program materials were collected and used to provide a framework for the observations. These were employed on-site to observe how Chinese EAL students took advantage of these materials to develop their coping strategies during their EAP writing practices (see Appendix D: Observation Protocol I-IV). In the meantime, these materials have been used as the documentation data to carry out comparative analysis with the other two types of data, interview data, and document data.

Validity Issues

According to Merriam (1998), validity issues include both internal validity and external validity. She argued that there are six basic strategies that a researcher can use to ensure internal validity: triangulation, member checks, long-term observation, peer

examination, participatory modes of research, and addressing the researcher's biases. This study collected multiple and different sources (interviews, classroom observation field notes, Chinese students' EAP writing samples, and other related documents from the participants' EAP writing instructor.) in order to attain the triangulation requirements. In order to increase the validity of the findings for my current study, classroom observations for the participants of the EAP writing program lasted almost a full term. In addition, after the data analysis was completed, member checking with my research participants was conducted. As Creswell (2007) advocated, "I did not let participants take a look at my transcripts or raw data, but ask them to review my preliminary analyses consisting of description of themes, and seek their views of written analyses as well as their missing points" (p. 209). When my analyses and interpretations of their interview, classroom observation and writing samples were reviewed with the participants in this study, there was basic agreement that I had captured and analyzed the data correctly. A researcher's biases -- how their own assumptions and worldviews with regards to the research topic might affect the results -- are often difficult to identify and eliminate. I feel that these were addressed and clarified when I completed my analysis and reported the findings of the case study.

External validity refers to generalizability of the research findings (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, Merriam (1998) suggested providing a rich, thick description to achieve transferability, establishing the typicality or modal category of the case, and conducting a cross-site or cross-case analysis in the case study research. The multiple sources of data (interviews, classroom observations and related documents from the AEPUCE

program, EAP writing instruction and research participants' EAP writing products) were utilized to provide the rich, thick description necessary to achieve transferability in my current study. In addition, since participants came only from one homogenous group and were selected in order to investigate their individual learning experiences and potential unique coping strategies based upon their EAP writing practices, this met the requirements of typicality and cross-case analysis for the external validity. In spite of all these factors, the features of case study method made it impossible to maintain the concept of generalizability completely.

Ethical Issues

Although it is very important that validity issues are interwoven with data collecting and analysis procedures, these procedures have to be conducted with ethical considerations in mind (Stringer, 2004). Thus, to protect the well-being and interests of research participants and avoid potential harm to research participants, confidentiality, permissions and informed consent (Stringer, 2004) had been established before my case study research was conducted. After the letter of approval was issued by ENREB, the recruitment of research participants was begun. First, potential participants listened to a short presentation regarding my intention to conduct the research (See Appendix E). When the voluntarily participants were recruited, they were informed of the topic and research questions of the study. They were also informed about the purpose of study, how to handle responses, including confidentiality, and, the risks and/or benefits involved with their consent to participate in the study. In addition, they were informed about research-related ethics centered around preserving the anonymity and

confidentiality of participants, maintaining data security, and my intention to use data for study, presentation, and publication purposes. Participants were assured of their freedom to withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty, and were briefed them on the topic of informed consent prior to signing the informed consent (See Appendix E–II & E-III). Finally, they were given a copy of Ethical Issues Checklist (Patton, 2002) to ensure that they understood their rights during their participation in the study.

Data Analysis

Merriam (1988, 1998), Yin (2003), and Creswell (2007) stated that when the data collection of multiple cases study was finished, the first step was to provide a detailed description of each case and themes within the cases, namely, within-case analysis. The second step was a thematic analysis across the cases, i.e., cross-case analysis. The final step was assertions or an interpretation of the meaning of the cases. Based on these principles, the data analysis began with the very early stages of data collecting in order to provide sufficient evidence to answer the proposed research questions of this study. Another advantage of early data analysis was the ability to use this analysis to continuously modify and adjust the subsequent data collection stages in order to obtain complete and comprehensive information. In order to document the effects of early data analysis, I created a data matrix for each research question from some suggested ideas, e.g. Yin (2003), Table 6-8: Data Matrix of Within-case Analyses (See Appendix F) are samples of the data matrix. In these tables, comments on information played important roles in evaluating the quality and quantity of the data collection. At the within-case analysis stage, participants' interviewing and observation data were transcribed after each

interview and observation were finished. Analyzing the interview, observation and field notes data followed the steps of coding data, finding patterns, labeling themes, developing the category system (Patton, 2002), and relating them to the research questions. With regards to participants' writing samples, the reflections on their writing process have been transcribed and coded. Some examples of the written work have been taken out to support their perceptions when necessary. Data related to EAP writing demands have been extracted from other documents (AEPUCE program rationale, writing assignment requirements, and EAP writing instructor's class handouts) to describe and contrast with participants understanding. Data analyses in my thesis work follow the following procedure, and in Appendix F, examples of data analyses provided:

Coding data (interview data, fieldnotes, participants EAP writing samples) $\longrightarrow$

summarizing emerging insights (Classifying emerging insights) $\longrightarrow$ Completing

within case data matrix $\longrightarrow$ completing cross case data matrix

After that, each case profile was created and "each case is first treated as a comprehensive case in and of itself" (Merriam, 1998, p. 194). When the first stage analysis was completed, the second stage – cross-case analysis – was started. Table 8 Data Matrix of Cross-case Analysis sample (See Appendix G) is an example to show how the cross-case analysis conducted, and the aim of this step of data analysis was "to build a general explanation that fits each of the individual cases, even though the cases would vary in their details" (Merriam cited in Yin, 1998, p. 195). At this stage, a matrix (Brown, 2005; Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002) of information sources and three types of data (interview, observations, documents) have been clearly displayed and the chain of

evidence with the first and second stages of data analyses have been established. Consequently, the linkages between the learning process and outcomes could be employed to compare the individual case differences. These links would be categorized and established as themes or patterns developed for the general explanation of the findings. In this respect, some aspects of the Vygotskian sociocultural theory of learning -- such as the relationship between language and thought, lived experiences and mediation, scaffolding, and ZPD -- have been used as a framework to interpret research findings.

This data matrix is a comprehensive research analysis and includes the findings of data analyses within it. It not only connected the research questions with theoretical interpretation, supporting literature, personal experiences and knowledge (biases) as well as emerging insights from data analysis, but it also indicated what questions have not been answered, what puzzles were still missing what rival themes emerged, and what critical opinions emerged. These issues identified and added to the case study research graphic organizer to see whether follow up data collection needed to be conducted.

Finally, the findings of the analysis have been directly interpreted and generalizations have been developed to each of the proposed research questions. In next chapter, each case profile will be briefly introduced, and then research findings will be illustrated and discussed within sociocultural learning theoretical framework.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Research in the area of academic writing has shown that coping strategies developed and employed by EAL university students at different levels described these EAL students' academic literacy experiences in English-medium universities (e.g., Leki, 1995, 2003; Gao, 2006; Cheng, 2006; Li, 2004). The goals of this study were to describe Chinese EAL students' employment of coping strategies and their perceptions towards these. It was also to document the categories of coping strategies employed as well as to discuss the extent to which these were employed. In light of the students' coping strategies, another goal was to identify their actual learning needs in academic English writing.

During this process, interpretative case study methodology was applied to this semester-long research. This research traced Chinese EAL students' academic writing development and improvement in a pre-university EAP program. This was done by interviewing them about their learning experiences both in China and in Canada (qualitative data including participants and writing course instructor interviews), non-participant classroom observations, and analyzing documents (participants' writing samples, handouts, and some related program documents). The research encompassed the full term of the pre-university EAP program. In the following section, after a brief profile for each participant which focuses on their academic literacy experiences respectively, the findings of this study will detail how those Chinese EAL students dealt with their perceived challenges of the different EAP writing tasks. The study will

examine the varieties of coping strategies that they developed and employed and to what extent these perceived coping strategies influenced them. Further, these study results indicate how Chinese EAL learners' potential learning needs might be considered when assisting them in completing their writing tasks in the pre-university academic settings.

Since this investigation was based on research questions, the coding themes during the cross-case analyses also fell on these four categories: perceptions of coping strategies employed in EAP writing practices; coping strategies developed in EAP writing practices; coping strategies influences on EAP writing task accomplishment and learning needs in EAP writing practices. For clarity of reporting, these three Chinese EAL students' identified learning challenges on academic writing have been taken into account. These were the prerequisite and motivation for their perceptions of coping strategies. The coping strategies developed and employed in these three Chinese students' EAP writing practices were summarized and some related data provided to demonstrate the results of data analyses. In the meantime, the findings from some other previous similar studies were employed to validate these research results. Aiming to illustrate the extent to which those perceived coping strategies influenced these Chinese EAL students' academic writing practice, their chosen EAP writing samples were analyzed and discussed. Subsequently, current research findings within the sociocultural learning theoretical framework are discussed. Finally, these three Chinese EAL learners' actually learning needs in their EAP writing acquisition have been identified and considered.

Qing's Profile

Chinese and English writing learning experiences. Qing came from a capital city in the Northwest part of China and she was very thankful that she was born into a family that knew how to nurture and educate her.   As a result of her early nurturing in the Chinese language and extensive reading experiences, it was much easier for her to learn Chinese writing. When she began to learn Chinese writing at grade three in elementary school, she knew how to apply things from her readings to those journals and narrative writing. (The data used in this study follows the format of: type of data I: interview, I2: L2 EAP instructor interview, O: observation, D: document, W: EAP writing sample, date of collection, page number.):

> I used to read many books when I was very young so writing is very easy for me. Although there are some demands for the different writing tasks -- like minimum character restrictions with fluent, expressive language, fewer errors and accurate punctuation marks -- I don't need to think about it and I have plenty of information in my mind. So, whenever and what else the teacher asked to write, it was so easy for me to take out something from my mind and then I knew how to deal with any topics. (I: 6/15/08, p. 1)

After that, she attended junior high school. Generally, simple argumentative writing was introduced in junior high school in China. Qing liked argumentative writing in Chinese because writing at this stage required the students to view any social events from their own view of the world. In the meantime, Chinese language rhetoric and grammar were enhanced. Therefore, Qing now had a mature understanding of writing

after several years' experiences expressing herself in Chinese:

> I think that the most important aspect in writing a successful article is the fluent written language. A second important aspect should be the unique viewpoints or arguments in the article which may not follow the worldly views or even follow the ideas of the masses. The third important aspect is the writer's strong emotion which should be woven with the contents of the article…. keep on revising them will make the article more expressive and persuasive. (I: 6/15/08, p. 1)

When she went to high school, history and philosophy aroused her curiosity. As a result of her early years learning philosophy, Qing developed strong analytical abilities.

> It (philosophy) changed my way of thinking. My teacher thought I had a talent for philosophical thinking, although the other students thought that philosophy was so boring, I always grasp the ideas and understand sooner. I like thinking about those different theories in philosophy, and thinking deeper and grasping the key points in the theory. I think I have strong abilities in analyzing. …I like think and analyze from the depth, there are many 'whys' in my mind. … I learn from different aspects until I am satisfied with the results that come out. (I: 6/15/08, p. 1)

Qing's English learning also started very early. When she was young her parents and uncle taught her the English alphabet and some English words from children's English books. Her formal English learning started at grade three in elementary school. When she went to junior high school, her English learning became more extensive: learning English words, grammatical rules, vocabularies and expressions. At that time in

China, English writing began in secondary school.

> In high school, the English teacher asked us to write something. I remembered that our English teacher asked us to memorize the sentence patterns, the vocabularies, expressions and grammatical rules article organizations and imitate what we memorized in English writing. Before I came to Canada, I had chance to prepare the IELTS exam. From this learning experience, I know how to write an English essay. I know the difference between this Chinese writing and English writing. (I: 6/15/08, p. 2)

In addition, she also looked for additional topics to practice writing outside the prescribed school programs. In this way, she thought:

> At that time, the sentence structure and the organization didn't follow the structure of English essays that we learned in Canada at all. English writing was not real English language but the translation of Chinese writing word by word. I think that when I wrote in English, I still found a lot of language barriers because I couldn't express myself freely due to my limited vocabulary. Most of what I write are the simple sentences; I can't use much complex sentences. ... So I need writing practice more besides what our teacher assigned in class (I: 6/15/08, p. 3)

Qing participated in the national entrance examination for colleges and universities in China. However, she was not interested in the program which her parents had chosen for her and did not accept the admission to college. Finally, her parents made a decision to send her to a Canadian university so she could pursue her undergraduate study there.

Qing was 19 years old when she came to Canada. After the English proficiency

placement tests, she was placed in one year language learning programs. First was the IEP program and subsequently she was enrolled in the AEPUCE program.

Initially, EAP writing to Qing was a painstaking process, particularly when she started to learn how to compose academic writing in English. When she got results that she did not expect, she always had negative feelings.

> I think academic writing is so baldness that I couldn't write freely. Any ideas I have, I have to look for some sources or examples to support them. To be honest, I think that some examples in my mind are from my extensive reading experience. I can't remember who wrote the articles exactly to give proper reference. However, if I couldn't list the source, my point would be very weak. I feel very painful when I began to learn the academic writing. To me, the academic writing is so indifferent. It kills my talent in writing, I couldn't write anything that I want, and so my academic writing is so weak. I always spend longer time in academic writing tasks but didn't receive any rewards for my efforts. (I: 6/15/08, p. 4)

However, Qing was always responsive to feedback and actively sought to make changes to her writing techniques. From her EAP writing instructor's marking and comments on her assignments, she began to understand what her weaknesses were. At that point, she began to find her own ways to deal with the various learning challenges during the EAP learning process of the academic essay, summary, critique and research papers.

After one term of EAP writing practice, Qing not only made great progress, but her understanding of EAP writing had changed and was completely different from her initial

one:

> We need to look at the problems or points, argue scientifically and objectively but based on the facts. I think that it's a kind of responsible writing in that what you may say based on the research that you did. The format of English academic writing requirements is specific but strict. So, you need to be serious-minded and very careful when dealing with the different assignments. To me, it was very difficult and frustrating to learn its rules at the very beginning. But once you grasp its rules and formats, and applying them strictly in your writing practice, you not only can make faster progress but also can produce a well-argued and academic writing. Now, I don't feel that it is very difficult any more. I think I have a scientific attitude toward the academic writing after one term of learning. (I: 8/25/08, p. 4)

Ming's Profile

   Chinese and English writing learning experiences. Ming came from a beautiful seaside city in China. Ming's parents were typical Chinese parents who made every effort to support his education. They sent him to the best elementary school in the city. This meant that he could potentially go to some key Junior High schools if he performed well in the highly competitive city-wide entrance examination. However, the large numbers of students in each class -- approximately 80 – were not conducive to his success. Teachers who taught those students did not have enough energy to monitor his learning outcomes and provide him with the feedback and guidance needed for him to excel.

> So, I didn't work so hard at the elementary school and my grade for each subject was always in the middle ranks of my class. In my teacher's eyes, I would have to

be considered an average student. (I: 6/16/08, p. 1)

Therefore after he graduated from the elementary school, his parents decided to send him to a private junior high school. Ming studied very well when he was in that school, in part because his biology teacher encouraged him and influenced him greatly. While here, his interest in biology developed further. After he graduated from the junior high school, he went to one of key high schools in his home city. By the time he was in grade eleven, he began to prepare to study overseas. This preparation acted as a distraction and he began to spend less time in study while he dealt with many things related to university application issues. His academic progress began to deteriorate. As a result, by the time that he came to Canada, he had not completed his secondary education in China.

When Ming started learning writing in Chinese, he liked writing narratives as he felt that they could describe anything in great detail. With his real experiences, he could write with his true feelings and strong emotions. However, at that time, he strongly disliked writing anything with the minimum word requirements as he thought that it constrained his writing ability. Chinese writing teachers at that time sought various expressions and different ideas and unique viewpoints.

In Ming's opinion, good writing should be creative in its organization, structure, viewpoint, and even the contents. Therefore, if he could use his personal experiences from real life in his writing and use different rhetorical devices to delineate his actions and emotions -- such as metaphor, simile, and hyperbole -- his writing should be satisfactory. He once got full marks in his descriptive writing. From then on, he began to

like Chinese writing and he decided to join in the Literature Club in order to further develop his writing skills. In this club, members shared their writing skills and experiences once a week in a seminar and they assisted each other to write outstanding works. He remembered:

> At that time, we were asked to give feedback for everyone's work, I thought it was very good practice for me. Looking for other's strengths and weaknesses made me know how to improve my own writing. We also discussed the contents of our newsletter which helped me develop my ability to do some editing work. We watched movies, read the world famous literature works and then we shared our opinions and wrote our comments on those of movies or literature. The tutor in this club always taught us some writing skills and different Chinese writing styles which he wouldn't have chance to teach in class. I don't think I liked writing argumentation articles, but the extensive reading and newsletter editing practice helped me a lot to brainstorm such genre. Our teacher always introduced us to excellent writing samples published in some composition journals for high school students. It gave us many fresh ideas on how to compose our own writing. (I: 5/16/08, p. 4)

In China, when Ming began to learn English writing in high school, he tended to follow the Chinese writing style to do his English writing. For him, this influence was impulsive, such as trying to use different vocabularies, memorizing the good expressions or sentence structures focused on the main points to discuss. Since Ming had his own unique ways to deal with Chinese writing, he would look back at related experiences

and look for the unique aspects in the assigned topic in English writing. He was also good at incorporating anything which happened to come to his mind at that moment.

Ming was 18 years old when he agreed to be my research participant. He was shy and amiable. In the class, he was generally so quiet that he wasn't really noticeable. In his EAP writing class, he always sat at the very back of the classroom. He seldom asked questions or answered the teacher's questions unless there were no other options.

As Ming started to learn EAP writing, he thought he would still keep his Chinese writing habits. Therefore, he tried his best to write as much as possible but the more he wrote, the more problems that he had: grammatical errors, non-English writing patterns, and Chinese expressions which didn't translate well.

> I was very frustrated; I made great effort to complete each assignment but I always got the negative comments, like, 'it seemed that you had good ideas to develop, but not clear.' The mistakes in my writing were underlined with red pen and covered almost the whole page: mistakes, mistakes, grammar mistakes, spelling mistakes, wrong words. I really want to give up at that time. (I: 5/16/08, p. 2)

Ming's instructor also tried to assist him in improving his EAP writing skills. She trained Ming to strictly follow the required formats for different assignments and writing demands. Gradually, he began to do that automatically. Although he finally passed his EAP writing course, he still felt that he did had not mastered all these formats. When he moved to Level 4, his instructor was so strict with grammatical errors that Ming became more careful during his writings. Gradually, fewer grammatical errors were found in his

assignments. When he enrolled in the AEPUCE program, he found that EAP writing at this level was not as difficult as when he had started to learn its rules:

> Even though I don't think the writing itself was any more difficult than the writing that we did at Level 4, I found that the writing at this level needed larger a vocabulary size, more accurate expressions and required the use of more academic sources to support writing. It takes longer time to do each writing task. So I have to figure out how to deal with all these requirements. (I: 5/16/08, p. 3)

Lei's Profile

 Chinese and English writing learning experiences. Lei came from the southern part of China. Before she came to Canada, she finished high school and completed the National Entrance Examination for University and College and was admitted to one of the Chinese universities. However, her mother's expectation was that she should have some overseas educational experience. As a result, she was sent to Canada. She was appreciative of the fact that her mother made every effort to guide her through every stage of her education in China.

When Lei was in elementary school, she had a hobby of reading fairytales. As a result of this hobby, she started to try short story writing. Even at the time of the study, she was still writing some short stories in her online personal space and shared those with other people. In Lei's opinion, Chinese writing was one of her hobbies and she thought that she could be a successful writer in Chinese. Ever since she began to learn writing, she hasn't had any difficulty. When she was in high school, her writing assignments and compositions in exams had been chosen many times as the samples to

be read to her classmates. Lei gave credit to her mother and teachers for their' positive attitude and encouragement for her successful Chinese writing practices in China.

She had her own understanding on the criteria of successfully writing:

> In fact, to me, writing should come from the real experiences and the writer should be so happy to share such truthful experiences. It should have beautiful but appropriate expressions, various rhetorical devices, and a well-organized article structure with logic mind. (I: 5/20/08, p. 2)

Lei was confident in her Chinese compositions and always got the highest marks. On occasion, she even received full marks for her work. When she was in junior high school, her teacher didn't allow students to use the first pronoun. This teacher liked something described from the third person perspective. It was very useful training. Since then, she has learned how to think over anything objectively. However, after she came to Canada, her experience as an international student was much different. When she used the first pronoun perspective to share her viewpoints in English writing based on Chinese culture, it generated a positive response from her teachers and she received high marks. In addition, the Chinese language teacher at that time usually asked students to imitate the organization of different genres, and some typical expressions used in argumentation writing. Gradually, she got used to follow whatever format the teacher taught, although it was too restrictive to develop her writing talent, she thought that it was the reason why she had adapted to English academic writing faster.

When she was in high school in China, the writing practices were more exam-oriented. Accordingly, she began to imitate the compositions which had been rewarded

in the national competition in order to ensure that she received good marks in the national entrance examination to college.

> At that time, I memorised many expressive, persuasive, eloquent expressions, as well as some paragraphs for beginning and ending writing for argumentative writing. I also learned how to quote some famous sayings, the words form the world famous figures, and some examples from their experiences to support the points that I put forward in my argumentative writing. (I: 5/15/08, p. 5)

Therefore, when she began to learn EAP writing and teacher required her to cite or paraphrase someone else's viewpoint, she was quite familiar with these skills. She already knew how to cite something appropriately from her first language writing experiences and all that was required was to add the APA style to do it.

Her extensive practise in Chinese writing gave her the ability to generate ideas when she began to compose and she could finish writing a composition in a short time. As for the English writing, she thought it was almost same as the Chinese writing that she learned when she was in China. She benefited greatly from her Chinese writing habits. Even in Canada, English writing to her used the same process of composing. For example, at first Lei thought that writing a summary was very difficult. However, when she realized that it was similar to the main idea of summarizing in Chinese reading, she had fewer problems. She recalled that the teacher in her Chinese classes -- no matter what the grade level – always asked students to summarize the main ideas or gist of the required article. The basic skill for doing this task successfully was the ability to pick up the key points in the article. Although the thinking patterns were somewhat different

from in English and Chinese article organization, she found that it was easy for her to get

the main points in English written articles.

> I know how to find the key points in the article. Usually, I look for the topic
>
> sentences of each paragraph, or I look for the key words in the thesis statement.
>
> Sometimes, I will combine teacher's methods with my own way to summarize the
>
> key points of the article if I really don't know how to summarize the author's idea;
>
> I will cite the words from the article. Then, I follow the pattern of summary
>
> writing in English. (I: 6/20/2008, p. 1)

Therefore, when Lei was asked to reflect what upon how she employed different

coping strategies in her EAP writing, Lei thought that she would most likely follow the

same process of first language writing except base it upon academic sources. She also

found other ways that worked well during her EAP writing practice. These included

using first language and culture in second language writing in English, strictly following

the teacher's instruction to make her learning easier and applying previous learning

strategies to her current EAP writing practice in Canada. These coping strategies will be

discussed in detail in the next section.

Identifying EAP Learning Challenges

Generally, EAP writing requirements meant strictly required fixed writing patterns

with enough sources to support the raised points in writing, and APA style of citation

with references needing to be provided.

> Qing: Academic writing is a kind precise writing with some sources supported
>
> and it needs to follow many strict regulations. For example, its references

should follow the APA style, the organization of the paragraph should

follow the topic sentence, examples, thesis statement, etc., and the

sentence structure should have its subject, verb and object, etc. When I

began to learn EAP writing, I felt that it was so difficult. Even though I

understood the teacher's instruction, I still didn't know how to start

writing. However, the more I practiced following those rules, the more

familiar that I became with its structure and I now think I could develop

something new in my academic writing tasks. (I: 7/15/08, p. 1)

Ming: More and enough references to support your points in the writing.
(I: 7/14/08, p. 1)

Lei: It's a kind of formal writing and should be academic. It's similar to the

argumentation writing in Chinese; the words cited in the article should be

spoken by authority or someone who had some achievements. In Canada,

we have to add those sources as references. (I: 7/16/08, p. 1)

Challenges in EAP writing practices. In the pre-university EAP program, the

academic writing objectives mainly focused on the following writing skills: "simple,

compound and complex sentences, advanced grammar rules, paragraph development-

main ideas, topic sentence, supporting details, transition words, paragraph cohesion" (D:

2/7/08, p. 7). Based upon these teaching and learning objectives, there were a number of

basic criteria which are used to evaluate EAL learners' writing outcomes. These included:

"i) global error: content, organization, vocabulary; ii) surface errors: sentence fragments,

run-on sentences, sentence variety, punctuation, pronoun reference, subject/verb

agreement, misplaced and dangling modifiers, parallel form, spelling and related matters" (D: 2/7/08, p. 7). Accordingly, mostly, these three Chinese students' EAP writing challenges fell on these aspects during their writing practices. It was those challenges in EAP writing practice that might result in the employment of coping strategies. In the following section, their EAP writing challenges will be described respectively, and then their perceptions of coping strategies are summarized.

Qing's challenges. Since Qing's EAP writing learning began, she has been struggling with the different challenges:

> I couldn't write what I really wanted to write, even if I had my own points in writing…. As a good Chinese writer, I used to have quick ideas for a topic. In English, although I had the same ideas, the weaknesses in my vocabularies and expressions constrained my strong points and weakened my arguments on the assigned topic. (I: 5/5/08, p. 1)

Although Qing realized that some aspects in her EAP writing needed improvement, the instructor's comments on her assignments (Qing's first writing task at AEPUCE program) helped her to become clearer on what areas that she should focus her attention:

> Compare and Contrast Education in Canada with Education in Your Country
>
> (**It's better not to start your paragraph with "because"**)<u>Because</u> the social system and state institutions are different, <u>china</u> (C) and Canada have their own special education system. For instance, one of the remarkable <u>different</u> (Gr.) is (Pr.) <u>the</u> (Gr.) compulsory education. Particularly, in <u>china</u>, (C) the <u>governments advocate</u> (Gr.) compulsory education, and actually there <u>are</u>(Gr.) a part of financial <u>expend</u>(Gr.) which <u>support</u> (Gr.) education. However, <u>a mount of student</u> (Gr.) who live in(Gr.) countryside discontinue

their studying, because the tuition cannot be underline afford (Gr.). … (W: 5/15/08, p. 1)… what's is

the reason? Because the policy which made by government does not really work, and

still there are some unreasonable rules which… (This is not a proper sentence.)

* Words in brackets were EAP instructor's comments

Since most Chinese students have fewer opportunities to practice English writing in

China, the accuracy of grammar use was still one of greater challenges in their academic

writing. Qing was not unique in this regard as we can see from her above writing sample.

After several EAP writing practices, Qing also identified her own challenges:

I always have grammatical mistakes in my academic writing. I do check carefully

when I finish each writing task, but I still can't find any more mistakes.

Sometimes, I really don't know why the things that the teacher points out are

wrong. I have some problems in APA writing style -- I lost some points because I

didn't follow this style. As a result of these prescribed rules of EAP writing, my

writing ability in English has been restrained. (I: 5/5/08, p.1)

Accordingly, Qing aimed to improve her grammatical usage, enlarge her English

vocabulary size and acquire more academic sentence structures. In addition, when she

began to learn EAP writing in Canada, the formats and mechanics of EAP writing, and

even the APA writing style, were additional challenges for her.

Coming from the Chinese ethnic background, on one hand, Qing felt proud of

Chinese long history and cultures in the world. On the other hand, she was aware that

her typical Chinese thinking patterns sometimes constrained her English writing:

My Chinese thinking patterns made me totally lost when I just started to learn

academic writing in Canada. I remembered the first topic that I wrote about was

"Discussion on the challenges of studying overseas". When I just looked at the topic, I was so excited and had quick ideas for it. Without drafting the outline, I started to write immediately, even if I had to keep consulting the Chinese-English dictionary all the time, and I knew I could finish it successfully. Finally, you know what happened? I got big "0" mark with comments like "It's not an academic writing paragraph! Please follow the structure of paragraph writing and redo!" Can you imagine how disappointed I was at that time? I wanted to be unique because our Chinese writing evaluates it; I didn't follow what our teacher taught in class. As a result, it's hard for my teacher to find my topic sentence. Due to my Chinese thinking and writing style, I couldn't clearly express my points clearly, like the "skipping mind" in her comments, I understood myself, and she didn't. (I: 5/15/08, p. 1)

Similarly, in Angelova and Riazantseva's (1999) study, one international student wrote her first assignment in a very informal and distinctively personal style which was criticized by her professors as an inappropriate academic writing style.

Ming's challenges. Almost the same as Qing's challenges, Ming thought that the repetitive vocabulary and expressions in his EAP writing practices indicated that he should enlarge his English vocabulary size though his writing followed the English writing format. Additionally, some grammatical errors such as inappropriate preposition collocations, parallel forms in sentence structure, dangling modifiers and verb tense forms were evident in his EAP writing practices from time to time. Ming also found that it was difficult for him to be understood when he directly translated his Chinese

thoughts into English during the composing process. From the following writing sample, maybe some of his EAP writing challenges in practice can be illustrated:

> …As people <u>are borned</u>, they are sorted by gender. From a very old time, men and women had performed different works. Gender roles <u>has</u> (Gr.) made influence <u>to</u> (*on*) that. <u>Basic</u> (*Basing*) on traditional gender role(*s*) (Gr.), some people think women should be a mother (,) <u>stay</u> (Gr.) (*staying*) at home, and <u>take</u> (Gr.) (*taking*) care of the family, and men should stay in the (*stronger*) position in occupational domain. However, <u>as</u> (*with*) the development of society, more and more people think we shouldn't follow the traditional gender role(*s*) (Gr.) any more. But in my view, I think traditional gender role(*s*) (Gr.) is very important for people to follow. I want to support my opinion in three aspects: 1. the basic difference. 2. the equality of bodies. 3. the mental differences." (*These points are not clear.*)
>
> (W:5/18/08, p. 1)
>
> *Italic words in brackets were writing instructor's correction.
>
>   Gr: grammatical mistake (D:5/6/08, p. 1)

As Ming put it:

I didn't think I was without ideas or points to argue in academic writing. Usually, when I have the topic, I will know how to deal with that. When I finish the assignment, I always feel that I have met the requirements. However, to my writing teacher, it's not very direct and clear. Maybe, I guess the words that I used were not really expressing what I intended to mean? Or, maybe they didn't give the clear referral object – I'm not sure. Sometimes, the meaning of I want to express is from the general viewpoint of human worldview or common sense, but our teacher thought that what I expressed was too abstract to understand, and it should be more concrete. (I: 5/19/08, p. 2)

After reading some Ming's EAP writing samples, from a Chinese reader's point of view, it was like the literal translation of a piece of Chinese writing but following the English

writing format. In actuality, he has been trying to change his Chinese way of thinking with the resulting effect that it sometimes seemed a little bit redundant in its expression. However, the contents of his writings were quite good and he knew how to choose the appropriate examples to illustrate his viewpoints. At this point, his EAP writing instructor gave him a mark of between 3.5 and 4 points out a possible 5 points (See Writing Evaluation Criteria on p. 119), thus indicating that he had comprehended many of the EAP writing skills.

Lei's challenges. Qing, Ming, and Lei came from the same ethnical and similar education backgrounds except that Ming had two years private high school learning experience. It is not surprising then that Lei also shared similar learning challenges in EAP writing. However, in contrast to Qing and Ming, Lei always wanted to keep good academic records and was worried about making mistakes in sentence structure, grammatical accuracy and dictions in writing. Consequently, she seldom used complicated sentences structures and avoided losing any points in the writing assignments and exams. As a result of her limited English vocabulary and expressions, she thought that she could not produce the excellent EAP writing work that was expected:

> In Canada, the first academic writing genre that I learned was the essay, I don't think the format that our teacher required was difficult for me to learn, but I found it was so hard to provide strong arguments to support the points raised in the essay writing. I don't know how to use complex sentence structures very well. I don't know how to use different English words to argue for or against the issue, and I

don't know how to use different sentence structures to make my writing more expressive. (I: 5/15/08, p. 1)

The following writing sample from her essay specified somewhat her EAP writing challenges.

> … The computers become the heroes who release people (from…) in the world. Since the computers were invented, many people believe that they have already been the top players in solving (Gr.) problems such as calculate (Gr.) huge numbers today. Nevertheless, lots of (a number of) social groups begin to be worried about the increased dependent (Gr.) on computers. … (W: 5/12/08, p. 1)
>
> *Words in brackets were EAP instructors' marks or correction.

In this respect, their EAP instructor shared the same opinion as her students. In order to cope with these challenges, she thought that "they have to acquire academic vocabulary to be able to discuss topics from the academic discipline quite adequately". (I2: 7/7/08, p. 1)

For Chinese learners, the biggest challenges in EAP writing practice centered upon the following aspects: English language expressions at vocabulary level, sentence level, and grammatical rules level. Some previous research has similar findings. For example, in Angelova and Riazantseva's (1999) research on international students at the undergraduate level, they reported that Chinese learners had problems with academic vocabulary. Yang et al. (2004), in their study on Chinese and Japanese EAP writing learners at the pre-university level, reported that all the Chinese learners reflected that they have learning challenges in EAP writing, and in particular, in English vocabularies

and expressions. Therefore, they argued, because of those L2 learners' small English vocabulary size, they were unable to strongly support their ideas and make them clearly understood in English. Similarly, at the graduate level of L2 EAP writing research, Shi (2002) reported that her research participants -- Chinese graduate students in a Canadian university -- experienced English vocabulary and expressions usage problems during their L2 EAP writing practice.

Additionally, English rhetoric in EAP writing genres was challengeable for many Chinese EAP learners. To illustrate, Qing believed that she could accomplish her first essay writing task as long as it had eloquent arguments. However, the mark she received reminded her to follow English essay organization. Her EAP instructor pointed out this challenge as well. For that reason, she suggested that "they have to learn the principles related to the organization of the English speaking academic essay format, and they have to switch to the paradigm of thought accepted in the host academia" (I2: 7/7/08, p. 1). Similarly, Yang et al. (2004) found that Chinese EAL learners at pre-university stage were reminded to follow a fixed pattern for essay organization: topic sentence, thesis statement, examples and conclusion. Although they found following the fixed pattern somewhat boring during their EAP writing practices, it was compulsory because it was expected by EAP writing instructors.

Perceptions of Coping Strategies Employment in EAP Writing Practices

In terms of these challenges, Chinese learners in this study all developed their own coping strategies to deal with them. However these pre-university EAP learners were too young to reflect upon strategies that they were using to deal with their learning

challenges. Fortunately, when they were required to reflect upon their lived learning experiences, both in China and in Canada, they suddenly realized that they had been actively developing some useful techniques to cope with their learning difficulties. This was due in part to the fact that participants in this study were attempting to master these techniques in order to lay a solid foundation for their future university writing practices. Therefore, they started to ponder how to improve their academic writing abilities. Basically, the participants did have their own positive comments on the coping strategies that they employed in their EAP writing practices and they learned to decide which strategies worked and which ones did not. In particular, Qing's experience showed the following point:

> When I met different difficulties in academic writing, I started to think about how to solve these learning problems, and then I began to try different ways to deal with them. In this process, some strategies were given up, like memorizing the vocabularies from the dictionary; it turned out to be time consuming but with little actual learning outcome. Seeking help from tutors fell into the same category because I didn't know how to express myself exactly in English when I consulted the tutors in the library. I don't think that they helped me solve my problems though they tried. My inability to express myself meant that they still couldn't understand what I really need in my EAP writing. I remembered the first tutor told me that if I tried to make less grammatical mistakes, my English writing would be improved. The second tutor even didn't understand what I needed. I asked her to have a look my first draft, but she didn't help me to figure out what I should do to revise my draft. I still received low marks after she talked to me. (I: 6/2/08, p. 1)

Other Chinese EAL learners' perception regarding L2 EAP writing coping strategy employment in the pre-university context will be illustrated and discussed in the

following sections.

Coping Strategies Developed and Employed During EAP Writing Practices

The subsequent parts delineate my research findings. Table 5 summarizes the coping strategies that were developed and employed by these three Chinese EAEALL participants during their EAP writing practices. Some of types of these coping strategies have been named based upon the findings of previous literature in this field, mostly from Leki's (1995) study on coping strategies. Some of coping strategies that emerged were new and I summarized them by the features of those strategies.

Different research participants had their own ways to deal with their EAP writing challenges in each categorized coping strategies. In the next section, a general explanation has first been given to each categorized coping strategy employed by these three Chinese EAL students. Second, coping strategies included in such category have been listed and examples from participants' writing samples, classroom observation data and interview or document data have been used to analyze how such coping strategies were developed and employed. Regarding this inquiry, some related research findings in previous literature will be reiterated and compared. Meanwhile discussions within Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theoretical framework were conducted and then how such perceived coping strategies influenced these three Chinese ESL students' academic writing practice will be illustrated.

According to results from analysis of data, these three Chinese EAL learners' academic writing practices mostly happened in selected social environments: inside or outside classroom. All individuals with whom they interacted -- peers, classmates,

advanced learners, and EAP writing instructors -- were involved in this learning

Table 5

Categories of Coping Strategies Chinese EAL Students Developed and Employed

Coping strategies Chinese EAL students developed and employed in academic writing practice in AEPUCE program in a Canadian university
1. Sociocultural strategies
2.Adapting strategies
3.Using current EAP writing training (Leki, 1995)
4. Clarifying strategies(Leki, 1995)
5. Applying Chinese writing or past English learning and writing experiences to current EAP writing practice
6. Individualized strategies
7. Self-improvement strategies
8. Looking for EAP writing practice models (Leki, 1995);
9. Focusing strategies (Leki, 1995)
10. Taking advantage of Chinese language and culture

environment and they interacted with one another. Since this applies the principle that learning is a social act (Vygotsky, 1997), this group of strategies has been named as sociocultural strategies.

Sociocultural strategies. Sociocultural learning activities usually occurred when the participants in this study needed to solve their learning problems and improve their EAP writing abilities and skills. Under these circumstances, they used different social activities inside or outside classroom to seek experts' help. These strategies have been classified as:

* Seeking experts' (writing instructor, advanced learners, native English speaker friends)

  help   when encountering personal learning difficulties (understanding the assigned

reading materials or further clarifying the writing demands, improving EAP writing

weaknesses, revising the writing mechanic mistakes);

* Making good use of the instructor's help during class time: topic choosing; mistakes

identification and correction; editing; drafting different parts; dealing with challenges

(writing demands) when peers or experienced friends couldn't resolve them;

* Seeking feedback or revision suggestions several times on revision before submitting

the final draft;

* Making good use of the results of classroom discussion for choosing topics and

adopting some constructive ideas, comments or suggestions and using the strengths

of the advanced learners to improve their own writing; and

* Making good use of the writing instructor during in EAP writing class time for

individual instruction to improve different writing skills.

Sociocultural Strategies employment in these three Chinese students' EAP writing

samples. Qing knew that she had difficulty checking her own mistakes for grammar and

spelling, but she had a good Japanese friend who majored in English and was good at

editing. Therefore, she often sought her help in class.

> Five minutes before the class began' Qing went to her classmate (Junko) with the
> assignment draft. She greeted her and asked whether Junko could help to check
> her mistakes in grammar, spelling and APA references style for that assignment.
> Junko was pleased to do that, so she started to underline Qing's writing:
>
> Junko: Qing, I think you'd better use Word document to write your assignment if it
>   is possible, because it could help you check some general grammatical and
>   spelling mistakes.
>
> Qing: You're right, Junko. Maybe I need to force myself to draft assignments with

computer. (O: 6/18/08, p. 2)

In Qing's critique writing, she employed sociocultural strategies to strengthen her viewpoints:

Critique on article "Pumping up the volume!" by Anna Meijdam

…"Secondly, according to Meijdam, Li's "Crazy English" instruction is an unorthodox method, …Therefore, simply naming such instruction as an unorthodox method is inappropriate. <u>However, I disagree with Li's point that learning English is merely repeating of words physically. Because simply repeating the pronunciation of English words would not guaranty the words usage.</u> (W: 6/25/08, p. 1)

Because Junko majored in English Linguistics in her undergraduate study in Japan, she introduced me some knowledge in English language, and then, I revised the second part of my point and it is: (I: 6/28/08, p. 2)

However, I disagree with Li's point that learning English is merely repeating of words physically. According to the development of English language, it combines different European cultures and vocabularies, consequently, when we learn English language, we need to analyze it and even seek its cultural connotation, and then to practise it in appropriate contexts. (W: 6/27/08, p. 1)

In addition, Qing sought additional help when she began to choose the topic for her research paper (RP). Qing took the EAP writing instructor's suggestions on how to narrow down her topic on Tang Dynasty's economy and followed the instructor's advice on word choices for the topic. As a result, the topic of RP finally became more focused and it was entitled "Analysis of the Reasons for Why the Tang Dynasty's Economic was Strongest".

The preparation for this important EAP writing task started at least one month prior to the final exam. Since Qing knew she always had problems in academic style during writing, she kept on trying to finish each part of RP in advance. This allowed her to seek help from her instructor or her classmates in finding mistakes and editing. Qing used her classmates' help to edit basic/common grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors and she drafted different parts during class which she believed was very helpful in overcoming her writing weaknesses. In this regard, her peer's help complemented her writing instructor's help. Qing also sought experienced and excellent EAP learner's help. In the following RP outline writing, Qing once used Yan's assistance to prepare the RP outline. Yan was a former Chinese EAL student in the AEPUCE program and her EAP writing products were often used as the samples of academic writing in the program. Yan made important suggestions to Qing with regards to her RP outline: she suggested that the advanced cultural perspectives of Tang Dynasty be included and this was an important aspect of Qing's RP.

Analysis of the Reasons for Why the Tang Dynasty's Economy was Strongest

(In class, the instructor gave students 25 minutes to work in groups to draft their RP outline. When Qing began to share her rough ideas about the outline, she listed two main reasons: advanced technology and international trade; she hoped that her group members would suggest more. After a while, one Chinese student advised her to think about some big political reform or policies. It seemed that Qing was very satisfied with this idea and she took notes about that. (O: 7/15/08, p. 1)

Outline

I. Introduction

      i. The main features of Tang Dynasty's economy

      ii. What caused the strongest economy in Tang Dynasty?

      iii. Focus of the paper

I.I Analysis of the reasons for why the Tang Dynasty's economy was the strongest

      i. Political leadership

      ii. Open-door policy

      iii. Agrarian reform

      iv. Strengthening the power of centralization

III. Advanced technology and culture (Qing's good friend in U1 suggested her to take

    Tang Dynasty's culture into account)

      i. Frequent trade exchange between international partners

      ii. Advanced technology inventions

      iii. Growth of international trade and domestic trade

      iv. Silk-roads

      v. Far-reaching trades internationally

      vi. Prosperity of domestic and international market (W: 8/17/08, p. 2)

In order to finish each writing task, Ming also developed different strategies. For instance, sometimes he found that suggestions from the instructors and peers were very helpful. The EAP words list handouts also provided useful direction:

...each student took out their draft of their critical summary writing draft, and then they started to work in pairs to brainstorm the assigned topic for the academic writing exercise; meanwhile, they were waiting for the instructor's comments on their draft. The instructor came to Ming, and after a while, she said to Ming:

Instructor: Here, you judge on the style, but you should do it later. The third point needs to be explained more; in your conclusion, you should clearly summarize the points why you disagree with the author, only

> because she didn't provide academic evidence? And I would suggest you use more academic words and expressions to redo the conclusion part.
>
> Ming: Ok, I will try to do it again, thank you!
>
> Classmate: You can use the tool in Word document, like thesaurus, or, our teacher's academic words handout.... (O: 6/27/08, p. 1)

In the following writing sample, Ming showed how he followed his instructor and classmate's suggestions to revise his first draft:

> (First draft) To conclude, the author used too many mean words, and there is no academic research. Anyway this article is just made up by XX. It is not credible at all. (W: 6/26/2008, p.1)
>
> (Second draft) <u>According to the evidence mentioned above</u>, in my opinion, XX's <u>viewpoints</u> on Li's *Crazy English* were somewhat <u>bias</u>: <u>on one hand</u>, her writing did not <u>take</u> Chinese English language learning environment <u>into account</u>; <u>on the other</u>, the words she used to describe (express) how Li's method to practise English sounded so offensive (insulting) in Chinese culture, such as "bark", "baying" and "pumping". Therefore, if the author could <u>investigate</u> how Chinese English learners understand Li's *Crazy English*, the academic value of this article would be improved. (The academic value of this article is doubtful.) (W: 6/28/2008, p.1)
>
> *The underlining expressions from the writing instructor's EAP words handout.
>
> *The words in brackets changed after Ming used the tool -Thesaurus in Word document.
>
> *The expression for last sentence was revised based on the instructor's suggestion, because she thought it was still too harsh.

Ming felt that results of discussion activities in the classroom sometimes played certain roles in EAP writing tasks. In the following writing sample, Ming took some points from these classroom activities to support his viewpoints in an academic essay

which entitled " Intercultural Marriage Has Many Problems."

> After the instructor explained key aspects on composing argument essay, she delivered handouts and asked students to work in groups to discuss the topics she assigned to write an essay. Ming's group chose the topic #2
>
> "In modern times of living in a "global village" intercultural marriages become more common. However there are cultures that do not encourage people to find life long partners from a different culture or race. They would say this phenomenon can wash out the cultural values and practices till they are completely lost. What would you say?" identify the argument in the topic. Choose your position. Substantiate the reasons for your position in the essay form…. (D: 6/12/08, p.1)
>
> two minutes later, Ming's group members agreed with the argument for topic # 2 was "Intercultural marriages have many problems", and then one Chinese student wrote it on a poster size paper, meanwhile, he wrote 1.2.3….waiting for other discuss results. … 10 minutes later, lifestyle conflicts, cultural conflicts, religion conflicts, communication conflicts, child raising conflicts, … were on the paper constantly… (O: 6/12/08, p. 2)

From the following example, Ming took some of those points from this time in class group discussion and applied them in his EAP writing task this time.

> Intercultural marriage has problems in communication between parents and children, conflicting lifestyles between two different cultures, and cultural conflicts in children's education. (W: 6/16/08)

Lei was very satisfied with one of her essay writing assignments which was entitled "What are the Critical Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour?" At first, this essay was

titled "Basic Factors Influencing Consumers in Buying Products."   However after Lei

shared her rough ideas on this topic, the EAP writing instructor advised her to use a

more academic title. As a result, she took the instructor's suggestion and revised the

title. In the following writing samples, Lei demonstrated how she improved the essay

writing with the help of her instructor and a classmate.

Topic: What are the critical factors influencing consumer behaviour? (First draft)

The world becomes smaller and smaller because of global exchange. Global exchange offers people more product choices. Nevertheless, the global exchange also brings challenges to the companies. To address the consumer's needs better, companies should know what factors influence consumer behaviour critically. If the companies do not realize this, the competitive market will let them fail in business. Therefore, these factors are vital to the companies. There are a lot of components influencing consumer habits. This essay will focus on three critical factors, namely, price, quality and advertisement. (W: 6/5/08, p. 1)

(Lei sought his instructor's opinion on his first draft during the break time. The instructor thought that it seemed that it was not focused on consumer behaviour but rather on global exchange. Also, it did not briefly introduce consumer behaviour academically and it was repetitive in style. So she suggested Lei define consumer behaviour from one of academic sources. (O: 6/5/08, p. 2)

 Topic: What are the critical factors influencing consumer behaviour? (Third draft)

With the development of market-directed economy, the subjective role of consumer becomes more obvious. Meanwhile, the market and the world of commercial activity are more dependent on consumer behaviour. So a greater awareness of consumer behaviour and the factors influencing it will have far-reaching importance, as for consumer behaviour, according to Hawkins (1998)... There are many components influencing consumer habit. This essay will focus on three critical factors, namely, price, quality and advertisement. (W: 6/10/08, p. 1) *This was the final version of the instruction part of Lei's essay.

(Before Lei wrote his first draft, Lei only listed two factors influencing consumer

behaviour in the discussion group. One of her Chinese classmates in her group mentioned that name brands, e.g., Guess, were always her priority in choosing products. This point motivated Lei to think of the role of advertisements in commercial activities...) (O: 6/4/08, p. 1)

Sociocultural strategies and classroom activities. Donato and McCornick (1994) argued that social interaction and cultural institutions, such as schools and classrooms, played essential roles in an individual's cognitive growth and development. Therefore, Gao (2006) believed that a sociocultural approach could help to develop a deeper understanding of language learners and their strategy use. In the discussion that follows, sociocultural perspectives on ZPD, mediation, lived experiences and the relationships between language and thought have been applied as an explanatory framework to interpret the results on how Chinese EAL learners develop, reflect upon, and refine their own coping strategies in order to improve their academic writing skills during their pre-university EAP context.

Some phenomena in this study indicate that despite challenges, the participants could overcome some learning challenges by themselves. However, the data suggest that some learning problems which they encountered required them to seek additional help to gain more successful learning outcomes. Generally, they would consult their writing instructor, friends who are at the more advanced level than themselves, or native English speaker friends when they required additional help. This help might include the need for further clarification of the writing demands, understanding the assigned reading materials, improving EAP writing weaknesses, and/or correcting

grammar or punctuation. These levels of scaffolding successfully helped them cope with their learning difficulties to various degrees as noted from their satisfactory reflections on their finished EAP writing products. In particular, Qing and Lei reiterated that assistances from their writing instructor, peers, and friends played essential roles in helping them accomplish their writing tasks. To support this finding, some studies (e.g., Angelova & Riazantseva, 1999; Frodesen, 2009; Crosby, 2009) also found that EAL learners employed the same coping strategies to successfully deal with their learning problems at the undergraduate level. Similar strategies were employed, such as consulting peers, and adjusting vocabulary and writing style according to the professor's feedback. Similarly, Yang et al. (2004) observed that pre-university EAL students used different mediating artifacts (e.g., peers' and instructors' facilitating) and community to achieve their learning outcomes.

Based on the sociocultural theory of learning, Wink and Putney (2001) believed that "the learning and development of students should be understood as a product of the interaction of many factors: the student's language and cultural background, the educational setting, and the wider sociocultural influences" (p. 77). In sociocultural learning theory, learning is dynamic development and a part of the problem-solving process. Vygotsky (1987) argued that the solutions to critical problems arrived at in one level of development then become the source of the next problem to be solved. We use language, in the action of writing, as a tool for developing thought, and at the same time, we develop language through thought. "Vygotsky's definition states that the ZPD is the difference between what a person can achieve when acting alone and what the same

person can accomplish when acting with support from someone else and/or cultural artifacts" (p. 17).

According to Vygotsky (1987), the learner's ZPD reflects a process from dynamic development to problem solving to new knowledge acquiring. During this process, the learner's actual development level -- which includes previous experience, i.e., his/her individual funds of knowledge -- come from performance before competence. The assistance process is the interchange of funds of knowledge, which bring the power of funds of knowledge to schools to create a new collective experience by way of various types of interaction.

In this study, for these participants, the fund of knowledge for EAP writing was still new and developing; it was still part of their potential development. However, for those "experts, the very same knowledge used to be their actual level of development. The "experts" had experienced the similar problem solving activity in their learning. They had received the assistance of their more capable peers, family members, teachers and others. This assistance and experience had become funds of knowledge to scaffold others. For instance, in Qing's critique writing and in Lei's expository essay writing, they all mentioned their classmates' assistance. Qing highlighted her new knowledge of English linguistics received from her Japanese classmate's English major's education background; Lei noted her new thesis statement derived in part from her classmate's shopping experiences. In this regard, we noted the importance of peer communication in ZPD. Researchers have also applied Vygotsky's ideas to peer interaction where there was not a clear 'expert'. Studies of peer interaction in a foreign language have found

that differential competence among peers allows a ZPD to emerge in groups or pairs of

adult learners (e.g., Anton & DiCamilla, 1998; Ohta, 2000; Curro & Tsui, 2004; Li, 2011)

even when no true 'expert' was present. In Donato's (1994) view:

> Expertise was relative, not embodied in a single member of the group, and
>
> scaffold assistance and mediation were encouraged, expected, and valued. Both
>
> students and instructor concentrated understandings and insights on the nature
>
> of language learning as a collaborative achievement and the value of
>
> sociocultural theory for understanding the powerful relationship between social
>
> interaction, social context, and language (p. 46).

Ohta (2000) also pointed out, "Peer interaction may result in the emergence of a

ZPD, and that peers do help one another, the nature of help provided by peers, the

mechanisms through which that help is sought and provided" (p. 55).

In ZPD, learners transform what the experts offer them as they appropriate it. We

see examples of this process in this study: the participants would take suggestions from

their instructors, peers and friends to revise their EAP writing tasks. During this process,

Vygtosky argued that the key to transformation resides in imitation, which along with

collaboration in the ZPD, 'is the source of all the specifically human characteristics' of

development" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 210). Imitation in ZPD, unlike copying, "is a complex

activity in which the novice is treated not as a repeater but as communicative being"

(Newman & Holzman, 1993, pp. 151-152). Imitation, in Vygotsky's sense, is not

operative. For example, Qing's critique writing imitated the model from the writing

instructor but she expanded and adjusted it after several revisions with assistance from

several sources. Within Vygotskian and neo-Vygotskian sociocultural theory, a basic premise pertains to the fact that cognition in general has its roots in social interaction. Donato (1994) argued, "Teachers and learners are afforded opportunities to mediate and assist each other in the creation of zones of proximal development in which each party learns and develops" (p. 46).

From the viewpoint of sociocultural theory of learning, a classroom should be a supportive sociocultural environment in which students are encouraged to mediate their world (Wink & Putney, 2001). Hence, Donato and MacCormick (1994) argued:

> ...[the] classroom as an emerging and dynamic culture, the culture of the classroom plays an important role in fostering strategic learning. The success of these students in identifying, refining, and developing their own strategies was a direct result of an environment that mediated language learning in reflective and systematic ways through the use of the student portfolio. The classroom culture was itself strategic. (p. 78)

Classroom observations in this study indicated that the more actively students participated in classroom activities, the more chances that they had to apply their coping strategies to writing activities, both consciously and unconsciously. They also received more constructive feedback and suggestions from teachers and peers. Under such circumstances, personal learning problems were mediated and more appropriate coping strategies were developed. According to Donato and McCormick (1994), the classroom was a context for self-investment, critical analysis, and the discovery of new strategic orientations to language learning. In my study, because Qing and Lei were

actively pursuing many positive avenues (e.g. seeking help from their writing instructors, seeking feedback and suggestions on their finished writing, taking advantages of group discussion on assigned EAP writing tasks.), they continuously made progress in the EAP writing practices. In contrast, Ming was always quiet and he took fewer opportunities to interact with his teacher and classmates unless he had to do so. His goal was to pass the EAP writing. As the instructor commented:

> There are a big number of Chinese students who treat our EAP program only as a jumping board to the university, forgetting that our program is meant to teach them new necessary university skills. I couldn't say they're bad students, but because they thought they didn't need to work hard to improve what they've already known. Their main misconception blocked him from actual learning in my class. (I2: 7/7/08, p. 2)

It was very probable that in setting lower goals for learning – i.e., Ming did not expect great progress from classroom interaction – that it had the effect of reducing his degree of motivation. Thus the result -- fewer positive learning outcomes -- is easily understandable. Less input (feedback and help) equals less output (positive learning experiences). At this point, Donato and MacCormick (1994) stressed that strategies were goal-directed actions, and to fulfill goals required involved an active response on the part of the learner. Undeniably, in our real learning social and cultural contexts, we always see different learners with different learning outcomes.

In this regard, Vygotsky (1986) argued that although learning systems might be similar among children at certain phases of their developmental process, these systems

cannot be identical for all children because of their differing social experiences. Here, Vygotsky referred to children's learning, however, the concept should apply to adult learners as well. During this process learners acquired both social and scientific knowledge. They interacted with people who had different social and family backgrounds, individual experiences and specialized skills. As a result, learners' life experiences are influenced by talking to each other, listening to our friends and colleagues, and developing new thoughts and new ideas (Wink & Putney, 2001). This made the potential individual differences possible and, as a result, it displayed different learning outcomes.

In general, the sociocultural strategies employment in this study indicated, as Wink and Putney (2001) illustrated, "They have been learning with others and making sense through the language of their social worlds as they are combine these implements of learning, their literate practices, their language, and their ways of being with others in this classroom community" (p. 63).

However, Ohta (2000) pointed out the importance of determining a learner's ZPD. Without knowing a learner's actual level of knowledge, the potential knowledge development could not be achieved. Ohta (2000) remarked,

> It is an act of negotiated discovery that is realized through dialogic interaction between learner and expert. The learner and expert engage each other in an attempt to discover precisely what the learner is able to achieve without help, and what the learner can accomplish with assistance… (p. 55).

This helps to explain why, in this study, Qing did not get the full marks for her mechanics

when her friend was too busy to help check the last part of her research paper. Qing over depended on her classmates to help her to do the editing work for the final research paper writing.

   Extent of sociocultural strategies influences on EAP writing tasks. Seeking expert help has been viewed as a necessary strategy to develop Chinese EAL learners' academic writing skills and ensure good learning outcomes in this study. Qing's failure experience in her first assignment made her ask for help from her EAP writing instructor. She pointed out that Qing should try to use synonyms to express the same meanings, to do careful editing work so that she made fewer grammatical and spelling mistakes, and to use the typical academic sentence structures and paragraph organizations that she was taught in class. What's more, she could give Qing some feedback on how to improve each EAP writing task if Qing could finish the draft in advance. Similarly, Lei followed her classmates', peers' and EAP writing instructor's suggestions to revise and modify her draft many times until she was completely satisfied with her work. Although Ming did not seek the advice of his EAP writing instructor and classmates as much as what Qing and Lei did, he still found that it was necessary when he could not solve his writing challenges. As a result, all the participants readily agreed that they benefited greatly from an expert's assistance when dealing with their EAP writing challenges. At this point, Yang, et al. (2004) also found that Chinese students took their teacher's suggestions seriously and industriously put them into their composing, brainstorming ideas and drafting outlines before they began to write. They also found one Chinese student who, like Qing and Lei in my study, asked her teacher to read and comment on her essays, and

sought native English speakers to help to correct the expressions that she used in her drafts.

Using current EAP writing training. Pre-university EAP writing emphasizes the basic writing skills used in academy, and Qing, Ming and Lei realized that as long as they applied the newly acquired EAP writing skills to their writing practices, they would improve their EAP writing abilities. Therefore, they kept on practising what they had learned from the EAP instruction and adjusted them to individual learning situations. These strategies focusing on this aspect are:

* Applying writing skills (using synonymies, various sentence structures, English expressions and article organizations) delivered by the writing instructor to follow the evaluation criteria;

* Employing new words learned from other EAP courses: reading, listening, and conversations;

* Paying special attention to class distributed materials and trying to use them to improve their writing skills in their essays; and

* In summary writing, looking for topic sentences or key words in a thesis statement to organize the writing, using synonyms and simple sentences to keep the author's meaning or to use some quotations from the target article when they did not know how to paraphrase them confidently.

Summary and critique writing were key elements in the AEPUCE program. During EAP writing practice, Qing prepared the related academic writing skills and developed some coping strategies to deal with her challenges as well.

Although it took a longer time to understand the target article, to grasp the gist of the author's ideas, and to reflect on those ideas, Qing thought about critique writing this way:

> I don't feel it is difficult to write because I think it's more similar to Chinese critical writing. I know how to write a good Chinese critique. So, the only thing for me is how to follow the pattern of English critique writing. (I: 6/20/08, p. 2)
> The instructor asked the students how they understood critique. Several seconds later, Qing put up her hand and answered: "To me, it's not like the black hole I need to fill it and it should be one piece of art I need to improve it and make it better. And, it is the basic criteria in Chinese critique writing." The instructor thought Qing's answer was unique, but she stressed that it was very important to make balance between positive and negative aspects during English critique writing. Then, she wrote two models of critique. Qing took note on these immediately and told the instructor that the second model was very similar to Chinese one (I. Introduce the main points: a, b, c. II. Provide your comments: a, b, c. III. Conclusion) (O: 6/18/08, p. 1)

Qing followed the demands of this assignment and finished the first daft earlier in order to help her to learn better:

> I made good use of the critique writing models that our teacher gave us. I chose one for my style. I read the demands of this assignment several times and then talked to both my classmates and my teacher in order to become familiar with the purpose of doing this homework. I understood that the most important thing is that when I finish the first draft, I seek my friend's suggestions and then revise it. After that revision, I give it to my teacher. After getting her feedback, I confirm my understanding about her comments and suggestions and then I

revise it again. I think it took longer time for me to do this work, but I felt very

confident after that, so, I received very high marks in this writing assignment.

(I: 6/20/08, p. 3)

In this critique writing practice, Qing made good use of the handout, which

explained how to write critique in great detail.

…Read the entire article, trying to identify the writer's main point.

Look for the ideas the author uses to support the main point.

Summarize the article in your own words by introducing the work by stating the

author, title, and source along with the date of publication, add one or two

sentence summary you developed to the introduction, leading up to your thesis

statement.

Read the article one more time to analyze how the author has supported his or

her ideas. Are there examples, facts, or opinions? What is the author's bias? Are

opposing arguments addressed competently? Are you convinced or unconvinced

about the author's main point? Why? Will you incorporate the information you

read into your life or do you reject it? Why? (You may agree with some points

and disagree with others.) (D: 6/18/08, p.1)

... The EAP instructor explained two critique writing models. She then introduced

some critique writing tips to her students, such as "Quote some expressions

directly when you don't know how to express them". (O: 6/18/08, p. 1)

In the following writing sample, it shows how Qing made good use of her critique

writing training (the bold parts were from one of critique models instructed by her EAP

writing instructor, and the underlined expressions were from the target article).

Critique on article "Pumping up the volume!" by Anna Meijdam

Meijdam's article "*Pumping up the volume!*" published in *Newsweek* (1999)

introduces one of the most successful English teachers, Li, Yang, and his unique styles of

English teaching and learning in China today. Meanwhile, Meijdam's descriptions on Li's

"Crazy English" and critics in academy imply her critical attitudes towards this English

teaching and learning method.

Meijdam **makes several points in this article**. **Firstly**, … if they really

followed the "<u>effective motivational speaking</u>" instruction…

Secondly, …Li's "Crazy English" instruction is an <u>unorthodox method</u>, which is the

"<u>baying pronunciation drills</u>" technique of English learning…. (W: 6/20/08, p.1)

Qing was very satisfied with her critique writing as she found that she had the

potential to write a better English article.

I can't say I'm confident in writing a critique, but the most important thing is that

I have passion to learn. As a successful Chinese writer, I hope that I become

successful in English writing too. I'm very interested in the article; it talks about

Chinese people's English learning from a western perspective. I have many points

in my mind already and most of them are different from the author's viewpoints.

(I: 6/25/08, p. 3)

A research proposal was one of components in RP writing. The EAP writing

instructor taught her students the fundamentals of RP organization during class time.

The following example shows how Ming applied these writing skills to his research

proposal writing task.

Research proposal

Topic: The most significant inventions in second industrial revolution: How do they affect the development of society

<u>The present research will identify and discuss</u> three main inventions: steam engine, steel making and Haber process in second industrial revolution of 1870-1914. <u>The purpose of this paper</u> is to review the background of second industrial revolution what created the basis for scientists to come up with the inventions. As a future student of the economics, I am very interested in the development of the technology. Although people know its importance of the second industrial revolution, they probably ***don't know*** (do not know) the typical inventions or how the inventions affect our current life. <u>The data collection will be based on analysis of the scholarly source relevant to the target question</u>. (W: 6/14/08, p.1)

*the underlined expressions were from RP proposal model; the bold and italic expression was informal in EAP writing, so the instructor corrected it and made it acceptable in academic writing.

Lei considered some reading materials distributed by the writing instructor to be very valuable because she believed that they were focused on those assigned writing tasks. Consequently, she preferred using these materials instead of searching something online for several hours in library for other material. The citation in the following writing sample shows how Lei used her current training.

What are the critical factors influencing consumer behaviour?

...

Finally, for better or worse, we live in a world that is surrounded <u>by marketing stimuli</u> in form of advertisement. <u>According to Sallabank (2006), "advertisement is essentially an unsolicited, generally unrelated, enticement brought to the attention of someone who is undertaking some other activity" (p.22).</u> usually, advertisements are designed to increase consumption of certain products and services. ...

(W: 6/12/08, p. 2)

***underlined part was from EAP writing handout.

*the underlined parts were quoted from reading handouts.

In previous literature, Leki (1995) found that only one Chinese student used some EAL writing training in his writing practice. The other two Chinese students in her study did not use EAL writing training. In the research findings of Yang et al. (2004), the pre-university Chinese participants indicated that they employed the writing skills that they learned from their writing instructor. It can be assumed that the pre-university students' adhered to what the instructor taught. In other similar studies, the students are older and undergraduates. It could be assumed that they were more likely to follow their discipline specific demands in EAP writing.

Applying Chinese writing or past English learning and writing experiences to current EAP writing practice. This strategy takes two forms. One was developed from Chinese writing experiences and facilitated their understanding and enforced their learning outcomes. The other was from past English writing experiences developed in China or in Canada. All participants in my study thought that the skills they employed previously still worked well but they needed to make some adjustments in their new learning situation.

* Learning from Chinese writing practice to keep on memorizing various expressions, vocabularies, sentence structures, grammatical rules and article organizations and then imitate them in writing practices. Writing based upon real personal experiences, looking for the unique aspects in the assigned topic (Qing);

* Taking notes on some viewpoints and examples related to essay writing for later use

(Qing and Lei);

* Previous literature review writing experiences in first language facilitate understanding and grasping of English critique writing (Ming);

* Memorizing excellent published articles facilitated first language writing practice in China, same practice facilitated English writing practice in both China and Canada. (Qing);

* Using Chinese writing skills, such as citing famous persons' words and examples, strengthened the viewpoints presented in the English essay writing practice (Lei);

* Realizing that English and Chinese writing shared similarities during the composing process, participants applied some Chinese argumentation, writing, understanding and skills to their English essay writing practices. EAP writing needs sources to support its viewpoints. The skill of knowing how to cite support for viewpoints put forward in EAP writing appropriately came from the first language argumentation writing practice in China. (Lei) and

* Coming back to Chinese writing skills when met with EAP writing challenges in Canada, like seeking expert's facilitating (Lei)

Qing thought, without knowing her weaknesses in her EAP writing, it was impossible for her to improve her academic writing efficiently. Therefore, after she got her assignment back,

> During the break, Qing went to her instructor with the following assignment. She was taking some notes when the instructor explained her marks and suggested to her methods on how to improve this writing. (O: 5/22/08, p. 2)

With <u>As</u> the developing of the world, the countries become closer. All the <u>situation</u> **(Pl.)**are

<u>changeing</u>**(Sp.)** . For example, we can see different races in the same place, and expecially in

North American countries. Thus**(P)** many <u>studes</u>**(Sp.)** choose **(Prep.)** study in Canada to get more

apportunities**(Sp.)** and broaden their <u>mind</u>. **(Pl.)** In my opinion**(P)** study**(w.f.)** in <u>the</u>

(a)multicultural classroom environment **(Verb)** a benefit. There are three reasons to support my

opinion: 1.**(You can)** get more <u>chance</u> **(Pl.)**to practice English 2. **(You can)** judge <u>youself</u> (Sp.)and

your country from <u>orther</u>**(Sp.)** views 3. **(You can)** broad**(w.f.)** <u>youself</u> **(Sp.)**in many <u>way</u>. ...

Content   4.5/5 ----- Well done!

Organization 4.5/5 ---- Well done!

Style   2.5/5 ---- Limited range of vocabulary!

Mechanic 3.5/5 ---- See your essay for grammar, spelling and punctuation errors

        observed. (W: 5/22/08, p. 1)

Through the instructor's guidance, Qing realized that many things hindered the

development of her writing ability:

My poor English expressions, grammatical and spelling mistakes, carelessly prepared

APA writing format, small size and inappropriate vocabularies and mono sentence

structure prevented from doing a better job in my academic writing. So, I tried to

find some useful ways to improve this situation. (I: 5/24/2008, p. 1)

As a result, she set in motion a strategy to address these weaknesses in her EAP

writing practice. Certainly, during this process, her previous learning experiences had

been used for references to develop the new coping strategies for her current learning.

In Qing's opinion, since she memorized lots of expressions in Chinese writing, she could

also use the same method to enlarge her English vocabulary. In particular, she tried to

use words from EAP handouts in her English writing practice.

> In order to help us to use more vocabularies in our EAP writing, our instructor sometimes prepared words lists which were relevant to the topic that she assigned. Generally I would apply some of them to my writing practice. After I had done this for a while, my teacher commented that I made progress in the vocabulary usage, because I was able to use different words to express the same meanings and make the article read more academically… (I: 5/30/08, p. 5)

The following writing sample adapted from Qing's critique writing indicated the improvement of her EAP vocabularies.

> Thirdly, Meijdam **comment**s that Li's wealth comes from the zeal of Chinese English learners, because these learners are aiming to **pursue** individual success and national prosperity in today's China. **In this regard**, **indeed**, Li promoted Chinese people's enthusiasm for English learning. **In particular**, the "Crazy English" magazines widen Chinese English learners' horizons form more **authentic** English situations. Meanwhile, Li became a millionaire in Chinese education market. (W: 6/27/08, p. 1)

> *Bold words were taken from EAP writing class handouts (Some Academic Words List).

Differing from Qing and Ming, Lei liked EAP essay writing. Her argumentation writing experiences in Chinese made her feel more confident in her ability to master the structure of paragraph writing in English essays. According to the objectives of the writing component in the AEPUCE program, the organization of argument essay is:

English argument essay organization

I. Introduction
   i. Statement of argument: Introduction of a controversial issue.

  ii. Background information paragraph (optional)

  iii. Thesis statement: Personal position, opinion on the issue presented. Normally

   with three main arguments to defend the position

 II. Body: three paragraphs corresponding to the

  Three arguments outlined in the thesis statement

 III. Conclusion: Restating of the personal position

  Claiming that this position is correct (D: 6/16/08, p. 1)

The EAP writing instructor's handout demonstrated instruction writing very clearly:

... However the writer sets out the introduction, it must cover three important components as follows:

1. The introduction must alert the reader to the general subject area being considered,... in answer to the question: In general terms, what area of experience is this argument dealing with?

2. Second, the introduction must narrow down that general subject so as to define a very specific focus for the argument, in answer to the reader's question: Just what particular part of this general subject area is this argument focusing on?

3. Third, the introduction must establish an argumentative opinion about the focus defined in Step 2 above. This argumentative opinion, which is the central claim you are making in the argument and which you want to reader to accept, is called the thesis of the argument. (D: 6/16/08, p. 2)

In terms of these handouts about dealing with the argument essay writing, and by comparison and contrast to her Chinese argumentation writing experiences, Lei came to the conclusion that the organization of the Introduction paragraph in English argument essays was similar to Chinese argumentation writing. Both followed the pattern of argument point, argument examples and central argumentations. She compared it with

Chinese argumentation writing this way:

> To me, an argument point is same as the topic to be discussed; argument examples are how I define the topic with some examples from the general to specific and the argumentation is the thesis statement. Also, I know how to use some examples and famous figures' words to support my central points. (I: 6/18/08, p. 3)

At this point, Lei was very confident with her Chinese writing skills. She considered that her English writing practice in Canada would benefit greatly from her Chinese writing experience:

> In fact, when I started to write in English in China and in Canada, I realized that what I learned from Chinese writing skills were very useful to English writing too. You know, I like collecting description and expressions in Chinese writing practice, and I do the same thing in English writing. However, differently from my Chinese writing experiences, for English I always collected some complicated sentence structures which I tried to use them dynamically in the different writing exercises later on. It worked so well, it's not like Chinglish (Chinese English expression) again. Of course, I also cited the words, points from the famous figures to support my points. So, finally, I found to my surprise, most of my points were from others. To tell the truth, I often found that those points were stronger than my own and began to accept them. Maybe, this is one of writing skills that I developed from my previous learning experiences. (I: 6/18/08, p. 3)

The following EAP writing sample adapted from Lei's argument essay shows how she

used some coping strategies to conduct her EAP writing practice. These strategies were developed from her previous learning experiences.

> Should professional sportsmen get huge money for their performance?
>
> In modern society, sports has become more popular than ever before; <u>as a result</u>, <u>having</u> a career in sports <u>is</u> getting <u>the priority for</u> some young people <u>with desire that</u> (the underlined part was the sentence structure Lei collected from those EAP reading materials) they could not only become a successful and famous professionals in sports, but also they could earn huge money when they become a sports start. Taking Yao Ming as an example, a world famous basketball player, who was said that he could get more than $76,000,000 in five years. **Nevertheless, should they really get huge money? Some people argued for that because of their very short sport life span; while some people argued against that, because they doubted their real value in society**.(Lei said that she used the similar way to state a controversial issue in Chinese argumentation writing) However in my opinion, professional athletes should not get huge money, because first, it is unfair to other sports professionals; second, it is unfair to other occupations in a society; third, poverty is the big issue for many counties in the world. (Lei said, she followed the pattern of argument essay to make her thesis statement.)
> (W: 6/20/2008, p. 1)

In the following writing sample discussing price, Lei applied some Chinese argumentation writing skills (thesis statement-argumentation-examples) to her current English essay writing practices. She also applied the value principles in political economics to emphasize its importance.

> What are the critical factors influencing consumer behaviour?
>
> ...
>
> First of all, price is an important element to be considered during purchasing. On one hand, price is often used as the indicator of quality. It seems that high price usually means good quality. Conversely, low price indicates poor quality. On the other hand, <u>price always</u>

<u>fluctuates from up and down around value</u> (of what?). Hence, to some extent, price becomes prime issue and leads lifestyle due to its flexibility. Concurrently, this kind of flexibility can keep concord with shopper's intention and satisfaction as well. For example, ... (W: 6/18/08, p. 1)

*The underlined part was directly translated from Chinese expression in political economy textbook, therefore, the instructor marked it with "of what?" after this sentence. In fact, it means " **the products' price always changed according to its market value.**" If Lei could paraphrase the original Chinese one, maybe it would be clearer in its meaning.

In fact, all the above-mentioned strategies have been illustrated in previous literature (e.g., Shen, 1989; Li, 1996; Gao, 2006; Shi, 2003; Cheng, 2006). As long as the research participants had Chinese educational backgrounds, it appeared that they employed almost the same ways to improve their English writing skills.

Self- improvement strategies. Strategies employed in this category indicate how the research participants improved their EAP writing skills in terms of their own weaknesses in the writing practice and the effects of using these strategies.

* Making good use of negative feedback and comments to address their weaknesses and find personal problems;

* Learning from others' strengths;

* Learning from previous less successful writing experiences;

* Paying attention to negative examples of Research Paper writing from previous students and the instruction on the common mistakes in EAP writing to avoid making the same mistakes;

* Setting up realistic goals to finish the Research Paper writing task; and

* Reviewing mistakes in previous assignments and ensuring that these were not

   repeated in the current assignment.

Qing, Ming and Lei all thought that negative feedback, previous writing experiences and negative examples were all valuable tools for them to identify their weaknesses. Specifically these included academic English writing style, mechanics, organization, and APA reference style problems. When these three Chinese students started EAP writing at this level, the instructor generally marked their writing with a median score of 3, but after one term practice, they improved to a score of 4. The following program writing evaluation criteria Table (D: 5/9/08, p. 1) at this level indicates their improvement in EAP writing tasks:

WRITING EVAUATION CRITERIA

Score	Content	Organization	Style	Mechanics
4	Clear, meaningful writing; few sentences can be awkward. Topic is developed clearly enough	Good structured piece with some "jumps". Main ideas are well supported, but paragraphs can seem incomplete.	Good range of vocabulary; frequent use of academic words. A good variety of structures and word choice.	Some errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation.
3	Text lacks clarity, however main ideas can be understood; awkward sentences make more than a half of the piece	Organization lacks logical development; no linking between parts clearly observed.	Limited range of vocabulary. Mostly general and informal lexis is used. Many repetitions. Simple sentences prevail.	Errors dominate however the meaning is still communicated.

Chinese students in Yang et al.'s (2004) study experienced grammar problems

which could be specified as the use of articles, prepositions and native-sound (Chinese) sentence structures. In these cases, the students focused on these weaknesses and tried to make fewer mistakes. Qing's perspective was that those negative examples were a positive warning and she made every attempt to avoid making the same mistakes. For example, from the instructor, Qing knew that one of previous students gave up research paper writing because the RP topic that she had selected turned out to be too difficult. She had thought that she would be very interested in it, but she found that there were too many new words and terminologies in the field. Therefore, when Qing chose her RP topic, she kept consulting her writing instructor, peers and friends until she was confident about her choice and her ability to complete the task. Importantly, Qing set up a series of realistic goals to accomplish her final EAP task (RP writing):

> I hope I could reach score 4 in its contents, organization, style and mechanic based on our writing evaluation criteria. I'll try to make less grammatical mistakes as much as possible, and successfully graduate from language learning program. In other words, I hope I could have higher marks, but I really hope to see my improvement in academic writing comparing with previous assignments. (I: 7/27/08, p. 2)

Ming felt that an academic essay was different from a general essay. In terms of its content, he summarized:

> It should be based on the reading materials when you need to draw a conclusion. Any points raised in the essay need have enough evidence to support them: citations from other related academic readings or examples in the field. We can't

create something by ourselves. I don't think my personal examples or experiences are strong enough to support the points in the essay because they are too subjective. "So, taking other's points, examples or research results are very important in academic essay writing. Everything should be objective, and it should take place sometime or somewhere, because it's fact, anyway". (I: 6/16/08, p. 2)

As for the organization, Ming gave a vivid description of an EAP essay. He compared its organization as the "Hamburger": introduction, body and conclusion representing the layers of a hamburger (top bun, burger and bottom bun). He thought that the burger – the "body" -- decided its "flavour". However, because of his limited EAP vocabularies and expressions, he couldn't make a delicious "hamburger" even though everyone would know that it was still a "hamburger". Therefore, aiming to make a delicious hamburger with lots of flavour, Ming made his own EAP words lists which included the EAP words and expressions taken from some academic reading materials. These were handy for him to use when he conducted the EAP writing.

Usually, Ming also attempted to improve his EAP writing based upon his writing instructor's comments on his writing assignments. Several times, his instructor reminded him that his ability to paraphrase was comparatively weak. Accordingly, Ming analyzed the reasons why he couldn't paraphrase well and concluded that one of the reasons was that it was sometimes challenging for him to fully understand the original writing. At first, he sought help from his classmates, but he was not satisfied with their explanations. Finally, he asked for help from his writing instructor in class. From her, he

received explanations which were always clear and helpful to his EAP writing practice.

> This is the second EAP essay class — Argument essay writing task. The instructor gave students the topic about gender roles in modern society, and asked students to work in groups to brainstorm on this topic. Ming was quiet and only listened to other students, it seemed that he didn't get the points of this topic. Several minutes later, he put up his hand and asked the meaning of last sentence of the topic:
>
> "This inevitably leads to male dominance in many societal spheres and as result, to social inequities." (D: 6/30/2008, p. 1)
>
> The instructor helped him find the S.V.O.(underlined words):
>
> Ming: (Ming was so excited) Oh, I see, I see. (I guess probably, Ming was confused with modifier of the sentence.)
>
> Instructor: Good, so, would you argue for or against such traditional gender roles?
>
> Ming: Eh... I think I like traditional gender roles. (O: 6/30/08, p. 1)

In an effort to avoid making mistakes that she had made previously, Lei wrote the types of mistakes that she made in her previous writing task – and the corrections -- on the draft paper and then paid special attention to them during her composing.

> I think that my teacher's evaluation could help me to avoid making same mistakes in the next writing assignment. For the most part, I would use the last evaluation as a basis for my focus in the next writing assignment. Suppose I received lower marks in style and mechanics on this assignment. For the next assignment, I would pay more attention to the sentence structures, grammatical mistakes and dictions and improve them this time. (I: 7/20/08, p. 1)

However, sometimes, Lei admitted that she hardly found the sentence structures

problematic until the instructor pointed them out. When she finished the first draft of her RP paper, she checked it and could not find any more errors. She gave it to her instructor for feedback and her instructor marked sentence structures and grammatical errors in the following writing sample. Lei read those errors many times until she knew how to improve them.

Discussion on the factors promoting success in small businesses

…

Natural factors

… In other small businesses, the products are (Gr.)demanded by market is the same important as online stores. Goods without market demand, the things people produce are not products, because no one will buy them. Goods with a little market demand, how small businesses can have competition with big companies? (SS.) (W: 7/31/08, p. 9)

… For other small businesses, market demand plays the same important roles as those of online stores. Therefore, striving to be the winner of market competition, those small businesses should conduct a well prepared market demand analysis before any products have been made. (W: 8/10/08, p. 9)

*the underlined parts marked by Lei's EAP writing instructor.

In addition, similar to one Chinese student in Yang et al.'s (2004) study, Lei also borrowed the work of her classmates with highest marks, reading the work carefully to find its strengths and how she could learn from them.

Experiences → Mediation → Endeavour. Vygotsky believed that life experiences affect and influence learning and development (Wink & Putney, 2001). In this study, all the participants experienced the painstaking process in their EAP writing practices. For

example, Qing, even got a "0" mark at the very beginning of her academic writing

learning. No one with any academic aspirations wanted to be eliminated by failing to

meet the minimum English language proficiency requirement for university admission.

So for that reason, most students started to do different forms of self-reflections and

self-assessment in order to improve their EAP writing competency. Findings in this study

show that the scope of improvements include using current EAP writing training,

applying Chinese writing or past English learning and writing experiences to current EAP

writing practice as well as other self-improvement strategies. Parks and Raymond's

(2004) research illuminated how social context might constrain or facilitate the use of

these strategies and how these new strategies were incorporated. It also drew attention

to how personal history and experiences might mediate learning.

Their endeavour in EAP writing practices reflected what Vygotsky claimed "these

higher mental functions are generated in goal-directed, mediated activity" (Donata &

MacCormick, 1994). For Vygotsky, the source of mediation has different types, and one

of them might be the behaviour of another human being in social interaction. In this

study, Chinese pre-university EAL learners' academic writing practice (all the required

EAP writing tasks) was a mediating factor in socializing their coping strategies

development and employment. During this process, they constantly mediated their

actual performance in EAP writing practices, such as their weaknesses contrasting to the

writing demands, their writing instructor's feedback for the draft writing, and learning

from other's strengths. According to Donata and MacCormick (1994),

This mediation can take the form of the textbook, visual material, classroom

discourse patterns, and opportunities for second language interaction, types of

direct instruction, or various kinds of teacher assistance. All forms of mediation

are embedded in some context that makes them inherently sociocultural

processes (p. 456).

During this process, Vygotsky believed that some higher mental capacities --

including voluntary attention, intentional memory, planning, logical thought and

problem solving -- would work for learning and evaluation of the effectiveness of these

processes (Lantolf, 2000).   Therefore, Chinese EAL learners in this study critically

examined their academic writing practices by reflecting upon their previous

unsuccessful writing experiences, finding their weaknesses (e.g., their lack of EAP

vocabularies and lack of accuracy in grammar), and setting up goals to improve these

weaknesses, discovering new coping strategies and implementing them to practice their

new knowledge. These strategies included focusing on their class handouts, following

the writing instructor's instruction, seeking the instructor's facilitation, etc., which

helped to solve their personal learning problems gradually and assisted them in

accomplishing their different writing tasks in the pre-university EAP program.

From a sociocultural perspective, Donata and MacCormick (1994) believed that the

emergence of strategies was a by-product of goal-directed activity in which mediation

through artifacts, discourse, or others played a central role in apprenticing novices into

a community of practice. Mediating artifacts involved strategic orientations to problem

solving in this study, which included the EAP writing instructor, online materials, native

English speakers, capable peers, in-class handouts, model essays, and classmates writing.

In this respect, some research findings (e.g. Yang et. al., 2004; Leki, 1997, 2007; Spack, 1997) proved the critical roles that the above-mentioned mediating artifacts played once learners set up their realistic learning goals.

Clarifying strategies. Leki (1995) pointed out that this strategy was used to make sure learners understand what was being required in assignments. However, Qing's clarifying strategy went beyond the basic definition although she constantly sought for her EAP writing instructor's confirmation to ensure that her style mechanics, content, organization and format of the assigned writing was on the right track. In contrast, Ming was confident of his understanding of the EAP writing assignments, but sometimes he employed clarifying strategies with the EAP writing instructor. Lei also made use of clarifying strategies when she needed to fully understand the requirements of some EAP writing tasks or to clarify what the EAP instructor expected in her writing draft revision.

To Ming, research paper writing meant the last important writing task that he needed to finish and it marked the end of his English language learning program. He was somewhat excited at that moment. Actually, before doing the research paper writing at level 5, Ming has had his own experiences in research paper writing, and he learned from his negative RP writing experiences:

> We needed to learn how to write RP and we needed to learn how to acknowledge other's research works with which we might not familiar with in our own culture. I remember when I studied at level 4, we were asked to write RP, but I only received a mark of 39 and the teacher told me my writing was not academic. The topic was about homosexuals and I expressed my viewpoints

about it. The response from my teacher was that I shouldn't use any words or expressions subjectively. (What words did you use, then?)   I used statements like "I strongly disagree, selfish, no ethics", and so on. At that time, I didn't like research paper writing. One lesson that I learned from this assignment is not to choose any controversial and hotly debatable topics in the future. On the next assignment, I chose a topic that I liked and it was also more scientific. My instructor confirmed my choice of topic. So, I didn't have to worry as much about this big task. (I: 7/20/08, p. 2)

It took one week for students to choose their research topic and write their RP proposal. In EAP writing class for that week, Ming took every opportunity to discuss possible choices with his classmates or seek the instructor's feedback.

In the 15 minutes group discussion, Ming shared his ideas with his group member:

Ming: I want to do some research on the 2nd Industrial Evolution to show its
        important influence on today's life.

Classmate 1: I think this topic is too broad to do, I would say its technology, but it
                should focus on one type of that.

Classmate 2: Maybe you can list some important inventions to show its impact, for
                example, Steam Engine, what do you think?

Ming: A-ha, I see, that's what I want, I will take economic in the future. So, I will
        discuss its Socio-economic influence. (O: 7/14/08, p. 2)

The writing instructor required students to prepare their RP topic, and she would give them feedback. ... Ming's topic was *The most important inventions in the second industrial revolution*, after the instructor read it, she asked:

Instructor: Why do you want to discuss those inventions?

Ming: I want to talk about its influence on our today's life.

Instructor: Ok, you'd better to add a subtitle, let me see, what about, "The most
                important inventions in the second industrial revolution: How do they

affect the development of the society", and, replace **important** with

significant, what do you think?

Ming : I agree with you, it really sounds better, thank you! (O: 7/16/08, p. 2)

In his final EAP writing task, Ming was more serious than he had been in previous assignments. He did some research based on different academic sources. He also raised his own viewpoints by citing some points and even using some examples from those sources to support those points. Therefore, he felt that no matter what mark that he ultimately received on this task, he was very satisfied what he had learned about researching a subject and that it would serve him well in the future.

Taking advantage of Chinese language and culture. For pre-university Chinese students, composing in English is relatively easy with help from their first language. Mostly, their strategies include:

* Using some aspects of Chinese language writing experiences as references in EAP writing;

* Applying the related first language and culture to EAP writing practice when it is applicable;

* Using Chinese language internet sources in similar a topic and then translating some of them to EAP writing;

* Reading first language writing research papers to look for useful points;

* Looking for a topic in general scientific in first language and translate the key words in English to look for relevant topic in English again;

* Using first language doing the outline drafting;

* First language and culture employment in second language writing sometimes may get

   the good marks; and

* Using online sources in Chinese first and then English.

Among the three Chinese EAL students in this study, Ming was the only person who

was highly dependent upon Chinese language during his EAP writing.

> I always think and draft my writing in Chinese first, and then I revise it until I'm
>
> satisfied with it. Finally, I follow English formats to translate my writing into
>
> English. Sometimes, I will read them several times to see whether they read like
>
> English, and if not, I will revise it again. Sometimes to do this though I need help
>
> from my friends or teacher. (I: 5/30/08, p. 1)

The next writing sample showed how Ming revised some Chinese English

expressions.

> … Low physical activity is the <u>most common phenomenon</u> for computer workers. <u>This is</u>
>
> <u>because their work require them sit for a long time</u>. <u>Keep the same gesture for long time</u>
>
> is very harmful for people's health. (W: 5/12/08, p. 1)
>
> *Ming thought the underlined part was directly translated from Chinese, so he revised it.
>
> For computer workers, low physical activity is a general problem, because this type of
>
> work needs *sedentary position* for a quite long time. While *staying in one position* for a
>
> longer time is no good to people's health…. (W: 5/12/08, p. 2)
>
> *the italic part was from EAP instructor's suggestion.

Qing always tried her best to follow English thought patterns in her writing

assignments.   However, there were some examples in Chinese culture that she used in

her English writing after overcoming its interference in her thinking process.

As a result of her familiarity with Chinese language and culture, Qing was excited to have an opportunity to write a critique which would allow her to take advantage of this familiarity. In this critique, she took several opportunities to contrast what the author understood with Chinese English learning reality. She knew how to confidently make comments on those points, and the next part was one of examples in her critique writing.

Critique on article "Pumping up the volume!" by Anna Meijdam

Meijdam makes several points in this article. Firstly, Meijdam argues that Li's drilling and Amway marketing techniques of English instruction draw thousands of followers all over the country, thus making him become the most successful English teaching in China today. As a matter of fact, Li's distinctive perceptions of English learning by shouting words, phrases, idioms, even some sentences contributed greatly to Chinese spoken English teaching and learning. So far, a number of learners benefited from this English language learning method, if they really followed the "effective motivational speaking" instructions and practices diligently. (W: 7/7/08, p. 1)

*Qing thought that the underlined parts were from her Chinese language and culture.

In addition, Qing's RP writing took advantage of Chinese language and cultures since she started to select the research topic and search for the references. However when she could not find anything that she thought was very informative, she sought assistance from her father who found some Chinese sources (academic journals in the history research field) which were very useful. Using these Chinese sources, she was able to do her research in less time than it would have taken had she strictly used English

sources.

Lei credits her Chinese writing experiences with encouraging her to acquire summary, essay writings in English.   Some viewpoints and examples from her first culture gave her writings a unique perspective in the EAP writing practices.   In Lei's opinion, critique writing was closely related to critical thinking, which was logical in its organization and used eloquent expressions to debate the points raised. Critique writing should list the reasons why you criticize these points, and there should be a balance between the positive and negative comments with those argumentation and main points. Lei said,

> At first, I didn't know how to write a critique for an article which was so difficult to understand. You know what, there were so many words and expressions I didn't know, for example, "pop-cult figure", "unorthodox", "iron-pantalooned", "epiphany" and "rags-to-riches self-help gurus".   I wouldn't worry about most new words since I can understand them by consulting my dictionary. This time was different -- I even couldn't find those words and expression in the dictionary. The author also used some complex sentences so I couldn't get any points at all. I didn't know what I should do! So, I really felt frustrated at that time. I had to go to my instructor to ask for help. (I: 6/29/2008, p. 1)

> During break time, Lei took the article and asked the instructor how to understand the underlining words, expressions and sentences. (Just at that time, a few students came to her and maybe they had the same problems) So, the instructor took away the article and began to copy those words and expressions on the board. When she finished, she asked students how they understood them. Some students gave answers for one or two words but most students kept silent. It seemed that they were waiting for the instructor's explanation. The instructor

then explained them one by one with some examples. Lei nodded while she was taking notes. After that the instructor asked whether they still had other words that needed to be explained. The instructor told her students that maybe the style of the article could be one of points which students could use in their critique. (O: 6/20/2008, p. 1)

Having listened to the instructor's explanation on those challenging words, Lei understood the article better than beginning.

I also asked my good friend how she understood that challenging article, she told me, since that article was about one of Chinese figures, she used the internet and got some background information about Crazy English, that made her easier to understand it. So I did same thing, too and I found the more I read the more ideas came out, especially, when I read her assignment and I know how to write my own. I think her work also gave me some prompts on how to write critical summary. In the meantime, I also consulted to my notes on critique writing in order to carefully understand the requirements of this writing task. Finally, I focused on the two models that our teacher had taught us in order to see which one was good for me to use. In fact, these two models also helped me a lot on how to compose the critique. (I: 6/29/2008, p. 2)

Lei's critique writing got good marks. She reflected that the assistance of her EAP writing instructor and peers was necessary when she had challenges in completing her writing tasks. Meanwhile, she attributed her success to knowledge of her first language and culture and her second language learning experiences as well.

Fortunately, the assigned article is about how Chinese people learn English in China, and I came from the same learning environment as the author described in the article. So, I think I have an advantage because of my first language and culture and I know how to make critical comments based on that. I also have many examples from my English language learning experiences which I can use to support my critical points. (I: 6/29/2008, p. 2)

In Lei's essay "What are the critical factors influencing consumer behaviour?" Lei thought:

This writing exercise gave me more space to develop my own ideas and it displayed my writing competence. In this writing, I analyzed the factors influencing consumers' product choice from Chinese cultural perspectives. (I: 6/19/08, p. 2)

What are the critical factors influencing consumer behaviour?

Price is an important element to be considered during purchasing. … For instance, most Chinese students agreed that prices on sale were eye-catching, thus making shopping in Canada always spent more than they expected. There are two reasons to explain this phenomenon: first, in Canada, marked prices in Canadian currency before taxes were really lower than the same merchandises in Chinese currency; second, Chinese people like random shopping, so they always took lots of cash, sometimes, they kept on shopping until there is no money in their pockets. … (W: 6/18/08, pp. 1-2)

In research by Yang et al., (2004), the Chinese students also employed similar strategies. When they thought about topics, ideas, they preferred to use Chinese first

and then they translated them into English. However, as the researchers indicated in their study, one of the effects of this process was often awkward English expressions.

English language learning → New thought developing → New language expresses new experiences. Sociocultural perspectives on additional language acquisition maintains that additional language learning is scaffolded and improved by first language learning. The more competent the first language skills are, the faster the acquiring process is. As Vygotsky noted, "success in learning a foreign language is contingent on a certain degree of maturity in the native language … a new language facilitates mastering the higher forms of the native language, expanding the mental abilities in both languages." (Wink & Putney, 2001). At this point, we clearly understand the relationship between first language and additional language learning. In previous studies, although contrastive rhetoric's research mainly pointed out the first language intervention in additional language learning, many researchers -- Mohan and Lo (1985), Leki (1995), Angelova and Riazantseva (1999), Wang and Wen (2002), Woodall (2002), Kavan and Wilkinson (2004), and Edwards and Ran (2006) -- all found that Chinese EAL learners, no matter at what levels they were, tended to use Chinese to facilitate their EAP writing practice.

Additionally, Vygotsky viewed that the language learning process was also a problem solving process through reflection, which meant reflecting on what we learned from another's experience, or from reflecting on our own experience, that could result in self- and social transformation in a future situation (Wink & Putney, 2001). Therefore, when we talk to each other, listen to our friends and colleagues, we develop new

thoughts and new ideas. When we do not understand something, we discuss it with others often we discover the answer as we talk. Obviously, from a Vygotskian perspective, everything about learning and developing is social. Since we are social beings, our constructed experiences are influenced by the meditational artifacts. Accordingly, these Chinese EAL students' interaction with their grandparents, parents, siblings, friends, peers, teachers during learning in their previous social contexts before they came to Canada also developed their ability to solve learning problems. These learning experiences might help them to develop new abilities to solve problems in Canadian university.

When these three Chinese students described their challenge of academic writing practices in university, they also looked back at their Chinese writing proudly. They all viewed themselves as successful writers in Chinese. The three participants all observed that some aspects in Chinese writing could be applied to their current EAP writing. For instance, Lei found that the elements of Chinese argumentation were similar to that of English, but Chinese rhetoric structures were more flexible. Ming mentioned that his previous Chinese literature critique writing experiences in high school assisted him to understand the key to English critique writing. Mohan and Lo (1985) claimed that classical texts and modern works on Chinese composition found no support for the organizational pattern of Chinese writing that differed markedly from that of English. As a result, Chinese language transfer seems more likely to help than to interfere.

In addition, these three Chinese EAL students all extracted something important from their different previous learning experiences to facilitate their academic writing

learning, such as memorizing the new vocabularies, imitating English sentence structures, paragraph organizations, citing world famous persons' words, and some examples to strengthen the proposed viewpoints in the essay writing. Hence, it was important to note that some coping strategies found in this study relate to Chinese writing experiences and previous learning experiences reflected the intimate connection between thought and language. Their relationship results from, according to Ohta (2000), "language's function as a mediator of human cognition, interaction provides a window into developmental processes" (p. 54). Applying Chinese writing or past writing experiences to current EAP writing practice and taking advantage of Chinese language and culture confirmed these viewpoints from sociocultural learning theory. The close relationship between language and thought in its development demonstrated how personal history and experiences may mediate learning as well.

According to Wink and Putney (2001), Vygotsky regarded meaning as the secret to acquiring an additional language. He explained that the first language worked well to make the new language become meaningful. Attempting to understand and write more satisfactory EAP products, these three Chinese students were likely to use their first language to make English meaningful. As Vygotsky argued, this meaningful language enabled their thought development for performing the human mental ability by precise functional systems: memory, problem solving, attention, intention, planning, orientation, and evaluation (Wink & Putney, 2001). This relationship assisted L2 learners to solve their learning problems through reflection and action: reflect on what they learned from another's experience, or from reflection on their own experience (Wink & Putney, 2001).

This mediation process explains why Chinese EAL learners in this study would apply their previous Chinese writing experiences and take advantage of Chinese language spontaneously. Accordingly, they viewed their first language as a useful and important tool for their EAP writing practices. This was not exclusive to my study; Bayliss and Raymond (2004) found that their research participants would use their prior knowledge and experience to understand L2 learning. Dong (1999, 2005), Shi (2003), and Cheng (2006) also found that EAL learners would constantly bring skills and beliefs from their L1 writing to L2 writing. Chinese learners in Gao's (2006) study reiterated that memorization strategies still worked well in English learning by deepening their impression of the new vocabularies in a British university. In this regard, research also indicated that accessing information about early literacy experiences would heighten L2 instructors' awareness of what factors might affect, effect, or deflect students' academic writing in English (Steinman, 2007).

Adapting strategies. Spack (1997) argued that acquiring English language academic literacy was normally a lengthy, painstaking process. For the participants in the study, it was also a university cultural adaptation process which involved EAP writing formats for different genres, organizations and sentence structures. Therefore, they were required to make themselves familiar with the academic writing conventions of the English speaking countries. Attempting to achieve their EAP writing successfully, they employed the following strategies:

* Strictly follow the different EAP writing formats or patterns that the teacher taught in order to produce good EAP writing;

* Try to change first language writing habits and find more related sources during brainstorming to adapt EAP writing formats and demands; and

* Imitating sentence structures, beginning and ending writing paragraphs, article organization and expressions in their EAP writing practice to meet the requirements for essay, summary, critique and research papers.

Although sometimes, they thought that these conventions constrained their creativity, they followed them rather than risk losing marks.

For example, Qing's understanding of summary writing changed after she came to Canada.

> After I studied in Canada, I think summary writing was more than what I expected. I'm still not clear on the difference before the first paragraph (introduction) and the last paragraph (conclusion) of the summary; to me, they are same. Also, the big challenge for me in writing a summary was to get its main idea because of the different thinking patterns between Chinese and English. In Chinese writing, main ideas could be any part of the article; sometimes you have to summarize by yourself. However in English, it is not same as it at all. That's why I sought to confirm what I thought was the main idea with our instructor before I started to write. I followed the writing patterns that she provided and the academic words that she suggested would be helpful (I: 6/20/08, p. 2)

> The instructor asked the students to work in groups to discuss the article that she would assign for the second summary writing. After Qing understood the main ideas, she put up her hand to confirm them with the instructor. The instructor told her that her first two main ideas were okay. The third one was not the author's view but rather he quoted others and the comments on that opinion was what the author really attempted to illustrate. Qing thought about that for a while and then she nodded. After that, Qing began to take notes on the board

about the two summary writing models and some EAP words, such as 'explains', 'claims', 'says', 'informs', etc., which students might use in their summary writing. (O: 6/18/08, p. 3)

Similarly, Yang et al. (2004) found that Chinese students indicated, "Although they found the 'fixed pattern' somewhat boring, they would follow it in their English essay writing because it was expected by their teachers" (p. 19).

Individualized strategies. Strategies in this category were only employed by an individual participant, in other words, the usage of such strategies may have assisted them in completing their writing tasks, but they were not always guaranteed a good outcome.

Qing's first failure experience made her become passionate about EAP writing. The more that she practised her academic writing, the better she knew what was expected of her so that she could successfully complete the AEPUCE program.

In fact, after one month study at AEPUCE program, I suddenly realized that we are expected to master the different formats of academic writing and we were required to learn and practise academic vocabularies. From then on, I followed the format for each writing assignment strictly, and tried to use those academic words listed on our handouts. This turned out to be very useful in our writing assignment. (I:6/12/08, p. 2)

Qing demonstrated how she employed her individualized strategies in the following draft of her summary writing. This process helped her complete this writing task successfully:

Summary on "Tongue surgery in Bid for flawless English"

Contents	words can be used
Who wrote the article?	Emphasize, focus, consider,
What is the main idea?	Evaluate, provide, discuss, analyze
How the author supports that main idea?	Illustrate, support, explain (D:7/5/08, p. 1)

My summary should only focus on what and how the author defines or illustrates?

*left side were summary writing format from EAP writing class instruction; right side

were   some of EAP vocabularies from Academic Words List handout.

In addition, Qing continued taking notes on some expressions or vocabularies to increase both her vocabulary and the accuracy of its use. When she read some sources on her RP topic, she wrote down some terminologies and vocabularies, e.g., "political leadership", "culture exchange", "innovation policy", "open-door" policy, and "agrarian reform", which she then sought to understand more fully.   These became the key words in her RP.

Ming also had individualized strategies to cope with his EAP writing challenges. He always started writing from any point when he did not know how to compose. For instance, when he couldn't understand what the author was trying to say – even after reading the target article three times -- he realized that he couldn't understand the meaning of the article because the author used more informal English. He started to make comments on the language used in the target article; his comments included "ambiguous", "vague", "unclear" and "indirect". His EAP writing instructor thought it was good to criticize from this point of view.

Also, Ming thought that his previous failure experience in research paper writing at

Level 4 had warned him that choosing a controversial and debatable topic was a difficult task if you did not have comprehensive knowledge about the topic. Therefore, for the final research paper writing at Level 5 of the AEPUCE program, he chose a topic where he could not only find sources easily, but also one in which he was very interested. With regards to looking for sources in the library, he found it difficult at first to find useful material. However, he accidently found what he needed when he was looking for sources from one main source and hit upon a more relevant source in another area of the library. As for his language problems in EAP writing, Ming preferred to use the office software to check basic grammatical and spelling mistakes, and then he tried to check other grammatical errors by himself.

Lei's strategies in this category utilized two very different sides. On a passive side, Lei tried to use the simple words, expressions and sentences to express ideas in her EAP writing to avoid making more mistakes. However it did not mean that she improved her skills in this regard. Lei preferred to use online sources because she thought that they were more directed, especially those written in the first language. She thought that they were more appropriate for writing at the pre-university level. Also, she read former excellent students' assignments to seek new inspiration for dealing with the current writing task. On an active side, Lei attempted to predict the purpose of assigned writing tasks so that she was clear on what those assignments demanded. So she always read the writing demands many times until she understood the EAP writing requirements which helped her accomplish the tasks. Sometimes, Lei would combine teacher's methods with her own to summarize the key points of the article in summary writing,

If I really don't know how to summarize the author's idea, I will cite the words

from the article (I: 6/25/08, p. 2)

This was one of summary writing strategies from in class instruction and Lei

incorporated it regularly as one of her personal strategies. Lei tried her best to write a

well-prepared first draft, paying attention to every detail, both during the

thought/planning process as well as the writing.

I always do the preparation work before I start to write. I would contrast what I

drafted to all the demands from the writing instructor. After one or two days'

thinking about the topic and the writing demands, I would start to write and

continue until it was finished, no matter how many hours it took. (I: 6/25/08, p. 3)

Aiming to assist these L2 learners to accomplish this final important EAP writing task,

the EAP writing instructor prepared a RP writing calendar.   This calendar marked

deadlines for research topic selection, RP proposal writing, RP sources searching, RP

outline planning, RP first draft writing (optional), and RP final draft submitting. Lei was

one of students who made good use of this calendar to ensure her completion of all the

RP writing tasks in the proper steps and in a timely manner.   Lei felt that the research

paper writing process was cooperative as well.   During this process, she experienced

how she cooperated with her teacher and her classmates inside or outside the

classroom.

Generally Lei was the first student who responded to the instructor's questions

quickly in class.   To some extent, it gave her more opportunities to solve her own

learning problems.

Lei: If I choose Economics in the future, so how can I narrow down my topic? I

don't have any ideas about that. (The instructor encouraged students to choose

a topic relating to their university majors later on)

Instructor: Ok, look at this example: (The instructor wrote an example on the board,

and demonstrated how to narrow down a topic from general to more

specific) Psychology-memory-long term memory or short term memory-

what about long term memory? What factors related to long term

memory?...

Instructor: Ok, let's go through these examples in your handout. Lei, what do you

think about the first one?

Lei: (Reading the topic very slowly, it seemed that she was thinking about that) This

topic is still too general to handle, because bridge construction involves many

aspects, maybe discussing what type of material can make a bridge stronger is

more specific, I guess.

Instructor: Great, Lei, you got the point. So what do you think about your own topic?

Lei: Eh… maybe I should focus on business, in my hometown, there are lots of small

factories, they developed so fast and contributed greatly to its local economy…

(O: 7/14/08, p. 1)

Choosing a really workable research topic took Lei almost one week. During that

time, she continued discussions with the instructor until her topic had been narrowed

down to "Discussion on Factors Promoting Success in Small Business".

Looking for EAP writing practice models. Qing always followed the model of

different writing formats strictly because she thought it was one of best ways to make

her familiar with EAP writing format and overcome her Chinese thought patterns.

However, sometimes the writing instructor didn't give any concrete examples of the

writing model for the assigned task. In these cases, she employed various coping

strategies -- trying to find examples from EAL writing websites and EAL writing books or initiating discussions with her friends -- in order to complete the writing task. However, if she still could not find any examples,

> I will follow the demands of that assignment, because I found when I listed the
>
> writing demands for the assignment, it became the outline for my writing. Aha,
>
> it's the easiest way to use and it also meets all requirements...." (I: 5/25/08, p. 1)

In this example, Qing demonstrated how she used the writing demands in those of class handouts as the writing model to follow.

Academic paragraph on assigned topic

Choose a topic from the given below. Focus on the topic and develop an academic paragraph using at least two citations from a scholarly source (an article from a scholarly journal, or a book). Provide a list of references.

Format:

Compose a paragraph consisting of no less than 12-15 sentences; it must have **a topic sentence, main point, explanation, support, example, citations (APA), and conclusion**.

Type, double space, font 12 Arial, Times New Roman. References in APA style (D: 5/25/08, p. 1)

What factors are influencing consumer's purchasing choices?

A top sentence: consumer's buying decisions are very important in today's market.

Main point: analyze the factors influencing consumer's purchasing choices before selling any kinds of products is also vital to successful retail business. In my opinion, there are three factors...

Explanation: **(Support-Example-Citations)** (Qing explained the factors one by one with examples or citations)

Conclusion: It is not surprising that price, brand, shopping conveniently... (W: 6/6/08, pp.1-2)

Lei felt that writing the introduction part was challenging for her as well -- its style, organization, development of multiple main ideas, and even the diction. The following writing samples from Lei's research paper draft show how Lei employed some coping strategies to deal with her challenges during the writing of the introduction:

Introduction

Introduction of the topic: Small Business

A small business is defined as a business with a small number of employees. The legal definition of "small" of varies from industry to industry to reflect industry differences accurately, but is generally under 100 employees. Here is the definition of a small business from Holmes and Gibson (2003):

A small business is a business which is independently owned and operated...The business will have less than twenty employees. ...

(In class, the instructor introduced what aspects should be included in the introduction part: background information, common facts about the topic, points related to the topic, thesis statement. (O: 3/24/2008) However, when Lei attempted to write, she found it was difficult to put. Therefore, she consulted the library sources; there she got several introduction writing samples, and then the three underlining parts came out. Also, she took it to the instructor to get her feedback. The instructor suggested her to revise the first part, because the information was repeated. Tracked this idea, she revised it as follows:

A small business is defined as a business with a small number of employees. According to Holmes and Gibson (2003), a small business is a business which is independently owned and operated...The business will have less than twenty employees....

Situation of small business in recent years

…

<u>Focus of the present research</u> (W: 7/16/2008. P. 1)

While she put great efforts to complete this writing task, she was very satisfied with this writing product:

> When I finished the final draft, you know, I was so tired, but when I look at it, it likes my 'baby'. I experienced excitement which I never had experienced in my Chinese writing. (I: 8/20/2008. p. 5)

In Leki's (1995) study, one Chinese student also employed the same strategy. Leki argued that it happened naturally for EAL students, but the potential existed for the inappropriate use of the models without instructor's recommendation.

It is noted that the coping strategies that Chinese participants employed in their EAP writing practices have been adjusted to the current sociocultural situation through different mediating artifacts: teachers, online material, NES speakers, capable peers, in-class handouts, model essays, classmates writing, friends, grammar books and well-written essays.   These were more extensive than what they had used in China where they were generally limited to free writing and input from relatives. In addition, the EAP writing demands for each task served to mediate participants' perception of their EAP writing practices. These included the adaptation strategies, individualized strategies, and seeking other EAP writing models during EAP writing practices. Parks and Raymond **(**2004) emphasized that it was important to remember that awareness of the need to change strategy may be mediated by involvement in a specific social context. Similarly, Gao (2006) believed that "language learners' learning efforts were also constrained by

mediating objects, or 'the means of the participation' in the communities of learning. Mediating agents, or 'significant others' -- including language teachers or experts from whom language learners seek assistance in their language learning process -- often exert influences on learners' strategy use" (p. 57).

Focusing strategies. The participants used these strategies to concentrate their attention on the writing tasks in both narrow and broad ways:

* Reading the target articles many times until the main points were comprehended (Qing);

* Taking some assigned writing tasks seriously and spending much time and energy on the   most important but difficult parts in dealing with assignments (Lei); and

* Reviewing handouts again and again until it was fully understood how to deal with the assigned writing tasks (Ming).

Ming thought that handouts for assignments were sometimes very useful. For example, when he just started to think about his argument essay: "Intercultural marriage has many problems", he had no ideas on how to compose this essay. Therefore,

I went over the handouts on the essay organization several times until I understood the key elements for writing the introduction in an argument essay. The first sentence of the first paragraph should be the topic sentence to outline the significance of the topic. From there, I explained the reasons why the topic was so meaningful. I'm very satisfied with my beginning paragraph.

 (I: 6/15/08, p. 3)

Argument Essay Organization

Statement of argument: introduction of a controversial issue;

Thesis statement: Personal position, opinion on the issue presented. Normally with three

main arguments to defend the position. (D: 6/12/08, p. 1)

<div align="center">Intercultural marriage has many problems</div>

Nowadays, people can travel and live in other countries more easily. It is very convenient

to know the culture from different places. In the condition of a global village,

intercultural marriages are becoming more and more common. Some people think that

intercultural marriage is a positive phenomenon. Because the partners in the marriage

can learn the new things from the different culture, and also they think they can have

special babies. But in my view, intercultural also can have a number of problems. I will

support my viewpoint by considering three main issues: 1) communication; 2) lifestyle; 3)

children. (W: 6/16/08, p. 1)

For Lei, writing a conclusion paragraph was not easy work; she always spent

considerable time and energy in completing this part. Sometimes she revised this part

many times until she was satisfied with it. She remembered that she modified the

conclusion for her essay at least ten times in its content, logic, generalization and diction

before the final version came out.

<div align="center">What are the critical factors influencing consumer behaviour?</div>

…

All in all, price, quality and advertisement are the basic factors which influence

consumer behaviour. If the product's price is reasonable, quality is good, advertisement

is appeared anywhere, the consumers will come in great numbers.

(W: 6/24/08, p. 2)

All in all, based on the results of above discussion, we do find that price, quality and advertisement show high degree of effects on the consumer behaviour. These three factors could not only provide an important sight for managers to define their marketing strategies but also provide a nice suggestion to consumers to be intelligent purchasers.

(W:6/25/08, p. 2)

*Lei was told the original writing was too general so she revised it many times.

Identifying challenges → developing coping strategies → effects of coping strategies employment in EAP writing practice. The three Chinese EAL students all experienced failure in varying degrees at the very beginning of their EAP writing experiences. However, all of them seemed to have viewed their failure from a positive perspective. They used their failures as an opportunity to improve their English language weaknesses. They figured out individual coping strategies to improve these weaknesses. The employment of their coping strategies highlighted their strong learning intentions, illustrating what Yang et. al. (2004) claimed, i.e., that they were highly motivated. This idea was demonstrated by the fact that each worked hard to improve their English writing in order to study in their desired fields at a Canadian university.

From a Vygotskian perspective, "Our learning impacts what actions we take. Our learning and development are also seen in relationship to others in our lives. We connect and make connections with others who influence what choices we make" (Wink & Putney, 2001, p. 83). When these Chinese students perceived their weaknesses in their EAP writing, they took some actions to improve them. Yet, since the nature of learning is social, they realized that they still needed to learn from the strong points of others to offset their weaknesses, a culturally profound Chinese learning strategy. For

Chinese students, one Confucius' saying has been deep rooted in their mind for learning:

(translation of Confucius' *Analects*): "If there people go by, surely there is a teacher for

me among them: I can choose something good about him and follow it, or something

bad about him and change it" (Cited in Han, 2005, p. 49). These learning interactions

with others further boosted their motivation to overcome more difficulties in their EAP

writing practices.

Additionally, these three Chinese EAL students' coping strategies were probably

shaped by Chinese culture which influenced their beliefs and views about learning

English vocabulary. For example, rote learning in China means that the more times that

you are exposed to material, the deeper it will sink in. This seems to guarantce accuracy

and the confidence for interaction naturally forms as a result. Actually, this traditional

learning strategy in China is not mere memorization, but a consolidation of knowledge

and a deepening of understanding.

To sum up, these coping strategies, in Qing's words:

I used them in my English academic writing practice when they were very

applicable. Actually, I don't think academic writing in English was difficult

compared with Chinese writing in China. However I needed have a more serious

attitude towards them. As for using coping strategies, I think they already

became one of my learning habits. Whenever I encountered difficulties in my

writing assignments, I knew which of my strategies was be best to use. To me,

they are my valuable learning experiences. With the help from the writing

instructor, my peers, and more experienced friends, I developed a good attitude

towards EAP writing failures. By using these strategies, I gained constructive suggestions and feedback to improve my EAP writing and made less mistakes in grammar. I found that I better understood sentence structure, paragraph structure and academic words usage which represent the great progress that I made in EAP writing; I have become very confident in dealing with any EAP writing at this level by using my own way and knowing how to arrange the contents for each individual paragraph. (I:8/25/08, p. 3)

Ming reflected the fact that since he began to study hard on EAP writing and tried to solve his learning problems actively:

I began to make fewer mistakes after my teacher explained those assignments. I now better understood the writing requirements and I also developed ideas on how to write the assignment. I know that I could meet the current writing demands in my native language, but because of cultural differences, sometimes there would be some misunderstandings between what I completed in my writing and my instructor's understanding. (I: 8/20/08, p. 2)

From Lei's viewpoint, the process of EAP writing practice indicates the process of growing up: beginning with childish writing ultimately ending with independent and mature adult writing.

As long as I use those strategies, they work very well, and I have less grammatical mistakes in my writing. I know how to make use of their suggestions to make my writing more expressive by the use of a greater vocabulary, using various sentence structures and utilizing multiple viewpoints in its contents. Most

importantly, doing this generally results in higher marks. Often, a peer's help is necessary when I find that I do not know how to deal with the difficult writing tasks. The coping strategies that I used in my writing proved to be very useful. By discussing difficulties with my classmates, it helped me vary the contents of my writing both in content and in style. It made me know that there are more ways to deal with the essay writing. Through discussions with my teacher, I was able to know on which aspects I should focus on. By reading more models, I made the organizations of my writing more flexible. I think with these strategies, I not only met teacher's demands, but met my own demands and they also developed my writing skills. (I: 8/23/08, p. 2)

So far, research findings in the EAL learners' EAP writing field stress the potential positive influences of coping strategies employment. Since these three Chinese EAL students first began their academic writing learning, they have sought different strategies to improve their written English competency. Coping strategies -- such as sociocultural strategies and the employment of other coping strategies -- should result in their English language improvement, although this level of improvement might vary from individual to individual. This finding was also true in this study with its small sample size. Ming's EAP writing proficiency improved at a slower rate than that of Qing and Lei. This might be explained by some other factors, such as motivation, but these were not addressed in this study.

Similarly, Chinese students were always eager to get feedback from their professors in order to improve their EAP writing skills (Angelova & Riazantseva, 1999; Cheng, Myles,

& Curtis, 2004; Cheng & Fox, 2008). One student in their study also compiled a list of useful academic expressions that she extracted from her reading in order to enlarge her academic vocabulary. This list was useful when the student was stuck in the writing process and could not find an appropriate word or phrase. Her list, somewhat like Ming's and Lei's EAP words lists, included words, word combinations, and entire sentences that would be appropriate for introducing a topic, building an argument, agreeing or disagreeing with a position and/or closing the discussion. These coping strategies have proved effective in helping them in their EAP writing practices. These EAL learners figured out their teachers' expectations and attempted to meet their requirements (e.g., Spack, 1997; Currie, 1998; Leki, 2003; Frodesen, 2009). Yang et. al. (2004) concluded that the employment of coping strategies in EAP writing brought positive outcomes at the end of the semester and assisted these EAL students to achieve their academic writing goals, although the degree of progress differed for each student. Leki's (1995) study commented on the coping strategies employed by a group of international undergraduate students, "our conclusion can only be that the students successfully met the expectations of their professors across the disciplines" (p. 254).

Learning Needs in Pre-university EAP Program

From the coping strategies that these three Chinese students developed and employed in their EAP writing practices, it has been found that they generally displayed their potential learning needs. These learning needs in EAP writing could be classified into the following aspects.

EAP writing skills improvement. These EAP writing skills in this study specified

reading comprehension skills related to academic writing practices, as well as specific skills to write the introduction and conclusion parts in research paper writing. For instance, Qing hoped to learn some reading skills to find the main ideas in an atypical organized academic article for summary writing. She also needed to improve her introduction and conclusion parts writing in research paper writing.

In addition, regarding English academic vocabulary and sentence structures, Qing, Ming and Lei all expressed their strong desires to enlarge their academic vocabulary size and to master various academic sentence structures. In particular, they wished that they had immersed training on complex sentences in the pre-university EAP program. According to Leki and Carson (1994), even undergraduates still have language needs and difficulties in academic vocabulary, and graduates have learning needs in technical vocabularies.

These three Chinese students all identified their weaknesses in their grammatical competence such as the verb tense, transitional words, parallel structures and the agreement between the subject and verbs during the academic writing. In this regard, Yang et. al.'s (2004) study on Chinese pre-university students also demonstrated the same learning needs. They remarked that in view of the fact that these Chinese students only completed secondary school in China, their academic writing abilities had not yet fully developed. Therefore, it was not possible for them to express their ideas fully and clearly in English as they did in their first language writing. Accordingly, their learning needs in this aspect were understandable.

Appropriate reading materials needed for EAP reading. In the coping strategies

listed above, it was obvious that Chinese students felt more confident about their EAP writing when they had related reading materials about Chinese cultures. Qing and Lei expressed that they needed more Asian culture reading materials and they thought that it would help develop their writing skills. On the other hand, they were required to learn the same reading materials for both EAP reading and writing classes. Ming suggested that the EAP reading instructor and writing instructor should work cooperatively and use same EAP materials for the reading and writing courses or one instructor should teach both reading and writing. He said:

> in reading class, we learn the new vocabularies, sentences structures and EAP writing formats. In our writing class, we would practise this new knowledge to improve our reading and writing skills at the same time. (I: 8/20/08, p. 3)

Similarly, Edwards and Ran (2006) in their article "Meeting the Needs of Chinese Students in British Higher Education", emphasized that EAP courses should encourage collaborative work between EAP tutors. In addition, all participants stressed difficulties in finding supporting sources in the library: complicated searching technologies made it difficult to locate the desired materials, some materials found were too complicated to be understood, and they did not know how to seek help from the reference desk at the library. Thus these are important factors which must be considered in order to assist EAP students.

Need authentic EAP writing models to follow. Ming and Lei put forward:

> Lei: We need authentic writing samples from NES students; for instance, the same topic written by a Canadian student. Although the writing samples

from the previous graduated students were helpful and they did excellent work, they could not use the expressions of native English speakers. (I: 8/23/08, p. 3)

Ming: Sometimes we would find some problems in the work of previously graduated students' writing, so their writing was not strong enough to improve our understanding and practice in EAP writing. (I: 8/20/08, p. 4)

Need effective EAP writing tutoring. Qing and Ming wished to have some Chinese teacher assistants. They thought that it would be more beneficial; their EAP writing guidance would be more effective because they would serve as better agents between Chinese EAL students and their writing instructor. Qing said:

It's my dream to write like native English speakers. However, if the writing tutor can't understand me and can't point out my weaknesses that need improving, how can I achieve my goals? So, I think if we have an 'agent' tutor, it would be different. (I: 8/25/08, p. 4)

However, Lei felt that the native English speaker volunteers would be desirable if the writing instructor aimed to make Chinese students change their thinking patterns. It is obvious that EAL Chinese students considered the teacher assistant's help to be very valuable, even though their specific needs might be different based upon many factors such as L2 proficiency and other areas of support.

Need more communication between writing instructor and Chinese EAL students. Qing, Ming and Lei expressed their strong desires that their writing instructor understand their Chinese writing cultures so as to avoid misunderstandings in their EAP

writings. This point has been used as one recommendation to L2 EAP writing instructors in the conclusion chapter. They also hoped to have more detailed comments focused on their weaknesses. Instead they found that the marks based on the evaluation criteria were somewhat abstract and therefore it was difficult to know their real weaknesses.

Meet individual learning needs if possible. These three Chinese students expected that the EAP writing instruction would be focused more on their individual learning needs, such as addressing the most confusing and difficult requirements of essay writing, critiquing and RP writing. For example, they needed to learn how to improve writing conclusions. They wished that more EAP writing samples would have been provided. These samples would have given them options from which to choose as they worked to complete their writing tasks.

Need to be familiar with the university provided technology.

 Qing, Ming, and Lei all felt that it was difficult to use the library search engines to get the information that they needed for their writing. Therefore, they all used different coping strategies to deal with the source searching during their academic writing practices. Angelova and Riazantseva (1999) stressed the need to "urge students to become familiar and proficient with technology available at the university such as computers, library search engines, the Internet, and so forth" (p. 518). It is an extremely important skill that they will need for their future university study.

Need to connect current EAP writing requirements to university 1 writing course requirements. Qing, Ming and Lei expected that their current EAP writing training would be related to university writing courses. Lei said:

The previous graduated students told us that there were some differences in the writing demands between these two programs. We wanted to know these differences and didn't want to waste time learning something that might not be useful in our future studies. (I: 08/25/08, p. 4)

In this respect, Yang et. al. (2004) emphasized that these EAL student expressed their desires to learn words related to their future academic fields. However, this was not the focus of their pre-university EAP instruction. Accordingly, curriculum designers of future pre-university EAP programs should consider this link as well. It may not always be possible or practical given the large number of academic fields and the broad base of EAP students, but there is a potential benefit that should not be ignored.

Coping strategies and learning needs. Learning needs regarding EAP writing at the pre-university level in this study mainly focused on the academic writing skills improvement, academic English vocabulary size, grammar usage accuracy and other elements such as diverse sentence structures. In this respect, their writing instructor also pointed out that "they need to diversify their academic vocabulary during their EAP writing" (I: 7/17/08, p. 2). In this regard, Leki and Carson (1994) argued "vocabulary knowledge is the single most important area of second language competence" (p. 95).

Chinese EAL students in this study used some coping strategies to enlarge their vocabulary size by memorizing, imitating, and copying some useful words and expressions. However, their writing instructor emphasized that "they needed to pay more attention to issues regarding plagiarism" (I: 7/17/08, p. 1). Leki (1992) argued that our concepts of plagiarism are different from those in other parts of the world where

students were encouraged to memorize the writings of the learned of antiquity and to use those thoughts in their writing. As a result of their smaller English vocabularies and knowledge of expressions, these three Chinese EAL students sometimes copied the words and phrases of other writers when they thought that those writers stated the same thing without giving appropriate reference to them. Similarly, Holmes (2004) thought that the way EAL students used words and ideas in their source material, substituting synonyms for occasional words, often led to unintentional plagiarism. Actually, some scholars viewed plagiarism at the very early stage of EAP writing as a coping strategy or a transitional phase (Edward & Ran, 2006). In view of this situation, they proposed a need for explicit instruction on referencing and support for paraphrasing to Chinese EAL students.

Generally, the three participants began their formal English learning in Grade Three at elementary school. However, even after almost ten years of English learning, their comprehension of many of the finer points of the English language was often lacking. There were many factors responsible: the lack of qualified English teacher resources, traditional language pedagogies, English language practicing environment, and other factors which did not strengthen their English communication oral and written abilities. In fact, all three Chinese EAL students were not actually shy in taking part in activities or interacting with their teachers in class. They just did not have the appropriate English language skills to do this effectively. Consequently, Ming showed the most reluctance to discuss controversial topics because of his insufficient linguistic skills. Ming and Lei

preferred to use simple sentences for fear of making mistakes in their EAP writing practices.

Findings regarding Chinese EAL learners' learning needs are very likely to reveal that inappropriate source materials limited their comprehension and led to poor quality assignments. However, their writing instructor thought "they need more practice in searching for reliable sources for their academic papers" (I: 7/17/08, p. 2). Gao (2006) argued that in China, it was the writing teachers who told students what to do. However, in the west, more responsibility was left to the students themselves. The student was faced with the reality that, while reading everything was impossible, making selections was also difficult. Gao's research findings suggested that Chinese students' experiences of independent research was sometimes painful.

In this study, the writing instructor thought that her Chinese students needed to add the specific vocabulary of the disciplines chosen for studies. In contrast, Chinese EAL students looked for their teachers to help them in this respect. According to Leki and Carson (1994), even graduates still have language needs and difficulties in technical vocabularies. After all, as pre-university EAP program students, they were not exceptional. At this point, Edward and An (2006) suggested that collaboration should be encouraged between EAP instructors and subject specialists in areas such as the identification and teaching of specialist vocabulary.

Fixed EAP patterns vs. creativity. As successful Chinese writers, Qing, Ming, and Lei thought that writing in English was easier than writing in Chinese other than the fact that they still had lots of language barriers pertaining to the use of English expressions.

Otherwise, they were all confident of their abilities to be successful English writers. Chinese EAL students in Kavan and Wilkinson's (2004) study shared the same opinions: it was effortless to use an English structure when writing for a New Zealand university.   In my study, based on these three Chinese students' learning experiences in EAP writing practices, their perceptions were that EAP writing tasks on essay, critique, summary, and research papers followed fixed patterns. For Ming, the fixed patterns did not interfere with his brainstorming on how to organize his writing; instead they acted like a reminder for him to do steps in order.

The participants' understanding may come from their training and understanding of Chinese writing evaluation criteria: Chinese style with its emphasis on beauty, and delicate balance of subtlety and clarity, required an extensive knowledge of the native language (Kavan & Wilkinson, 2004). Good Chinese writing emphasized that the writing without form, the content would have no body, and without the content, the form would have no soul. Good writing should be well-structured in its organization and be fluent and expressive in its use of language (Li, 1996). Therefore, these fixed patterns, in Chinese students' minds, were somewhat boring, indifferent, bland and even tended to kill their writing talents developed from their previous Chinese writing experiences. In Angelova and Riazantseva (1999), the Chinese students described Chinese as reader responsible, a style in which:

> you don't have to explain your ideas in a strictly defined logical way. You have to infer that the audience knows what you mean, so you don't have to state it clearly. Chinese is very flexible and not easy to organize because there are so

many kinds of expressions with the same meaning, and it's hard for the writer to

decide which one is the right one.(p.519).

On the other hand, from some EAP instructors' viewpoints, Kavan and Wilkinson,

(2004) thought that Chinese students' writing lacks creativity because of their inability to

do critical thinking. At this point, this phenomenon was suggested to be viewed from

two aspects. Culturally, in China, it would be immodest to promote one's own ideas over

others (Kavan & Wilkinson, 2004).   Practically, at present, secondary education in

Chinese composition in China laid emphasis on cultivating students' innovative thinking

ability. Consequently, when they completed their high school in China, they should

have been trained to analyze issues in a multi-directional manner. To grasp the central

idea of the matter, acknowledge its differences and respect its individuality; to raise

questions critically in terms of issue, seek differences from the social conventions and

ensure creativity in its implementation. According to Han (2005), there would also be a

change in the evaluation criteria for Chinese composition: Chinese language and

literature teachers would value the creativity as the priority of an insightful composition.

They would encourage students to:

> perceive and understand modern life sensitively so as to open up a rich resource
>
> for writing materials… to cultivate the sense of telling the truth, expressing the
>
> real emotion…; to foster their imagination; to broaden the students' horizon by
>
> making them read more actively…; to encourage students to write in their own
>
> words with new ideas and sincere feelings…; to polish the flow of compositions
>
> and increase the expressiveness of the language used (pp. 61-62).

As a result, Chinese students may have been equipped with critical thinking skills --

but only in their native language. However, limited reading comprehension ability,

limited knowledge in the field, and limited English language expression made it

impossible for them to be critical in their EAP writing practices. This result echoes the

research on some of the academic writing problems that these EAL students have (e.g.,

Angelova & Riazantseva, 1999; Canagarajah, 2002; Cho, 2012), when they were "asked

to write papers commenting on issues they have no familiarity with and so no well-

formed, thought-through opinion about" (Leki, 2001, p. 23). Exceptionally, Qing's

successful critique writing seems to suggest that using familiar background knowledge

reading materials probably would help develop their critical thinking skills.

In this respect, some scholars of critical EAP (e.g., Canagarajah, 2002) argued that

students should be facilitated to further develop their critical thinking skills and to be

creative and challenging in their writing in new academia by EAP writing professionals.

However, this is, in effect, an apprenticeship between the experts and the novices, one

with challenges but also one which would help enforce their previous critical thinking

skills.

EAP writing instructor's viewpoints vs. Chinese EAL students' perceptions.

Findings from interview data displayed many differences between the instructor's

viewpoints and Chinese EAL students' perceptions on their EAP writing practices.

For the EAP instructor, she expected this group of students

> to acquire strategies of how to participate in English-only group discussions and
>
> to know how to organize individual work on papers. (I: 7/7/08, p .2)

However, since these Chinese students came from teacher-centered educational backgrounds, they were unfamiliar with group discussion. Consequently, as Ming said:

> I don't like discussing something in English in groups. No one can express their ideas in English clearly, so what's the point? (I: 8/20/08, p. 1)

 In view of this phenomenon, Gao (2006) suggested that in order to be persuaded of its usefulness, teachers needed to explain very clearly the aim of any task, what students were expected to accomplish and how their contributions would be assessed. In the meantime, Gao proposed to give Chinese EAL students chances to deepen their understanding of concepts through discussion in Chinese in some other occasions.

> The EAP instructor hoped that her students would "apply critical thinking approach to evaluate the academic sources required for writing tasks" …
>
> As a result of their limited reading skills and lack of background knowledge of the content of reading materials, they found no more critical points. The EAP instructor hoped that her students would "select information relevant to the topic offered". (I: 7/7/08, p. 1)

Yet, Chinese students found that much brainstorming work was not rewarded and did not offset mistakes made at the vocabulary or sentence levels, or with respect to expression and grammar accuracy. Therefore, they would rather pay more attention to the format and mechanics of EAP writing to get good marks. The EAP instructor was looking for her students to "switch to the paradigm of thought accepted in the host academic and to literally forget their first language, so that they could be successful in EAP writing sooner" (I: 7/7/08, p. 1). For the students, their Chinese language, patterns

of thinking and cultures were the most important tools for them to cognate English language and adapt to western academic cultures.

These phenomena observed in this investigation may have contributed to a better understanding of Chinese EAL learners. Although the stories of a small and selected group of Chinese EAL students cannot expect to be representative of all Chinese learners in EAP programs, it appears that these results are similar to other research (e.g. Jin & Cortazzi, 2001; Leki, 2001; Kavan & Wilkinson, 2004) and we could "see valuable in helping us understand the kinds of struggles our students face in L2 writing classes and the varying stances they adopt in relation to these obstacles" (Leki, 2001, p. 19).

The current findings confirmed the view of Leki (2001) that sometimes the teachers did not know what the students needed; in other cases, the students thought they needed one thing, and the teacher thought they needed something else. This indicates that communication between EAP instructors and Chinese learners is necessary and urgent for better scaffolding their EAP writing practices. Therefore, for the benefit of both sides, Steinman (2004) highlighted the role that EAL students' literacy autobiographies played in their EAP writing. He advocated that EAP instructors should know those important personal learning histories in order to use Chinese students' strengths in EAP writing practices. Accordingly, in practice, for example, L2 EAP writing instructors could provide their students a chance to share their personal backgrounds at the beginning of EAP courses or they could try to ensure that the first writing assignments were related to personal experiences.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Many scholars and researchers in the second language writing research field are concerned about EAL writers' academic writing issues. However EAL learners' learning experiences and their voices have been paid less attention. Pre-university EAL students' academic lives have especially been ignored in the research trend. Consequently, this study attempted to examine how Chinese EAL learners developed their English academic writing skills in a pre-university EAP setting at a Canadian university and this study focused on coping strategies employed by this group of EAL students. Additionally, it was hoped that this study would make contributions to the lack of research in this area by investigating Chinese EAL students' perceptions of their academic writing practices at the pre-university level. Informed by Leki's (1995) study on coping strategies, this study employed the methodology of case study to gain in-depth descriptions of Chinese EAL students' their perceptions of academic lives at a Canadian university. In an effort to ensure that the research findings were valid and credible, multiple qualitative data collection methods were employed to conduct interviews, classroom observation, and document analysis in the investigation into a number of areas. These included Chinese EAL students' perceptions of coping strategies, types of coping strategies employed in the pre-university context, the influences of coping strategies employment on Chinese EAL students' academic writing, and their actual learning needs in terms of the coping strategies that they used. A number of data analysis techniques were utilized, such as

thematic coding on interview transcripts and classroom observations, doing content analyses of course handouts, documents and Chinese EAL students' writing samples, conducting cross-case analyses, writing memos for each individual case, and doing member checks.

Findings of data analyses in this study indicated that these three Chinese EAL students, who lacked any academic writing experiences before coming to Canada, felt very challenged negotiating the demands of academic writing tasks at the pre-university level. Mostly, their learning challenges fell on these aspects: EAP vocabularies usage, compound and complex sentence making, EAP paragraph composing and advanced grammar usage accuracy. Fortunately, they knew how to reflect upon their previous writing experiences in China and Canada and extracted several aspects of the experiences to cope with the challenges that they faced.

In addition, these comprehensive analyses helped this student researcher demonstrate how these three Chinese EAL students skilfully employed the various coping strategies to deal with their EAP writing challenges. Some coping strategies that the participants used in this study were similar to those outlined in previous studies (e.g., Leki & Carson, 1994; Leki, 1995; 1999; Yang et al., 2004). These included using current EAP writing training, clarifying strategies, looking for EAP writing practice models and focusing strategies (Leki, 1995). However some new strategies emerged from the current study: sociocultural strategies, adapting strategies, applying Chinese writing or past English learning and writing experiences to current EAP writing practice, individualized strategies, self-improvement strategies and taking

advantage of Chinese language and culture. These I hope to document and contribute to this field of research in the future.

The results of this research indicated that these three Chinese EAL students believed that those coping strategies were positive solutions to their EAP learning problems, and these coping strategies helped them overcome some learning challenges as they sought to improve their EAP writing skills. In addition, by focusing on these coping strategies, they identified their own specific learning needs for EAP writing in the pre-university context. At this point, findings of this study confirmed the conclusions from the existing literature in the field. The strategies that diverse EAL students employed successfully facilitated overcoming their learning difficulties and completing writing tasks across the curriculum at different levels in universities (e.g., Angelova & Riazantseva, 1999; Cheng, 2006; Crosby, 2009; Frodesen, 2009; Leki, 1995; Tardy, 2005; Yang et al., 2004).

In addition, to some extent these perceived coping strategies reflected these three Chinese EAL learners' urgent learning needs in pre-university EAP programs. Findings of this study suggest that Chinese EAL learners' unique oriental writing experiences should be viewed objectively. On the one hand, the findings have contributed to understanding and identifying Chinese EAL students' potential learning problems in academic writing. On the other hand, as a result of those coping strategies, for example, using Chinese writing experiences and taking advantages of Chinese language and cultures, we did not see its interferences in their EAP writing practices but found its positive influences upon it. However they truly needed

appropriate assistance to adjust to the requirements of the Canadian academic environment in a pre-university program.

The research findings seem to suggest that knowing Chinese students' academic writing experiences at the pre-university EAP program level would facilitate this group of learners to improve their EAP writing skills and motivate their EAP writing learning. In the meantime, EAP instructors should try to meet their actual learning needs to assist them to realize their learning goals in EAP writing practice. Accordingly, some potential pedagogical recommendations to assist EAP writing instructors and EAP program administrators have been developed.

Recommendations

For EAP instructors at the pre-university level, the following pedagogical recommendations should be taken into consideration while conducting EAP writing courses for Chinese EAL students.

1. To have empathy for Chinese EAL students' academic writing practices

According to Kavan and Wilkinson (2004), Chinese EAL students' academic writing products were always labelled as "Chinglish", "poor structure", "bad grammar". Chinese EAL students were often described as "timid writers" or "lazy writers" (Powers, 2008). In fact, most Chinese EAL students have been working hard to achieve their academic goals since they arrived in English speaking countries. However, it might take longer time to adapt themselves to the cultures of the host academia, and this process turned out to be painstaking transformation. One EAL academic writing instructor wished that students:

unlearn what they have learned at home; learn the principles related to the organization of the English academic essay format, APA referencing style, switch to the paradigm of thought accepted in the host academia, and literally forget about their first language, etc., if they want to be successful in English writing. (I2: 7/7/08, p. 2)

This might be far from what Chinese EAL students are capable of implementing when they just arrived in an English speaking environment.

This point easily leads to what Kavan and Wilkinson (2004) argued, "Teaching students to write in English using topic sentences, linear structure, fastidious grammar rules, and individual thought, appeared to be inherently ethnocentric" (p. 2). Therefore, during this transformation, if EAP instructors could imagine Chinese EAL students' learning challenges in L2 writing and develop a more patient and understandable attitude, it will assist their students in making progress. Specifically, they should help their students minimize the negative influences and maximize the positive influences from Chinese language writing.

2. To make good use of Chinese EAL students' previous experience and background knowledge to interact effectively with them within a sociocultural learning environment

The current inquiry demonstrated that Chinese EAL students' Chinese writing experiences assisted them to compare and contrast the differences and similarities between these two languages in writing styles. Some formats of EAP writing might not be difficult for them to master. However sufficient language supports were

demanded to meet their various learning needs in pre-university EAP programs. For example, they do not know the connotations of words and they have problems with idioms and exceptions.

In the early 1990s, some scholars' (Friedlander, 1990; Leki, 1992) studies indicated that L2 writers even went as far as writing sections of their texts in their L1 and later translating them into English with positive results. However, when they focused on form, they did so at the expense of meaning. Chinese EAL students thought that they could compose eloquent sentences in Chinese, but when they translated them into English, they sounded juvenile. "When I write in English, it is just like fighting without good weapons" (Kavan & Wilkinson, 2004). Angelova and Riazantseva (1999) advocated that EAL students' previous experience and background knowledge were the basis of academic interaction. Therefore to attain the ultimate objective of an academic enterprise, an awareness of the differences existing between such experience and knowledge appears to be crucial for making student-professor possible, i.e., the successful acquisition of academic knowledge and skills necessary to fulfill one's professional and personal goals. Similarly, Kirkpatrick (1997) argued that Chinese learners' previous learning experience would not be disadvantaged when they came to the task of writing in English, and the academic and argumentative practices of Chinese and Western scholars were remarkably similar.

3. To develop Chinese EAL learner's critical thinking skills and to encourage their creativity in EAP writing

Some researchers claimed that Chinese EAL students lacked critical thinking

ability (e.g., Chalmers & Volet, 1997) and assumed that they just memorised something without complete understanding. However, Kavan and Wilkinson (2004) thought that it was not fair to make such comments about Chinese EAL students without differentiating between thinking and expressing criticism. From findings in this study, all participants had their own mature understanding of critique writing; even Ming had literature criticism writing experiences in Chinese. In other words, they knew how to think critically, but sometimes, they thought they had not been provided enough background knowledge as Angelova and Riazantseva (1999) discussed in their study. Qing's successful critique writing experience illustrated that as long as Chinese students were familiar with the background knowledge of the assigned reading materials and they were provided with appropriate English language assistance, they could produce the more satisfactory critique writing work. In this regard, EAP writing instructors at the pre-university level might choose reading materials related to Asian cultures to develop Chinese EAL students' critical thinking skills. In addition, Chinese EAL students' writing creativity should be encouraged because they thought that the EAP writing format was to follow the fixed patterns and use various sources to support. This misunderstanding made them think the more meanings in textual details, the more mistakes they made, and the lower grades they got. At this point in their L2 acquisition, Leki (1992) thought that language limitations made it problematic for them to write a lot. In terms of this situation, Kavan and Wilkinson's (2004) cultural comparisons represent one pedagogical approach for Chinese EAL students. In practice, it has been proven as an effective way

to train those students' critical thinking skills, argument skills, to learn, and understand western cultures from different perspectives, or through dialectic viewpoints to improve effective communication between Chinese students and EAP instructors.

4. To address Chinese EAL students' language learning needs effectively

Many research findings in EAL writing continuously confirmed their urgent needs in English grammar, vocabulary and mechanics. Leki (1992) thought that EAL students who could plan in their L1 could also plan in writing in their L2 but not as extensively or elaborately. Attempting to write error-free English academic essays, Qing and Lei employed different self-improved strategies to overcome their grammatical mistakes, to find the right words, forms, and words orders in English. However, it required a great amount of time to complete one academic writing task and they had to sacrifice the amount of time to work on other EAP assignments. Consequently, they expressed strong desires to be trained regarding their challenges in this aspect. From Chinese students' previous learning experiences, they were used to doing immersion training on some aspects which needed improving. Accordingly, designing some exercises specifically related to grammar accuracy, EAP vocabulary, and sentence structures might be one effective approach for those groups of EAL students. For instance, using proof reading exercises would help them become familiar with common errors in grammatical structures, punctuations, vocabularies usage, and inappropriate styles in EAP writing. This proofing would help them to know how to recognize and correct errors and ultimately, avoid making them in the

first place. Alternatively, the EAP instructor could introduce some useful online sources on EAL learning to Chinese students. In that case, they could be trained how to use the academic vocabulary with some interesting but useful EAP word games to enlarge their vocabulary size. In this study, the participants had done some related exercises in class, however they thought it was far from what they needed. Additionally, in order to address Chinese students' learning needs successfully, EAP writing instructors should read studies on Chinese EAL students' learning needs conducted by both Chinese scholars and Western scholars. Those research findings would potentially enhance EAP instructors' abilities to understand Chinese students' writing characteristics in L1 and L2 objectively.

5. To train Chinese EAL students' to write multiple drafts so as to improve their revision   and editing skills

Findings in this study revealed, in view of different writing training patterns, good Chinese writers may prefer free writing (Qing, Ming & Lei's opinions in this study). In that case, Ochiong (2005) argued that encouraging EAL students to generate multiple drafts might produce good quality academic writing. In my study, Qing and Lei employed some sociocultural strategies and self-improved strategies to revise and improve their EAP writing assignments many times. In view of this situation, EAP writing instructors should encourage Chinese EAL students to do free writing using their creativity in their first draft. The writing instructor would then give feedback on those aspects, such as the need to identify sources to support their viewpoints in the draft. This process would be repeated more than once. In this way,

multiple drafts would improve Chinese EAL students' revision and editing skills and the final material would be of a better quality as Ochiong (2005) predicted in his research.

6. To establish effective communication between Chinese students and EAP instructors

The three Chinese EAL students in this study wished to have two-way communication with their EAP instructors. Obviously there was communication from the EAP instructors to these Chinese EAL students. However, it is also important for EAP instructors to give Chinese EAL students an opportunity to share their understanding of the EAP writing instructor's requirements and expectations. Then, in terms of ensuring their comprehension, EAP writing instructors might need to provide more detailed comments on their written assignments because all the participants in this study pointed out that they could not understand the abstract evaluation criteria. Except for the general marks, there was no meaningful information provided to the students. In this case, EAP writing instructors could also provide them some samples to demonstrate what different levels of evaluation criteria really meant based on content, style and mechanics. Further communication from the students to the EAP writing instructor, aimed at helping their EAP writing instructor understand their learning challenges, needs, backgrounds, experiences, cultures, strengths and challenges in their EAP writing practices, would also be beneficial. For example, EAP writing instructors might organize various activities to help international students to express their learning concerns, learning needs, and

share their learning experiences.

7. To connect EAP writing demands at the pre-university level to writing course demands in their first year of university

Although EAP writing courses at the pre-university level aimed to prepare EAL learners for their future university study, previous students' stories of failure in their university writing courses made these three Chinese EAL students feel somewhat nervous. As a result, they expected to learn the writing demands of university EAP writing courses. Taking this point into consideration, exposure to the expectations of first year university writing would give students the opportunity to reflect on their EAP writing learning needs. A very workable approach would be to invite previous L2 EAP students to come back to the program to share their EAP writing practices in their first year of the university. The need for this was shown by Benesh (2001) who found that "students who had successfully completed EAL courses offered at the university struggled with their mainstream academic course work. Benesh therefore developed a program allowing non-native students to continue studying English while pursuing their undergraduate degree, the language instruction would be directly connected to the content course they took" (cited in Blakely, 1995, p. 16).

8. To train source searching skills at the library

The coping strategies used by these three Chinese EAL students showed that they could not fully take advantage of the plentiful library sources available at the pre-university level. Since they were not familiar with the application of source searching technology, they were not able to find – or easily find -- research material

which they found useful to their EAP writing practices. Thus it is important for them to master these required library skills to support their EAP learning – as well as their future university requirements – and this can be best accomplished with assistance. The logical place for this is in their EAP writing course.

The findings of this study also reflected some important recommendations for EAP program administrators at the pre-university level which would facilitate Chinese EAL students' learning. Potential recommendations noted in the following section aim to better serve international students with Chinese backgrounds and meet their actual learning needs.

1. To solicit writing samples from NES and competent Chinese tutors exclusively for EAL learners at the pre-university level

No participants were totally satisfied with the writing samples for each EAP writing task in this study because all of them were produced by previous EAL students in their program. They considered that they could learn some strengths from those samples but they hesitated to imitate them completely because they were too novice to determine what was and was not appropriate for the EAP writing register. As a result, they wished to have some NES volunteers to provide the authentic EAP writing samples with the same topics on which they worked. In this way, they would know how native English speakers compose the writing tasks. After all, their writing instructors strongly required them to give up their Chinese thinking patterns so the model should be samples from native English speakers, not Chinese EAP students.

Also, they desired to have EAP writing tutors with a Chinese background whose

English language proficiency was high enough to assist them in accomplishing their writing tasks. Qing's negative experiences with NES tutors prevented her from utilizing NES tutoring more. In this respect, probably, this event links to Powers (2008) believed, that conferencing strategies at writing centers, which had been so successful with NES writers, worked differently when applied to EAL conferences. Furthermore, he emphasized, "we found it difficult to view them from the standpoint of EAL writer for whom the conference might have been a success; rather, we measured them against our nondirective philosophy which we appeared to have betrayed" (p. 371). For that reason, administrators in this program might consider recruiting international graduate students with strong EAP writing abilities for different ethnic groups in this pre-university EAP program or training tutors to be more culturally and linguistically sensitive (Kilborn, 2008) in order to assist EAL learners solve their learning problems.

2. To perform Chinese scholars' "agent" roles between EAP instructors and Chinese EAL students in the pre-university EAP programs

In EAP programs at Canadian universities, there are often some Chinese visiting scholars who are quite familiar with Chinese education background and understand Chinese EAL learners. They could be invited to deliver relevant information about Chinese cultural values, writing rhetoric, Chinese students' learning characteristics, and so on, in order to make EAP instructors aware of differences between the two cultures. Additionally, Chinese scholars could support the progress of Chinese students' EAP writing practice by sharing their ways of dealing with the learning process, challenges, and illustrating successful EAP writing experiences.

3. To provide appropriate research sources for pre-university EAP programs

For these three Chinese EAL students in this study, their reading comprehension abilities were not strong enough to understand the professional reading materials in English. When dealing with their writing tasks, they would rather look for online Chinese written materials. Although these materials assisted them with coping with their reading difficulties temporarily, their English reading comprehension skills still needed improvement for their future learning. Therefore, they desired to have some sources exclusively for training their research abilities and improving their reading skills. Under such circumstances, administrators in pre-university EAP programs might establish cooperative projects with public libraries or libraries within the education system to provide these EAL learners with appropriate research sources. While ultimately increasing their reading comprehension abilities is the correct long term solution, this transition strategy would help them address their research problems for the EAP programs and early university experiences.

4. To enhance the collaborative work to develop four language skills in the EAP program

In the rationale and proposed program outline for EAP program at the pre-university level, it is mentioned that "writing tasks will be frequently related to reading selections used in the reading component of the program" (D: 2/18/08, p.3). However, in reality, it was difficult for these three Chinese EAL students to feel this collaboration between EAP reading and writing tasks. Accordingly, Qing and Lei expected that EAP reading and writing tasks would connect effectively, which would

intensively support them to improve both reading and writing skills. Ming even desired to have one instructor to teach both EAP reading and writing to improve both academic skills.

In the literature, Grabe (2003) stressed that students needed to "practise writing many types of relevant genres and tasks, develop rhetorical stances to tasks and texts, develop awareness of text structure itself, become strategic readers and strategic writers, synthesize main information across more texts" (pp. 256-257). However, because Chinese EAL students' learning needs mostly focused on linguistic aspects, a practical curriculum based upon selected topics to improve their academic skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing would be ideal. For example, if the topic was something related to "Global Village", through the related materials for all four skills, EAL students would know more vocabularies, sentence structures, phenomena, viewpoints, material sources, and different genres of writing, all of which would be helpful for them to finish EAP writing tasks in this area.

Limitations

Due to the small case study size of this research project, the findings and recommendations were not meant to be generalized beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, because of the limitations of case study research, future exploration in this field needs to consider the qualitative methodology which can generalize more broadly. Furthermore, some other data collection techniques may be taken into consideration. For example, a survey may be a better research tool for conducting a study of a large group's of participants.

This study delineated three Chinese EAL students' perceptions of their EAP writing practices at pre-university EAP program in a Canadian university. For the efforts from these research participants, basically, this thesis project finally achieved the research goals. However, in view of the research method, data analysis process, final research, and some other human constraints that played parts in the study – i.e., time, energy, and resources (Reid, 2001) –, there are still some limitations which need to be recognized.

First of all, this study chose case study as the research methodology to provide an in-depth description of Chinese EAL student's academic lives at the pre-university level. However, the EAP program was only one term long. Comparatively, it may be too brief to observe their EAP writing competency development. Some research participants in this study thought that they just knew how to compose EAP writing when they finished their study at this level but their subsequent success or failure is not known.

Second, because it was case study research, the three Chinese EAL students' learning experiences cannot represent all Chinese EAL students in the program despite the appropriateness of the sample size for these research purposes. Third, as for human constraints, some of the students were busy with their course work at university and did not have time to do follow up interviews. The results from their email interviews did not always produce satisfactory results. In addition, since this information was to remain confidential, I am the only person who did data analysis from the very beginning to the very end. Thus, there may be some inherent bias in

my evaluation and interpretation of this data. As some the participants were completely novice as it pertained to research work, some aspects addressed in the interview questions were ones that they could not understand completely. As a researcher, in order to get more objective data, I could not explain too much without biasing the results. Therefore, some answers to the interview questions may not reflect their true beliefs but rather reflect the limitations of their language capabilities. Consequently there may be several areas where the results have a level of subjectivity despite my best efforts to be objective: the process of data analysis, my choice of data, and my interpretation of the data, are based upon my personal experiences. Although I emailed the results of the data analysis to the participants respectively to do member checks, I was not sure whether all of them took it seriously. While the conclusions that I drew from this research I believe are relevant and accurate, they may have an inherent bias and must be viewed with this caveat.

Future Research Directions

In terms of the findings from this interpretive case study and the limitations noted above, the findings cannot be over-generalized to include other students in the same course or students in other EAP contexts. However, these findings may provide a basis for further research direction. First, similar research in the future could extend the research time to two terms or one year. This would be appropriate for many reasons. When I interviewed Ming, he told me that he used more strategies in the EAP program compared to another language program that he took previously. Thus, the impact of language learning experiences before the EAP program might be

investigated. Second, methodologically, aiming to get more objective conclusions, future studies may consider recruiting more EAL students, including those from different ethnic groups, and using quantitative methods such as survey investigation. Other qualitative methods, such as focus groups, might also be used to explore how they cope with their EAP writing tasks in a pre-university context. An important finding might be whether they shared common learning issues or whether different cultural groups had some differences reflecting the diverse cultures and linguistics. Third, in addition to sociocultural theory, the theory of cultural synergy (Jin & Cortazzi M, 2001) might be applied to explore of the strengths of EAL students' learning experiences that could be employed to elevate their learning outcomes. Last but not least, there are many factors which influence EAL students' successful learning. If we are to correspond with more students in the academic writing classes, what are the major factors that will affect their decision-making to successfully achieve their goals?

The stories narrated in this study truly described these three Chinese EAL students' initial academic lives in a Canadian university. Their struggling, painful moments when facing challenges and their delightful, exciting times when overcoming their difficulties may reoccur in their future academic lives. However, it will bring a wealth of experience to their prospective professional lives later on. Through their considerable learning experiences in the EAP program at the pre-university level, EAP instructors and program administrators might come to better understand typical Chinese EAL students' literacy experiences in China, their distinctive approaches to coping with their learning problems, and further be

informed by their actual learning needs.

Although the findings of this research may contribute some suggestions to EAP pedagogy and curriculum design at the pre-university level, in reality, no writing program can meet every goal of the institution, every departmental demand, and even every student's needs. In Reid's (2001) words, "Teaching EAP writing is a service, … especially to serve EAL students-to prepare them to become successful, confident, efficient, effective academic wirers" (p. 144). Therefore, compared with L2 EAP writing at the undergraduate and graduate levels, teaching L2 EAP writing to pre-university students undoubtedly serves as the stepping stone for their higher level academic and potentially professional futures. As the results showed in this study, each L2 EAP task from these three participants' perspectives not only prepared and helped them develop their English language writing skills at lexical, grammatical, syntactical and textual levels, but it also helped them develop their analytical skills when they intended to critically compare or contrast the sources targeted. What's more, in their efforts to accomplish each EAP writing task, the coping strategies that they developed and used when they faced different learning challenges prepared their independent learning skills. All of these would play important roles in their disciplinary EAP writing later on.

References

Aitchison, C. (2003). Thesis writing circles. *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics, 8,* 97-115.

Al-Ahmad, S. (2003). The impact of collaborative learning on L1 and L2 college students' apprehension about and attitudes toward writing. *Dissertation Abstracts Insternational, 64,* 1621-1622.

Aljaafreh, A., & Lantolf, J. (1994). Negative feedback as regulation and second language learning in the zone of proximal development. *The Modern Language Journal, 78,* 465-483.

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

Anton, M., & Di Camilla, F. (1998). Socio-cognitive functions of L1 collaborative interaction in the L2 classroom. *Canadian Modern Language Review, 54,* 314-342.

Basturkman, H., & Lewis, M. (2002) Learner perspectives of success in an EAP writing course. *Assessing Writing*, *8,* 31–46.

Bayliss, D., & Raymond, P. M. (2004). The link between academic success and L2 proficiency in the   context of two professional programs. *Canadian Modern Language Review, 61,* 29-53.

Beare, S., & Bourdages, J. S. (2007). *Skilled writers' generating strategies in L1 and L2: An exploratory study*. In G. Rijlaarsdam (Series Ed.), M. Torrance, L. Van Waes & D. Galbraith (Vol. Eds.), *Studies in Writing,* Vol. 20, *Writing and Cognition: Research and*

Applications (pp. 151 - 161). Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Becket, D., Benander, R., & Kumar, R. (2007). ESL students in the disciplines: Negotiating the professional program track. *Teaching English in the Two-Year College, 35*(1), 63-72.

Benesch, S. (2001). *Critical English for academic purposes: Theory, politics, and practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Bourmot-Trites, M., & Seror, J. (2003). Students' and teachers' perceptions about strategies which promote proficiency in second language writing. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 6,* 129–157.

Bruffee, K. (1984). Collaborative learning and "the conversation of mankind." *College English, 46,* 635-652.

Canada: Facts and Figures: Immigration Overview Permanent and Temporary Residents. (2010). Retrieved from http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/research-stats/facts 2010. pdf

Canagarajah, A. S. (2002). Multilingual writers and the academic community: Towards a critical relationship. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *1,* 29–44.

Canagarajah, A. S. (2006). Toward a writing pedagogy of shuttling between languages: Learning from multilingual writers. *College English*, 68*,* 589–604.

Carkin, S. (2005). English for academic purposes. In E. Hinkel (Ed.). *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 85-98). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Chalmers, D., & Volet, S. (1997). Common misconceptions about students from south-east Asia studying in Australia, *Higher Education Research & Development, 16,* 87-99.

Chamot, A.U. (2001). The role of learning strategies in second language acquisition. In M.P. Breen (Ed.), *Learner contributions to language learning: New directions in research* (pp. 25-43). Harlow, England: Longman.

Cheng, A. (2006). Analyzing and enacting academic criticism: The case of an L2 graduate learner of academic writing, *Journal of Second Language Writing, 15,* 279-306.

Cheng, L., & Fox, J. (2008). Towards a better understanding of academic acculturation: Second language students in Canadian universities *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, *65* (2), 307–333.

Cheng, L., Myles, J., & Curtis, A. (2004). Targeting language support for non-native English-speaking graduate students at a Canadian university. *TESL Canada 21*(2), 50-71.

Ching, L. C. (2002). Strategy and self-regulation instruction as contributors to improving students' cognitive model in an ESL program. *English for Specific Purposes, 21,* 261–289.

Cho, S. (2004). challenges of entering discourse communities through publishing in English: perspectives of nonnative-speaking doctoral students in the United States of America, *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, *3*(1), 47-72.

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

Cohen, A. D., & Brooks-Carson, A. (2001). Research on direct vs. translated writing

processes: Students' strategies and their results. *Modern Language Journal, 85,* 168-188.

Cohen, L., & Manion, L. (1994). *Research methods in education*. New York: Routhledge.

Correa, D. (2010). Developing academic literacy and voice: Challenges faced by A mature ESL student and her instructors source *PROFILE 12* (1), 79-94.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Crosby, C. (2009). Academic reading and writing difficulties and strategic knowledge of generation 1.5 learners. In M. Roberge, M. Siegal, & L. Harklau (Eds.), *Generation 1.5 in college composition* (pp. 105-119). New York, NY: Routledge.

Cumming, A. (2001). Learning to writer in a second language two decades of research. *International Journal of English Studies, 1,* 1-23.

Curro, G., & Tsui, C. Y. (2004). The conference paper as classroom genre for teaching the postgraduate Chinese learner. *International Journal of Business & Management Education: Special Issue: Outcomes of University Education,* 1-13.

Demirkan-Jones, N. (2006). Exploring the importance of 'identity' for the East Asian students in an EAP context: A case study. Retrieved August, 2008 from the website of University of Essex http://161.73.1.13/schools/education/eal/eal-2-2/vol2_2_ demirkan jones.pdf.

Di Camilla, F., & Anton, M. (2004). Private speech: a study of language for thought in the collaborative interaction of language learners. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 14*, 36-69.

De Guerrero, M., & Villamil, O. S. (2000). Activating the ZPD: Mutual scaffolding in L2 peer revision. *The Modern Language Journal, 84*(1), 51-68.

Donato, R. (1994). Collective scaffolding in second language learning. In J. P. Lantolf & G. Appel (Eds.), *Vygotskian approaches to second language research* (pp. 33-56). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Donato, R., & McCornick, D. (1994). A sociocultural perspective on language learning strategies: The role of mediation. *Modern Language Journal*, *78,* 453-464.

Dong, Y. (1999). The need to understand ESL students' native language writing. *Teaching English in the Two Year College*, *(March)*, 277-285*.*

Dong, Y. (2005). Taking a cultural- response to teach multicultural literature. *English Journal*, *94*(3). 55-60.

Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Dooey, P. (2010). Students' perceptions of an EAP pathway program. *Journal of English for Academic purposes, 9* (3), 184-197.

Edwards, V., & Ran, A. (2006). Meeting the needs of Chinese students in British Higher Education. Retrieved August, 2008 from http: ncll. Org. uk/10_about/50 _research / 10_ research_projects/MeetingTheNeeds.pdf

Fast, R. (2006) *Academic preparation program for university and college entrance- Rational and proposed program outline*. Unpublished manuscript, ELC, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada.

Ferenz, O. (2005). EFL writers' social networks: Impact on advanced academic literacy development. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *4*(4), 339–351.

Flowerdew, L. (2003). A combined corpus and systemic-functional analysis of the

problem-solution pattern in a student and professional corpus of technical writing. *TESOL Quarterly, 37,* 489-511.

Foster, P., & Ohta, A. S. (2005). Negotiation for meaning and peer assistance in second language classrooms. *Applied linguistics, 26* (3), 402-430.

Friedlander, A. (1990). Composing in English: Effect of the first language in writing English as a second Language, in B. Kroll (Ed), *Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Frodesen, J. (2009). The academic writing development of generation 1.5 latecomer. In M. Roberge, M. siegal, & L. Harklau (Eds.), *Generation 1.5 in college composition*, (pp. 91-104). New York, NY: Routledge.

Gall, M., Borg, W., & Gall. J. (1996). *Educational research: An introduction*. White Plains, New York: Longman Publishers.

Gao, X. (2006). Understanding changes in Chinese students' uses of learning strategies in China and Britain: A soico-cultural re-interpretation. *System*, *34,* 55-67.

Grabe, W.(2001). Reading and writing relations: Second language perspectives on research and practice. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Exploring the dynamics of second language writing* (pp. 242-262). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Han, Y. (2005). Teaching writing in Chinese as mother tongue: Mainland China. In M. S. K., Shum and D. L. Zhang (Eds.) *Teaching writing in Chinese speaking areas* (pp.47-64). New York: Springer.

Hansen, J. G. (2000). Interactional conflicts among audience, purpose, and content

knowledge in the acquisition of academic literacy in an EAP course. *Written Communication, 17*(1), 27-52.

Hinkel, E. (2002a). Grammar teaching in writing classes: Tenses and cohesion. In E. Hinkel & S. Fotos (Eds.), *New perspectives on grammar teaching in second language classrooms* (pp.181–198). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Hinkel, E. (2002b). Why English passive is difficult to teach (and learn). In E. Hinkel & S. Fotos (Eds.) *New perspectives on grammar teaching in second language classrooms* (pp. 233–260). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Hinkel, E. (2002c). *Second language writers' text: Linguistic and rhetorical features*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Hinkel, E. (2002). *Teaching academic ESL writing: Practical techniques in vocabulary and grammar*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Hinkel, E. (2003). Simplicity without elegance: Features of sentences in L1 and L2 academic texts. *TESOL Quarterly, 37*(2), 275-301.

Hinkel, E. (2004). Tense, aspect and the passive voice in L1 and L2 academic texts. *Language Teaching Research*, *8,* 5–29.

Hinkel, E. (2005). *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning*. Mahwah, N.J: L. Erlbaum Associates.

Hooley, T., & Horspool, P. (2006). Two sides of the same story? Staff and student perceptions of the Non-native speakers experience of the British academic system. *The East Asian Learner, 2,* 1-10.

Hu, J. (2000). *The academic writing of Chinese graduate students in sciences and*

engineering: processes and challenges. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, the University of British Columbia - dspace.library.ubc.ca

Hu, J. (2003). Thinking languages in L2 writing: Research findings and pedagogical implications. *TESL Canada Journal*, *21,* 39–63.

Hu, G. (2005) Using peer review with Chinese ESL student writers. *Language Teaching Research, 9,* 321–342.

Hu, G. (2005)**.** Developing an EAP Writing Course for Chinese ESL Students. *RELC***,** *38*(1), 67-86.

Hyland, K. (2002). *Teaching and research writing*. Harlow, England: Longman.

Hyland, K. (2003). *Second language writing*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Jarvis S. (2002). Short texts, best-fitting curves and new measures of lexical diversity *Language Testing*, *19* (1), pp. 57-84.

Jin, L., & Cortazzi, M. (2001). *Cultural Synergy: Using Chinese strengths in EAP*. Retrieved August, 2008, from http://www.baleap.org.uk/pimreports/2001/shu/jincor.htm.

Kavan, H., & Wilkinson, L. (2004). Dialogues with dragons: Assisting Chinese students' academic achievement. Retrieved October18, 2007, from Massey University Web site:www.massey.ac.nz/massey/.../hkavan_Dialoguing%20with%20dragons.pdf

Kibler, A. (2010). Writing through two languages: First language expertise in a language minority classroom Source. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *19* (3), 121-142.

Kilborn, J. (2008). Cultural diversity in the writing center: Defining ourselves and our challenges. In R. W. Barnett and J. S. Blumner (Eds.). *The longman guide to writing*

center theory and practice (pp.391-400). New York: Pearson Longman

Kirkpatrick, A. (1997). Traditional Chinese text structures and their influence on the writing in Chinese and English of contemporary Mainland Chinese students. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *6,* 223-244.

Krishnan, L. A., & Kathpalia, S. S. (2002). Literature reviews in student project reports. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, *45,* 187-197.

Lake, J. (2004). Using 'on the contrary': the conceptual problems for EAP students *ELT Journal*, *58,* 137-144.

Lantolf, J. P., & Aljaafreh, A. (1995). Second language learning in the zone of proximal development: A revolutionary experience. *International Journal of Educational Research, 23,* 619-632.

Lantolf, J. P. (2000a). Introducing Sociocultural theory. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 1-26). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Lantolf, J. P. (2000b). Second language learning as a mediated process. *Language Teaching, 30*(2), 79-98.

Lantolf, J. P. (2005). Sociocultural and second language learning research: An exegesis. In E. Hinkel, (Eds.) *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 335-352). Mahwah, N.J: L. Erlbaum Associates.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2001) Individual cognitive/affective learner contributions and differential success in second language acquisition. In M.P. Breen, (Ed.). *Learner contributions to language learning* (pp. 12–24). Harlow, England: Longman.

Lazarus, R. S., & Launier, R. (1978). Stress-related transactions between person and environment. *Perspective Interact Psychology, 3,* 287-327.

Lei, X. (2008). *Exploring a sociocultural approach to writing strategy research: Mediated actions in writing activities. Journal of Second Language Writing, 17, 217-236.*

Leibowitz, B. (2005). *Learning in an additional language in a multilingual society: A south African case study on university-level writing. TESOL Quarterly, 39, 661-681.*

Leki, I. (1992). *Understanding ESL writers*. New York: Boynton, Cook, Heinemann.

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

Leki, I. (1995b). Good writing: I know it when I see it. In D. Belch & G. Braine (Eds.), *Academic writing in a second language* (pp. 23-46). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Leki, I., & Carson, J. (1994). Students' perceptions of EAP writing instruction and writing needs across the disciplines. *TESOL Quarterly*, *28,* 81-101.

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

Leki, I. (2001). Hearing voice: L2 students' experiences in L2 writing course. In T. Silva & P. K. Matsuda (Eds.). *On second language writing* (pp. 17-27). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Leki, I. (2003). A challenge to L2 writing professionals: Is writing overrated? In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Exploring dynamics of L2 writing* (pp. 315-331). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Leki, I. **(**2003). Living through college literacy: Nursing in a second language. *Written communication*, *20* (1), 81-98.

Leki, I.(2007). *Undergraduates in a second Language: Challenges and complexities of academic literacy development*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Leki, I., Cumming, A., & Silva, T. (2008). *A synthesis of research on second language writing in English*. Routledge, NY: Taylor & Francis Group .

Li, L. Y. (2011). Supporting the thesis writing process of international research students through an ongoing writing group. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International.48*(2), 195-205.

Li, X. (1996). *"Good writing" in cross-cultural contexts*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Li, X., & Chang, S. (2001). A positive cultural perspective on rote learning in China: An analysis of views from 100 Chinese learners of English. Retrieved August, 2008. From http://www.   baleap.org.uk/pimreports/2001/shu/li.htm.

Li, Y. (2004). Learning to live and study in Canada: Stories of four EFL learners from China. *TESL Canada*, *22* (2), 25-43.

Liu, J.(2000). Understanding Asian students' oral participation models in American classrooms. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication 10,* 155–189.

Liu, J., & Hansen, J., G. (2002). *Peer response in second language writing classrooms*. Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press.

Manchón, R. M., Roca, J. & Murphy, L. (2000a). An approximation to the study of backtracking in L2 writing. *Learning and Instruction, 10,* 13-35.

Manchón, R. M., Roca, J. & Murphy, L. (2000b). The strategic value of backtracking in L2 writing. Paper given at the *AAAL 2000 Conference*, Vancouver, Canada.

Manchón, R. M. (2001). Trends in the conceptualizations of second language composing

strategies: A critical analysis. *International Journal of English Studies, 1,* 47-70.

Matsuda, P., K., & Silva, T. (2001). *On second language writing*. NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Matsuda, P. K. (2003). Second language writing in the twentieth century: A situated historical perspective. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Exploring the dynamics of second language writing* (pp. 15-34). New York: Cambridge University Press.

McCarthey, S. J., & Garcia, G. E. (2005). English language learner's writing practices and attitudes. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *15,* 24-48.

McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (Eds.) (2002). *Action research: Principles and practice* (2nd edition). London: New York, Routledge/Falmer.

Meng, Z. (2001). *Writing to transform-Chinese graduate students' stories in epistemological learning of English academic writing*. Unpublished master thesis. University of Toronto, Canada.

Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study application in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Miao, Y., Badger, R., & Zhen, Y. (2006). A comparative study of peer and teacher feedback in a Chinese EFL writing class, *Journal of Second Language Writing, 15,* 179-200.

Min, H. T. (2005). Training students to become successful peer reviewers. *System, 33,* 293-308.

Min, H. T. (2006). The effects of trained peer review on EFL students' revision types and writing quality. *Journal of Second Language Writng. 15,* 118-141.

Mitchell, R., & Myles, F. (2004). *Second language learning theories*. 2nd Ed. London: Arnold.

Mohan, B. A., & Lo, W. A. (1985). Academic writing and Chinese students: Transfer and developmental factors. *TESOL Quarterly, 19,* 515-534.

Myles, J., & Cheng, L. (2003). The social and cultural life of non-native English speaking international graduate students at a Canadian university. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 2,* 247–263.

Nassaji, H., & Swain, M. (2000). A Vygotskian perspective on corrective feedback: The effect of random versus negotiated help on the learning of English articles *Language Awareness, 9,* 34–51.

Nelson, G. L., & Carson, J. G. (2006). Cultural issues in peer response: Revising "culture". InK. Hyland and F. Hyland (Eds.) *Feedback in second language writing* (42-59). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ochieng, M. A. (2005). *Secondary voices, familiar territory: An exploratory study of ESL academic writing practices: A case study of Kenyan students in a North American university.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania.

Ohta, A. S. (1995). Applying sociocultural theory to an analysis of learner discourse: learner-learner collaborative interaction in the zone of proximal development. *Applied Linguistics, 6,* 93-121.

Ohta, A. S. (2000). Rethinking interaction in SLA: Developmentally appropriate assistance in the zone of proximal development and the acquisition of L2 grammar. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 51-78). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

O' Malley, J. M., & Chamot, A. U. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

O'Neill, P., Crow, A., & Burton, L., W. (2002). *A field of dreams: Independent writing programs and the future of composition studies*. Logan: Utah State University Press.

Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. New York: Newbury House.

Oxford, R,. & Nyikos, M. (1989). Variables Affecting Choice of Language Learning Strategies by University Students. *The Modern Language Journal, 73,* 291-300.

Patton, M. Q. (1980). *Qualitative evaluation methods*. Beverly Hills : Sage Publications.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. (3rd.). Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.

Parks, S. (2000). Professional writing and the role of incidental collaboration: Evidence from a medical setting. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 9,* 101-122.

Parks, S., & Raymond, P. (2004). Strategy use by Nonnative-English-Speaking students in an MBA program: Not business as usual!, *The Modern Language Journal, 88,* 374-389.

Pavlenko, A. (2004). L2 influence and L1 attention in adult bilingualism. In M. S. Schmid, B. K. Merel, & L. Weilemar (Eds.), *First Language Attention: Interdisciplinary*

perspectives on Methodological issues (pp 47-59). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Peacock, M., & Ho, B. (2003). Student language learning strategies across eight

disciplines. *Journal of Applied Linguistics, 13,* 179-200.

Pennycook, A. (2001). *Critical applied linguistics: A critical introduction*. Mahwah, NJ: Erbaum.

Powers, J. K. (2008). Rethinking writing center conferencing strategies for the ESL writer.

In R. W. Barnett and J. S. Blumner (Eds.), *The longman guide to writing center theory*

and practice (pp.368-375). New York: Pearson Longman.

Qi, D. S. (1998). An inquiry into language-switching in second language composing

processes. *The Canadian Modern Language Review, 54*, 413-435.

Ray, R. E. (1992). Composition from the teacher-research point of view. In G. Kirsch & A.

Sullivan (Eds.), *Methods and methodology in composition research* (pp. 172-189).

Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

Reid, J. (2001). Advanced EAP writing and curriculum design: What do we need to know?

In T. Silva & P. K. Matsuda (Eds.), *On second language writing* (pp. 143-160).

Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Roca, J., Murphy, L., & Manchon, R. M. (1999). The use of restructuring strategies in EFL

writing: A study of Spanish learners of English as a foreign language. *Journal of*

Second Language Writing. 8, 13-44.

Roca de Larios, J., & Murphy, L. (2001). Some steps toward a socio-cognitive

interpretation of second language composition processes. *International Journal of*

English Studies, 1, 25-45.

Roebuck, R. F. (2001). Teaching composition in the college level foreign language class: Insights and activities from sociocultural theory. *Foreign Language Annals, 34,* 206-213.

Schmidt, C. A. (2001). *The interaction of second language students and academic writing prompts*. Unpublished master thesis. University of York. Canada.

Sasaki, M. (2004). A multiple-data analysis of the 3.5-Year development of EFL student writers. *Language Learning 54* (3), 525–582.

Scordaras, M. (2009). Just not enough time: Accelerated composition courses and struggling ESL writers. *Teaching English in the Two-Year College, 36*(3), 270-279.

Seiffge-Krenke, I., & Shulman, S. (1990). Coping styles in adolescence: A cross-cultural study. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 21,* 351-377.

Sengupta, S. (2000). An investigation into the effects of revision strategy instruction on L2 secondary school learners. *System, 28,* 97-113.

Shen, F. (1989). The classroom and the wider culture: Identity as a key to learning English composition. *College Composition and Communication, 40*(4), 459-466.

Shi, L. (2009). Chinese-Western "Contact Zone": students' resistance and teachers' adaptation to local needs. *TESL Canada Journal, 27*(1), 47-53.

Silva, T. (1990). Second language composition instruction: Development, issues and directions. In B., Kroll (Ed.), *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom* (pp. 11-23). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Silva, T. (1992). L1 vs. L2 writing: ESL graduate students' perceptions. *TESL Canada Journal, 10,* 27-47.

Silva, T. (1997). On the ethical treatment of ESL writers. *TESOL Quarterly, 31,* 359-363.

Silva, T., Leki, I., & Carson, J. (1997). Broading the perspective of mainstream composition studies: Some thoughts from the disciplinary margins. *Written Communication, 14,* 398-428.

Silva, T., & Matsuda, P. K. (2001). *On Second Language Writing*. NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Silva, T., & Brice, C. (2004). Research in teaching writing. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 24,* 70-106.

Spack, P. (1997). The acquisition of academic literacy in a second language: A longitudinal case study. *Written Communication, 14,* 3-62.

Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp.443-466). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Steinman, L. (2007). Literary autobiographies in a university ESL class. *The Canadian Modern Language Review, 63,* 563-573.

Stringer, E. T. (2004). *Action research in education*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson/Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Storch, N. (2005). Collaborative writing: Product, process, and students' reflections. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *14*, 153-173.

Storch, N. (2009). The impact of studying in a second language (L2) medium university on the development of L2 writing. *Journal of Second Language writing*, *18* (2), 103-118.

Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (2008). "Oh, I get it now!" From production to comprehension in second language learning. In D. M. Brinton & O. Kagan (Eds.), *Heritage language education : a new field emerging*., New York: Routledge.

Swales, J. M. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Swales, J. M. (2001). EAP-related linguistic research: An intellectual history. In Flowerdew & M. Peacock (Eds.), *Research perspectives on English for academic purposes* (42-54). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Swales, J. M. (2004). *Research genres: Explorations and applications*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2004). *Academic writing for graduate students: essential tasks and skills.* 2nd Edition. Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press.

Tardy, C. M. (2005). "It's like a story": Rhetorical knowledge development in advanced academic literacy. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *4,* 325–338.

Tardy, C. M. (2006). Researching first and second language genre learning: A comparative review and a look ahead. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *15,* 79–101.

Terraschke, A., & Wahid, R. (2011). The impact of EAP study on the academic experiences of international postgraduate students in Australia. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 10* (3), 173-182*.*

Tsui, A., & Ng, M. (2000). Do secondary L2 writers benefit from peer comments. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 2*, 147-170.

Victori, M. (1999). An analysis of writing knowledge in EFL composing: a case study of two effective and two less effective writers, *System*, *27,* 537-555.

Villamil, O. S., & de Guerrero, M. (2006). Sociocultural theory: A framework for understanding the social-cognitive dimensions of peer feedback. In K. Hyland & F. Hyland (Eds.), *Feedback in Second Language writing: Contexts and issues.* (pp. 23-41). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1986). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1997). The historical meaning of the crisis in psychology: A methodological investigation. In R. W. Rieber & J. Wollock (Eds.), *The collected works of L. S. Vygotsky. Volume 3. Problems of the theory and history of psychology* (pp. 233-344). New York: Plenum.

Wang, W., & Wen, Q. (2002). L1 use in the L2 composing process: An exploratory study of 16 Chinese EFL writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *11,* 225-246.

Wenden, A. (1991). Learner strategies for learner autonomy. Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall.

Wink, J., & Putney, L., G. (2001). *A vision of Vygotsky*. Boston : Allyn and Bacon

Wong, A. T. (2005). Writers' mental representations of the intended audience and of the rhetorical purpose for writing and the strategies that they employed when they composed. *System*, *33,* 29–47.

Woodall, B. R. (2002). Language-switching: Using the first language while writing in a second language. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *11,* 7-28.

Yang, L., Bara, K., & Cumming, A. (2004). Activity systems for ESL writing improvement: Case studies of three Chinese and three Japanese adult learners of English. *Angles on the English-speaking world, 4,* 13-33.

Yang, N. D. (1999). The relationship between EFL learners' belief and learning strategy use. *System, 27,* 515-535.

Yang, L., & Shi, L. (2003). Exploring six MBA students' summary writing by introspection. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *2,* 165–192.

Yasuda, S. (2005). Different activities in the same task: An activity theory approach to ESL Students' writing process. *JALT Journal, 27,* 139-168.

Yin, R. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Zamel, V. (1996). Transcending boundaries: Complicating the scene of teaching language. *College ESL, 6*(2), 1-11.

Zhang, M. (2000). Cohesive features in exploratory writing of undergraduates in two Chinese universities, *RELC Journal 31,* 61–93.

Zhu, W. (2004). Faculty views on the importance of writing, the nature of academic writing, and teaching and responding to writing in the disciplines. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 13,* 29-48.

Zhu, W. (2005). Source articles as scaffolds in reading to write: The case of a Chinese student writing in English. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication, 15,* 29-52.

Appendix A: English Language Proficiency Requirements for Undergraduate Programs Admission in Some Canadian Universities

	TOEFL	IELTS	CAN-TEST
University of 1	**Internet-based Test:** total score 89-99 +19 - 21 on Writing; **Paper-based Test:** total score 573-597 + 4.5 on TWE	An overall band of 6.5, with no band below 6.0.	total score of 4.5, and no part below 4
University of 2	**Internet-based Test:** total score 90 +21 on Writing; **Paper-based Test:** total score 590 + 4.0 on TWE	An overall band of 6.5, with no band below 6.0.	N/A
University 3 of 3	**Internet-based Test:** total score 80 +18 on Writing; **Paper-based Test:** total score 550 + 3.5 on TWE	An overall band of 6.5, with no band below 6.0.	total score of 4.5, writing: 4.0
University of 4	**Internet-based Test:** total score 80 +19 on Writing; **Paper-based Test:** total score 550 + 4.0 on TWE	An overall band of 6.5, with no band below 6.0.	total score of 4.5, writing: 4.0

*Names of these universities are anonymous.

Appendix B: Chinese EAL Learners' Interview Protocol (I)

Chinese EAL Learners' Literacy Experiences in China

Time of interview: 2-3 hours
Data:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:

Questions:

1. Please tell me about yourself (city of origin, level of education attained in China, hobbies, etc.)

2. Which stage of your education in China did you like most? What did you benefit from this stage of education in your learning experience?

3. Which subject or subjects did you like the most when you studied at schools in China? Please tell me the reasons.

4. Please tell me about your experiences with Chinese writing instruction in Chinese schools from elementary, junior high school, high school, and college (where applicable)

5. Which style of Chinese writing you like most? And how would you evaluate your Chinese writing level in China?

6. What value do you place on your Chinese writing skills that you received in your education in China?

7. Do you consider yourself to be a successful writer in Chinese? What is your criteria in deciding if your Chinese writing is successful?

9. How did you successfully accomplish your writing tasks or assignments at schools in China?

10. Please tell me about your English learning experiences in China.

11. Please tell me about your English writing experiences in China.

12. Please tell me about your viewpoints of English writing.

13. Do you have any challenges when you acquired English writing in Chinese schools? How did you cope with these challenges in Chinese schools?

14. How do you compare English writing and Chinese writing in China?
15. Do you like Chinese or English writing practice in China? Please tell me about this.

16. What specific strategies or coping skills do you apply in your Chinese writing and English writing practice in Chinese schools?

Appendix B: Chinese EAL Learners' Interview Protocol (II)
Chinese EAL Learners' Academic Writing Experiences in Canada- Academic Essay Writing Practice

Time of interview: 1.5 hour
Data:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:

Questions:

1. Please tell me about your first impression of EAP learning in Canadian universities?

2. What is your understanding of academic writing?

3. How do you understand English academic writing?

4. What did you find most challenging when you began academic essays writing practices in English in the AEPUCE program?

5. What have you learned from your English academic essays writing instructions? How do you feel about the writing knowledge?

6. Here are some coping strategies lists of English academic writing. After you have reviewed them, please tell me what coping strategies you employ in your own academic essays writing to overcome your challenges

7. If there is no any coping strategy you have employed in your academic essays writing practice, do you have your own coping strategies to overcome your challenges? If any, what are they and how did you develop these coping strategies?

8. Tell me about one of your successful English academic essay writing experiences

9. What do you think your academic writing instructors' comments on your successful academic writing assignment?

10. What aspects of English academic essay writing do you need improving?

11. In terms of English academic essay writing, what do you expect to learn in the academic writing class?

Appendix B: Chinese EAL Learners' Interview Protocol (II)
Chinese EAL Learners' academic writing experiences in Canada- Academic Summary Writing Practice

Time of interview: 1 hour
Data:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:

Questions:

1. What is your understanding of English summary writing?

2. What English summary writing skills have you learned from your academic writing course? How do you feel about these writing skills?

3. What did you find the most challenging when you began English summary writing, especially the critical summary writing practices in English in AEPUCE program?

4. What specific coping strategies or skills do you apply in your English critical summary writing practices?

5. How did you develop such coping strategies during your academic writing practices?

6. What do you think of your academic writing instructors' comments on your successful academic writing assignment?

7. What do you attribute this academic writing success/failure to? Please, explain.

8. What aspects of English academic summary writing do you need improving?

9. In terms of English academic summary writing, what do you expect to learn in the academic writing class?

Appendix B: Chinese EAL Learners' Interview Protocol (II)
Chinese ESL Learners' Academic Writing Experiences in Canada- Academic Critique Writing Practice

Time of interview: 1 hour
Data:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:

Questions:

1. What is your understanding of academic critique writing?

2. What English critique writing skills have you learned from your academic writing course? How do you feel about these writing skills?

3. How confident do you feel about academic critique writing after instruction in the academic writing course?

4. What specific coping strategies or skills do you apply in your English critique writing practices?

5. How do you develop such coping strategies during your academic writing practices?

6. What do you think about your academic writing instructors' comments on your successful academic writing assignment?

7. What do you attribute this academic writing success/failure to? Please explain.

8. What do expect your academic writing instructor could have done differently to help you meet your learning needs in this area?

Appendix B: Chinese EAL Learners' Interview Protocol (II)
Chinese EAL Learners' Academic Writing Experiences in Canada- Academic Research Paper Writing Practice

Time of interview: 1.5 hour
Data:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:

Questions:

1. What is your understanding of the academic paper?

2. How do you understand your instructor's purpose in assigning this particular kind of assignment?

3. What is your goal in completing this assignment?

4. Which stage are you at in this special academic writing assignment in terms of planning, drafting, peer reviewing, revising, or proofreading and editing?

5. How confident do you feel about academic paper writing?

6. What coping strategies do you draw on from your previous academic writing practice?

7. What new coping strategies do you develop from the current research paper writing experiences? And how?

8. To what extent do these coping strategies influence you to accomplish your final academic writing task?

9. In terms of all the English academic writing tasks, in what ways does the academic writing course help you improve your academic writing skills?

10. What to do you think about your academic writing competency now? And what do you still expect to learn from the academic writing course?

Appendix C: L2 EAP Writing Instructor's Interview Protocol (III)

   L2 EAP Writing Instructor's Perceptions of Chinese EAL Students' Academic
   Writing Practice in AEPUCE Program

Time of interview: 1.5 hour

Data:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Questions:

1. Since the majority of your students in your academic writing class are Chinese ESL
   students, what is your understanding of this group's students' writing?

2. What challenges do you think most Chinese ESL students have in dealing with the
   various academic writing tasks?

3. How do Chinese students receive the instructions they need to do the different
   assignments?

4. What is your goal in making these academic writing assignments?

5. What strategies of academic writing do you expect your students will acquire in your
   class?

6. What is your understanding of coping strategies of academic writing practice?

7. What do you look for in evaluating ESL students' academic writing?

8. Please describe one Chinese student's academic writing products you remember that
   was successful.

9. Do you know how Chinese students use some types of strategies to cope with the
   academic writing practices? If so, what coping strategies do you perceived from their
   academic writing practice?

10. After a term of learning of academic writing skills, what aspects of academic writing
    do you think that Chinese ESL students still need to improve in their future study of
    the university?

Appendix D:

Observation Protocol (I)

Content-specific vocabulary developing & well-structured, cohesive paragraphs writing skills enhancing weeks		
Descriptive Notes		Reflective Notes
EAP writing classroom activities	Research participant's reactions	
		Sketch of classroom

Observation Protocol (II)

Academic Essays Writing weeks		
Descriptive Notes		Reflective Notes
EAP writing classroom activities	Research participant's reactions	
		Sketch of classroom

Observation Protocol (III)

Summaries and Critiques of Authentic Academic Article Writing weeks		
Descriptive Notes		**Reflective Notes**
EAP writing classroom activities	Research participant's reactions	
		Sketch of classroom

Observation Protocol (IV)

Academic Research Paper Writing weeks		
Descriptive Notes		**Reflective Notes**
EAP writing classroom activities	Research participant's reactions	
		Sketch of classroom

Appendix E: Research Participants Recruitment & Informed Consents

Appendix E- I: Short Presentation to Chinese EAL Students in an EAP Writing Class

My name is Lihui Guo and I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am conducting a research project for my Master's degree. In this study, I will invite Chinese English learners to share their learning experiences, in particular, how they deal with the challenges of academic writing practices in the AEPUCE program. So, I need three Chinese students to volunteer to participate in my research.

If you participate in my research, you will get a chance to reflect on your English academic writing practices and identify your own strengths and challenges. Your participation will involve 5-6 interviews lasting 30-60 minutes each and sharing some writing samples of your choice to help illustrate the strategies you use when you complete academic writing tasks. Your participation will be confidential; in other words, no one else will know you are participating in this study and your real name won't be used in the research. My intention in doing this study is to help program developers and teachers respond as effectively as possible to learners' needs.

I will offer you refreshments during the interviews, and a $10 gift card will be given as a token of my appreciation when my study is complete. If you voluntary agree to participate, I will ask you to sign the letter of consent that explains the intended research in more detail. So, if you have any questions or are interested in participating please think about it and let me know. You can contact me via e-mail at lihuig777@yahoo.com.cn or call me at 204-269-3643. I will be in the student lounge 20 minutes after I finish this presentation, so if you have any questions please feel free to speak to me in person.

Thanks for your attention!

Appendix E- II: Letter of Consent to Chinese EAL Learners

Research Project Title: **Chinese ESL Learners' Perceptions of Academic Writing Practices in a Canadian University**

Researcher: Lihui Guo
Sponsor: N/A

Dear Participant,

My name is Lihui Guo and I am M.Ed student from the Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. This letter describes my thesis research project that I am conducting, and describes how Chinese English as Second Language (ESL) learners might participate in the study if you voluntarily choose. It includes the following aspects: purpose of the research, participants' involvement procedures, recording devices and transcription, confidentiality of information, and feedback about the study.

Purpose of the research: This study will investigate Chinese ESL students' perceptions of coping strategies of academic writing practices in pre-university English for Academic Purposes (EAP) program in a Canadian university. Therefore, from Chinese ESL learners' perspectives, this proposed research aims to

a. identify the role of coping strategies in Chinese ESL learners academic writing practices;

b. document the coping strategies of academic writing developed from Chinese learners' pre-university EAP context;

c. explore the influence of the perceived coping strategies during Chinese learners' pre-university academic writing practices;

d. analyze and document Chinese ESL learners' learning needs in a pre-university context in terms of perceived coping strategies.

Participants' involvement procedures: I am requesting your voluntary participation in this study. In this thesis research project, if you participate in this study, I will interview you five-six times, and these interviews will focus on your academic writing learning experiences both in China and in Canada, and your perceptions of how you skillfully deal with your academic writing challenges when you attempt to meet the course demands. Each interview session is about 60 minutes, but not more than 90 minutes. The time and place of the individual interview will be arranged at your convenience. In addition, you will be given the choice of having interviews in Chinese or English. Also, Chinese will be used to clarify any parts of the study as needed. I will conduct direct classroom observation and take field notes, and some of your EAP writing samples will be reviewed and analyzed with your interview and classroom observation data. Participants in the study will be currently enrolled in pre-university EAP program. During data analysis process, participants will be invited to do member checking. In addition to your participation, I will interview one EAP writing instructor to gain their ideas about how

Chinese EAP writers can be best supported within the framework of the program.

Recording devices and transcriptions: I will tape record each individual interview. The recording of the individual interview will be transcribed for later analysis. Also, I will tape record during my classroom observation, and take the field notes on-site.

Confidentiality of information: All data generated during this study will remain confidential and you will be asked to choose a pseudonym. And they will be on all transcripts, field notes, or written reports and summaries of the study. Any information will also be disguised that would uniquely identify the participants, if it occurs in any description of the participants. The researcher is the only person to access to the data from the interviews, classroom observations, and individual writing samples. All data will be kept in a restricted-access computer (with password) at home, and the research related files stored in the computer will be locked by the passwords. Any source (audiotape, field notes, individual writing samples, etc.) of data will be destroyed once the study is complete.

No one beyond the individuals directly involved in the data collection and analysis will be told of your involvement in the study. To help protect your anonymity, you will be asked to read and revise all written materials generated by the project that contain information from your interview, observation and writing sample analysis. This process will allow you the opportunity to edit out any information that you feel is too sensitive or that you would serve to identify you.

Feedback about the Study: After completion of the study, if you wish, you will be provided with a summary of the research findings at the conclusion of the project, via e-mail or in hard copy as you prefer. Therefore, please include your email address or your mailing address at the bottom of this letter.

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

You signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participant as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

If you decide to participant in this study, after you review the above-mentioned aspects relate to this study, and understand everything it mentioned, please contact me directly via e-mail at lihuig777@yahoo.com.cn. You will be provided with refreshments during the interviews and presented with a gift card upon the completion of your involvement with the project.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB). If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-mentioned persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or email Margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature _____ Date
Researcher's Signature _____ Date

I prefer to receive a summary of the findings via e-mail: _____
Address
_____

I prefer to receive a summary of the findings in hard copy:
Address
_____

Appendix E-III: Letter of Consent to L2 EAP writing instructor

Research Project Title: **Chinese EAL Learners' Perceptions of Academic Writing Practices in a Canadian University**

Researcher: Lihui Guo

Sponsor: N/A

Dear EAP writing instructor,

My name is Lihui Guo and I am M.ED student from the Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. This letter describes my thesis research project that I am conducting, and describes how EAP writing instructor might participate in the study if you voluntarily choose. It includes the following aspects: purpose of the research, participants' involvement procedures, recording devices and transcription, confidentiality of information, and feedback about the study.

Purpose of the research: This study will investigate Chinese ESL students' perceptions of coping strategies developed from their academic writing practices in pre-university English for Academic Purposes (EAP) program in a Canadian university. Therefore, from Chinese ESL learners' perspectives, this proposed research aims to

a. identify the role of coping strategies in Chinese learners' academic writing practices;
b. document the coping strategies of academic writing developed from Chinese learners' pre-university EAP context;
c. explore the influence of the perceived coping strategies on Chinese learners' pre-university academic writing practices;
d. analyze and document Chinese ESL learners' learning needs in a pre-university context in terms of perceived coping strategies.

Participants' involvement procedures: Aiming to gain EAP writing instructors' ideas about how Chinese EAP learners can be best supported within the framework of the program. I am requesting your voluntary participation in this study. In this thesis research project, if you participate in this study, I will interview you for 60 minutes, and this one time interview will focus on your perceptions of Chinese ESL learners' academic writing practices in your EAP program. The time and place of the interview will be arranged at your convenience. During data analysis process, you will be invited to do member checking.

Recording devices and transcriptions: I will tape record this individual interview. The recording of the individual interview will be transcribed for later analysis.

Confidentiality of information: This study will remain confidential and you will be asked

to choose a pseudonym. And it will be on all transcripts. Any information will also be disguised that would uniquely identify the participant, if it occurs in any description of the participant. The researcher is the only person to access to the data from the interviews, classroom observations, and individual writing samples. All data will be kept in a restricted-access computer (with password) at home, and the research related files stored in the computer will be locked by the passwords. Any source (audiotape, field notes, individual writing samples, etc.) of data will be destroyed once the study is complete.

No one beyond the individuals directly involved in the data collection and analysis will be told of your involvement in the study. To help protect your anonymity, you will be asked to read and revise all written materials generated by the project that contain information from your interview, observation and writing sample analysis. This process will allow you the opportunity to edit out any information that you feel is too sensitive or that you would serve to identify you.

Feedback about the Study: After completion of the study, if you wish, you will be provided with a summary of the research findings at the conclusion of the project, via e-mail or in hard copy as you prefer. Therefore, please include your email address or your mailing address at the bottom of this letter.

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

You signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participant as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

If you decide to participant in this study, after you review the above-mention aspects relate to this study, and understand everything it mentioned, please contact me directly via e-mail at <u>lihuig777@yahoo.com.cn</u>. You will be provided with refreshments during the interview and presented with a gift upon the completion of your involvement with the project.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board

(ENREB). If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-mentioned persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or email Margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been give to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature _____ Date
Researcher's Signature _____ Date

I prefer to receive a summary of the findings via e-mail:_____
Address _____
I prefer to receive a summary of the findings in hard copy:
Address_____

Appendix F: Samples of Within-case Analyses on three Cases

Data analysis procedure:
1. Data coding (interview data, fieldnotes, participants EAP writing samples)
2. Summarizing emerging insights
3. Classifying emerging insights
4. Completing within case data matrix

Table 6-8: Data Matrix of Within-case Analyses samples demonstrate how data analysis conducted

Case 1 (C1): Qing
Interview data:

I couldn't write what I really wanted to write, even if I had my own points in writing…. As a good Chinese writer, I used to have quick ideas for a topic. In English, the same, but, the vocabularies and expressions I used always constrained my strong points and weakened my argument on the assigned topic. (I: 5/5/08, p.1)

Emerging insights: small English vocabulary size and limited English expressions.

I always have the grammatical mistakes in my academic writing, I do check carefully when I finished each writing task, but I still couldn't find more mistakes than my teacher, and sometimes, I really don't know why they're wrong. And I have some problems in APA writing style, I lost some points in this style. Because of these prescribed rules of EAP writing, my writing ability in English has been restrained. (I: 5/5/08, p.1)

Emerging insights: it's not easy for Qing to identifying those grammatical errors in her EAP writing tasks.

Case 1 (C1): Qing

Writing samples:

Compare and Contrast Education in Canada with Education in Your Country
(It's better not to start your paragraph with "because")Because the social system and state institutions are different, china (C) and Canada have their own special education system. For instance, one of the remarkable different (Gr.) is (Pr.) the (Gr.) compulsory education. Particularly, in china, (C) the governments advocate (Gr.) compulsory education, and actually there are(Gr.) a part of financial expend(Gr.) which support (Gr.) education. However, a mount of student (Gr.) who live in(Gr.) countryside discontinue their studying, because the tuition can not be afford(Gr.). … (W: 5/15/08, p.1)… what's is the reason? Because the policy which made by government does not really work, and still there are some unreasonable rules which… (This is not a proper sentence.)

Emerging insights: grammatical mistakes and spelling mistakes.

Observation fieldnotes:

During the break, Qing went to her instructor with this assignment, and she was taking some notes when the instructor explained her marks and suggested her how to improve this writing.(O: 5/14/08, p.2)

Emerging insights: seeking EAP writing instructor's help to improve academic writing.

Table 6.

Data Matrix of Within-case Analyses (Qing's)

Research question	Data Sources				Comments
	Interviews	Classroom observations	Writing samples	Other documents	
Q1 & Q2	C1-I: p2.1; p.3.1;	C1-O: p2.1; p2.2; p3.3;	C1-W: EAP paragraph 2,	Program document: p.7	1. It's not so easy for Qing to identifying those grammatical errors in her EAP writing tasks. (C1-I:Challenges) 2.Grammatical mistakes and spelling mistakes (C1-W: Challenges) 3.seeking EAP writing instructor's help to improve academic writing (C1-O: sociocultural strategies)

Case 2 (C2): Ming
Interview data:

> but <u>to our writing teacher, it's not very directly and clear. Maybe, I guess the words I used were not really what I mean? Or, it didn't give the clear referral object.</u> In meaning, sometimes, what I want to express is from the general viewpoints of human worldview or common sense, but <u>our teacher thought what I expressed was too abstract to understand, and it should be concrete</u>. (I: 5/19/08, p.2)

Emerging insights: Chinese way of thinking made Ming to be unclear in his English expression.

Writing samples

As people <u>are borned</u>, they are sorted by gender. From a very old time, men and women had performed different works. Gender roles <u>has</u>(Gr.) made influence <u>to</u> (*on*) that. <u>Basic</u> (*Basing*) on traditional gender role(*s*) (Gr.), some people think women should be a mother (*,*) <u>stay</u> (Gr.) (*staying*) at home**,** and <u>take</u> (Gr.) (*taking*) care of the family, and men should stay in the (*stronger*) position in occupational domain. However, <u>as</u> (*with*) the development of society, more and more people think we shouldn't follow the traditional gender role(*s*) (Gr.) any more. But in my view, I think traditional gender role(*s*) (Gr.) is very important for people to follow. I want to support my opinion in three aspects: 1. the basic difference. 2. the equality of bodies. 3. the mental differences.**"** (*These points are not clear.*) (W:5/18/08, p.1)

Emerging insights: grammatical errors, limited English vocabularies and expressions, and Chinese thinking pattern but following the English writing format

Table 7. Data Matrix of Within-case Analyses (Ming's)

Research question	Data Sources				Comments
	Interviews	Classroom observations	Writing samples	Other documents	
Q1	C2-I: p. 4.1;		C2-W: essay 2;	Program document: p.7	1. Chinese way of thinking made Ming to be unclear in his English expression. (C2-I: Challenges) 2. grammatical errors, limited English vocabularies and expressions, and Chinese thinking pattern but following the English writing format (C2-W:Challenges)

Case 3 (C3): Lei

Interview data:

I found it was so hard to provide strong arguments to support my points raised in the essay writing. I don't know how to use the complex sentence structures, I don't know how to use different English words to argue for or against the issue, and I don't know how to use different sentence structures to make my writing more expressive. (I: 5/15/08, p.1)
Emerging insights: small English vocabulary and expression size, and grammatical knowledge in sentence structures prevent Lei write more expressive EAP product.

I think teacher's evaluation could help me to avoid making same mistakes in the next writing assignment. Mostly, I would use the last time evaluation as the extra demands for next writing assignment. Say, this time, I got lower marks in the style and mechanics, I would pay more attention to the sentence structures, grammatical mistakes, and dictions and improve them this time. (I:7/20/08, p.1)

Emerging insights: Using mistakes in previous assignments as the self-extra demands for the current assignment

Writing samples:

The computers become the heroes who release people (from…) in the world. Since the computers were invented, many people believe that they have already been the top players in solving (Gr.)problems such as calculate(Gr.) huge numbers today. Nevertheless, lots of (a number of) social groups begin to be worried about the increased dependent (Gr.) on computers. … (W:5/12/08.p.1)

Emerging insights: grammatical errors, inaccuracy English expressions

Table 8. Data Matrix of Within-case Analyses (Lei's)

Research question	Data Sources				Comments
	Interviews	Classroom observations	Writing samples	Other documents	
Q1 & Q2	C3-I: p.2.1 p.10.2		C3-W: EAP paragraph:3	Program document: p.7	1. Small English vocabulary and expression size, and grammatical knowledge in sentence structures prevent Lei write more expressive EAP product. (C3-I: Challenges) 2. Using mistakes in previous assignments as the self-extra demands for the current assignment (C3-I:Self-improvement strategies) 3. grammatical errors, inaccuracy English expressions (C3-W:Challenges)

Appendix G: Sample of the Cross-case Analysis

Table 9. Data Matrix of Cross-case analysis sample

Emerging insights	Data placement	Linking to theoretical explanation	Linking to Literature	Linking to Research questions	Reflections
1. Kept on asking teachers or someone else when met learning difficulties.- (socio-cultural strategies) 2. Many times revision will make the writing better. (socio-cultural strategies & self-improvement strategies) 3. Memorizing English vocabularies, expressions, sentence structures, and grammatical rules. (Using part or current learning experiences) 4. Trying to imitate English expressions and article organizations and adjust them according to the research questions in RP. (Using part or current learning experiences)	1.Cl-I: p. 2.1; p.4.1; p. 5.1; P.12.1; C1-O: p1.II; p.5.II; p.7.I; C1-W: critique, RP, essay; 2.C1-I: p.2.2; p.3.2; p.5.2; C1-O: p.10.II; C1-W: critique, RP; 3.C1-I: p3.3; C1-W: critique, RP; 4. C1-I: p.3.4; P. 10. 4; P.13.4; C1-O:p.30.II; P35.II; 4. C1-W:RP;	1."Socio-cultural theory maintains that social interactions and cultural institutions, such as schools, classrooms, etc. have important roles to play in an individual's cognitive growth and development." (Donato and MacCormick, 1994, p. 453) 1.the learner's ability to develop, reflect upon, and refine their own language learning strategies (Donato and Maccormick, 1994); 1. in Wink and Putney (2001), Vygotsky's ZPD; 1. Ohta (2000); 2. "socio-cultural theory maintains that emergence of strategies is a process directly connected to the practices of cultural groups through which novices develop into competent members of these communities. (Donato and Maccormick, 1994, p. 453). 3. socio-cultural theory of learning "what we have experienced in the past will influence how we participate in the present." (Wink & Putney, 2001, p. 65)	1.Gao (2006); Angelova and Riazantseva (1999); Yang, Bara, and Cumming (2004); 2. Yang, Bara, and Cumming (2004); 3. Shen, 1989; Li, 1996; Gao, 2003; Yu (2007); 4. Shen, 1989; Li, 1996; Gao, 2003; Yu (2007);	1---Q2; coping strategies used; Q3: Extent of using coping strategies. 2---Q2; coping strategies used; 3---Q2; coping strategies used; 4.---Q2; coping strategies used;	3. These are general Chinese students coping strategies during their English writing in China. And according to Shi (2001) and Yu (2007), these methods or strategies turn out to be very useful for Chinese students writing in English in China. 4. Imitation is one of important methods to learn first and second language, SCT theory illustrate this point very clearly.