AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF FIRST LANGUAGE IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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An Analysis of the Role of First Language in Second Language Acquisition

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ABSTRACT

An Analysis of the Role of First Language in Second Language Acquisition

by

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The impact of first language (L1) on nine prominent second language acquisition (SLA) theories has garnered broad attention in recent years. One topic of interest is to what extent are language identity and culture of English second language (ESL) college learners intertwined.

Extensive research has been directed toward understanding the influence of writing instruction on written discourse whereas far less attention, and hence the focus of this research, has been allotted to how L1 affects metadiscourse, miscues, and hedging in writing in a second language. English writing assignments of 141 culturally- and linguistically-diverse ESL college students enrolled in a “Linguistics Department” composition course at San Diego State University (SDSU) from 2010-12 were analyzed. This effort was augmented by conducting written interviews with six Linguistics professors who have taught ESL composition classes.

Findings provided insights into (1) the role of L1 in acquiring written literacy skills in L2 English as perceived through nine SLA theories; (2) the writing capabilities expected of ESL college students from the perspective of the six linguistic professors; (3) the metadiscourse variations occurring within steps of two genre types (Summary of a Commentary, Statement of Purpose); (4) the significant differences among language groups in the use of article and subject-verb agreement miscues; (5) the connection between linguistic discourse and ethnic culture employed by ESL students in written assignments through the lens of hedging (e.g. modal
auxiliaries, non-factive reporting and tentative linking verbs), a valued trait in self-expression for ESL students. Dispersion plots for sixty L1 Spanish students revealed usage patterns.

The study revealed challenges faced by Linguistics professors due to the diversity of the academic goals, interests, and writing purposes among ESL college students. The findings suggested various pedagogical implications comprising the Linguistic professors’ advocacy of their students by using L1 as a bridge for transferring schema to L2, providing specific genre knowledge and reinforcing the writer and audience connection.

This study contributes to an understanding of SLA and the incremental process in mastering L2 writing skills as well as the mosaic of the influences of L1 and culture in developing biliteracy.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The number of graduate students coming from abroad to study in U.S. universities has increased in recent years and so in turn has the demand for ESL (English Second Language) learners’ courses designed to help ESL college students to meet the writing demands of graduate programs.

1.1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Thus, considering the increasing number of ESL students in our CSU (California State University) system it is mandatory to understand the challenges the ESL students must focus on the academic genre (Bhatia, 2004; Hyland, 2009; Lee, 2005; Muraanen, 1993).

At the university level, the ESL student must attain a proficient level of academic English competency in order to graduate from the California State University (CSU) system and thus professors should consider not only the needs of ESL students but also their academic discipline of study. It is documented that most ESL students are not employing the same academic genre among disciplines in their academic writing (Bhatia, 1993; Martin, 2003; Moreno, 1997; Swales, 2004).

Furthermore, the current research in applied linguistic suggest that nine linguistic theories attribute different roles to the first language (L1)in their explanation of second language acquisition (SLA) (Bardovi-Harlig, 1992; Chomsky 1962, 1981; DeKeyser, 1997; Ellis, 2003, 2006; Gass & Mackey, 2000; Krashen, 1981; Isabelli, 2008; Pienemann, 2007; White, 2007; White & Juffs, 1998).

There are at least nine linguistic theories that are considered current linguistic theories that explain the different ways second language acquisition (SLA) is developed.
For the purpose of this research effort all of these theories were discussed since the goal of the current study was to compare the findings with other evidence of the effects of the L1 on SLA and thereby inform the readers from more than one perspective.

Although significant research has been dedicated to the study of SLA, less attention has been directed to the issue of how SLA theories account for L1 induced miscues. Even though considerable research has been devoted to writing instruction, less emphasis has been directed toward the writing demands that ESL college students face in their different disciplinary discourse communities and the role of culture in academic discourse. Thus, it was essential to gain a deeper insight concerning what metadiscourse writing was required for ESL college students based on their field of specialization, as well as understanding how ESL writing assignment miscues were related to the first language (L1) of the students.

1.2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study seeks to analyze students’ writing with regard to miscues in L2 English based on L1 and on current nine linguistic theories. Generally, undergraduates’ students simply produce classroom genres to meet course assignments. However, since graduate education courses are more specialized than undergraduate the production of academic writing is a necessity and expectation. Thus, for the purpose of the current study a genre analysis (moves and steps) was employed based on an advanced writing class that is required to meet graduation requirements.

Norton (1995) asserted that the language, identity and culture of the ESL college students are intertwined. Thus, the present study provides some insight with regard to the connection between linguistic discourse and culture employed by ESL students in a written text. In addition, interviews with professor who have taught the Advance Composition for
International Students (ACIS) class were conducted in order to understand what writing demands are required for an advanced writing class for ESL students.

1.3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The present study examines the role of the L1 in L2 acquisition in an advanced composition class. Based on the previous literature, a conceptual framework was developed for this study. The conceptual framework was developed based on the variables that are required in order to acquire writing literacy skills in L2.

Figure 1.1. Conceptual Framework of ESL Students Writing Through Integration of 9 SLA Theories
Figure 1.1 depicts the conceptual framework of the study. This conceptual framework indicates that the writing literacy skills of college students whose L1 is not English is a function of multiple variables: the linguistic course design (approach to academic writing discourse, syllabus, and materials), students’ academic writing (miscues sentence level and genre analysis text level) and the role of cultural context (formality and hedging). The conceptual framework was suitable because these variables were required in order to enhance the acquisition of L2 writing. The arrow lines in the conceptual framework shown in Figure 1.1 indicate the complex dynamics and relations among the different variables and were perceived as both an input and output.

Conceptual frameworks employed in academic writing studies support the conceptual framework on academic writing. It is more congruent than previous frameworks from a policy perspective because it incorporates the importance of L1 in developing SLA and in terms of pedagogical implications for ESL instructions.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions addressed in this study were:

1. What role does the first language (L1) play in the success of ESL international college students acquiring writing literacy skills in their L2 English that meet the institutional composition requirements of the California State University (CSU) system?

2. What are the writing characteristics that were expected of ESL international college students as they acquire L2 English as described by the ACIS professors?

3. What kinds of metadiscourse (genre moves/steps, metadiscourse) are employed by ESL international college students in their final ACIS writing assignments based on two different kinds of genre: summary of a commentary and statement of purpose?
4a. How do the miscues of ESL international college students’ English writing assignments relate to the students’ L1 (e.g. morphology) and are these miscues language specific? Furthermore, do SLA theories account for L1 induced miscues (e.g. article, verbs and subject-verb agreement)?

4b. Is there a correlation between verb (e.g. verb forms and verb tenses), article and subject verb agreement miscues among 141 ESL students?

4c. Is there a correlation between different types of errors (e.g. verb, article and subject verb agreement) and gender?

4d. Is there a significant difference between groups based on twenty different L1s with respect to the verb, article and subject verb agreement miscues?

5. How does hedging (e.g. modals, non-factive and tentative linking verbs) reflect culture in L2 academic writing?

1.5. DEFINITION OF TERMS

This section focuses on a number of key terms that are employed extensively among scholars in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). Moreover these terms may have multiple meanings. For the purpose of clarity these terms were defined here as used through this study. These terms were separated in three categories: nine second language acquisition theories, genre analysis and culture.

Nine second language acquisition theories

English second language students in this research are defined as all students whose first language is not English. English language students may be part of the following groups:
immigrants, refugees, English dominant language students, and international students (ESL Intersegmental Project, 1996).

First language vs. second language thus for the purpose of this study the native language of the L2 student was considered to be the first language (L1). The L2 was the new second language (English) which was in the process of being acquired by L2 students.

Input vs output in this research the input was defined as everything that was heard or seen by the L2 students and everything that was produced (in written discourse) by L2 students was defined as output.

Input and comprehensible language hence according to Krashen in his input hypothesis the learners (students) advance in their knowledge of the L2 when they grasp language input that is to some extent more complex than what is employed in their existing stage. Krashen defined this stage of input "i+1", where "i" is the language input and "+1" is the next stage of language acquisition (Krashen, 1985). Thus, the L2 learner has to be exposed to comprehensible input in order to acquire the L2. As a result, the input increases the linguistic competence and was perceived as the main component in L2 acquisition (Krashen, 1981).

For the purpose of this research effort the linguistic input was defined as the entire language component (e.g. phonetic sounds, words, morpheme) to which the ESL language student was exposed through written and oral language register. The input was everything that was asserted in the L2 even if it was already acquired by the L2 student (e.g. employing past tense once the L2 student has acquired this grammatical form).
Language acquisition vs. language learning. For this research effort there was a stringent division between acquisition and learning. Acquisition was perceived as a subconscious progression whereas learning is deemed to be a conscious progression. This distinction is supported by Krashen in his acquisition –learning hypothesis which claimed that development in language ability was dependent only upon acquisition and never on learning (Krashen, 1982). Thus, acquisition entails meaningful interaction, in the desired language during which the second language (L2) learner is paying attention on meaning rather than the linguistic structure. In contrast, learning a second language is a cognizant process, similar with what one experiences in an academic environment.

Literacy was defined as “An individual’s ability to read, write, and speak in English and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one’s goals, and develop one’s knowledge and potential” (National Literacy Act, 1991, p.333). For the purpose of this research effort literacy was defined in the same manner.

The linguistic models describe processes or sets of processes or phenomena. “A model does not need to explain why. Whereas a theory can make prediction based on generalization this is not required of a model” (VanPatten & Williams, 2007, p.5). For this research the linguistic models identifies L2 inputs, outputs, and the processing steps required to transform the inputs into the output. The models consist of at least three, and sometimes four, distinct components in which data flows through the system (e.g. input, input processing, the learner’s internal grammar, output). Processing was the action of manipulating the input into the final stage output.
For this research linguistics theories were defined as a set of assertions and principles employed to explain a group of facts or phenomena encountered in L2 acquisition stages with emphasize on phenomena that have been repeatedly tested, are generally acknowledged and are employed to construct predictions about L2 phenomena. “Distinct from a theory, a hypothesis does not unify various phenomena; it is usually an idea about a single phenomenon” (VanPatten & Williams, 2007, p.5).

The Output hypothesis (output production) maintains that the one possibility for the L2 learner to acquire or learn the L2 is to be able to produce language that “makes sense” (Swain, 1993). This research advocates the previous assertion and output was defined as everything that was produced by the L2 learner in written form and can be understood by interlocutors.

Transfer (positive vs. negative transfer) For this study positive transfer was defined when the L1 and L2 language are conceptually related thus the L2 learners would have no difficulty understanding because they would be able to employ their own linguistic habits and understanding in a new context. Negative transfer was defined when the L1 and L2 languages are different and as a result the habits and conceptual understanding of the L1 interfere with the acquisition of a new set of linguistic rules in L2. This type of transfer in linguistic is known as interference (e.g. woman beautiful in Italian vs. beautiful woman English). Positive perspective of the L1 role in SLA in this study refers to all SLA theories which attribute a positive (vital) role to the L1 in their explanations of L2 acquisition. Theories which do not attribute significant importance to the role of L1 in L2 acquisition perceive L1 as a negative transfer thereby offering a negative perspective of the L1 role in SLA.
In this research discourse competence was defined as the required skills which have to be employed in the written language in a meaningful way. Thus, elements of coherence and cohesion have to be employed in order to organize the text within a holistic structure that was beyond the sentence level.

Discourse analysis ‘refers to the study of how sentences in spoken or written language form a larger unit at a level above the sentence for example in paragraphs, whole conversations or written text’ (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p.6).

Genre in general is defined as groups of text that share a communicative purpose and that are produce by a certain discourse community. In systemic functional linguistics (SFL) genre is concerned with the relationship between language and its functions in social settings. When texts share the same purpose they often share the same structure and thus belong to the same genre (Halliday, 1985). For the purpose of this research genre was defined in exactly the same way. Texts were seen as being connected to particular contexts at two levels: register (academic vs. colloquial) and genre. This linguistic analysis focused on both global text structure and sentence level register features.

“Genre analysis refers to the study of the structural and linguist regularities of particular genre or text types and the role they play within a discourse community” (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p.6). For the purpose of this research effort this definition was employed to define genre analysis.
Moves and steps in genre analysis. Swales’ (1990, p.24) defines “A move is a discoursal or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse”. According to Samraj (2008) steps in genre analysis capture the variety present in the moves and they can be optional or obligatory. For the purpose of this study these definitions were employed.

Hedging

For the purpose of this study culture was defined through hedging perceived as a linguistic marker based on the features of academic writing (e.g. modal verbs, non-factive and tentative linking verbs).

Hedging is a basic feature in academic discourse (Kachru, 1985). Through the use of hedging “the writer leaves room for the readers to judge the truth value of the assertion” (Nasiri, 2012, p 5). For the purpose of this study the Hyland (1994, 1998) and Varttala (2001) framework was employed through language used in hedging (e.g. modal verbs will, would, may, might etc.).
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will review previous studies with regard to nine theories in second language acquisition, genre analysis a hedging in culture.

2.1. NINE THEORIES IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Anecdotal aphorism as well as personal discussions with students and teachers often reinforces the popular belief that the first language (L1) plays a major role in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). American students often assert that their English makes learning an Asian language assiduous while claiming that fluency in a language such as Spanish, Italian and French would make learning a second romance language much easier. The extent to which certain theories lend credence to these observed phenomena varies.

Although it seems intuitive to assume that L1 plays a prominent role in SLA, an examination of the major theories in the fields of linguistic and education reveals different perspectives on the importance of L1 in learning a second language. While there are indeed several theories that recognize the L1 as an important influence, other theories lend varying grades of significance to the effects of the L1 background. In some cases the role of L1 may be deemphasized (lending more gravity to universal effects of language processing) or ignored completely in terms of explaining the major constructs of the SLA theory.
2.1.1. THE NATURE OF THEORIES

At its most fundamental level a theory is a set of statements about natural phenomena that explains why such phenomena occur the way they do. According to Kuhn (1996), scientific theories are employed for the job of “conundrum solving” which means that scientists look at visible phenomena as a puzzle, a conundrum or a problem to be solved. To be concise, theories have to account for or explain observed phenomena. In addition, a theory allows a researcher to make predictions about what would transpire under specific explicit conditions.

Consider an example from psychology and linguistics. It is an empirical phenomenon that some people read and comprehend written text faster and better than others. As researchers began to investigate this issue, a theory of individual differences in working memory evolved. According to this theory it is hypothesized that people vary in their ability to hold information in working memory. More specifically, this theory suggested that not only do people vary in their working memory capacity but also some people have greater capacities for processing information when compared with others. However memory capacity is limited in some forms for everyone. Memory theory is used to account for individual differences in reading comprehension ability. In addition memory theory also accounts for a wide range of seemingly unrelated phenomena, such as why some people remember certain sequences of numbers or have visual memories and others do not. Also, memory theory can account for why people vary on what part of utterances they remember best and why certain stimuli are ignored and others are attended to.

A theory of working memory, therefore, allows psychologists and linguists to unify a variety of behaviors and outcomes that on the surface do not necessarily appear to be related. In order to ascertain this idea consider an example from syntax. In one theory of syntax (sentence
structure) a grammar rule can permit movement of elements in the sentence. This is how we attain two sentences that fundamentally mean the same thing as in

(1) Rob said what?

(2) What did Rob say?

In this particular theory of syntax the *what* is said to have moved from its position as an object of the verb *said* to occupy a place in a different part of the sentence. At the same time syntax theory also implies that when something moves it leaves a hidden trace which, in this case, is defined as *ti*. As a result, the syntactician would write sentence (2) like sentence (3).

(3) What *ti* did Rob say *ti*?

In (3) the *t* stands for the empty spot that the *what* left and the *i* simply shows that the *what* and the *t* are “co-indexed”. Thus, if there happens to be more than one thing that moves, you can tell which trace it left behind. In addition the theory also says that the *ti*, although hidden, are real and occupy the spot left behind. As a result nothing can move into that spot and no contractions can occur across it. Having this empirical data the syntactician can make numerous predictions about grammatical and ungrammatical sentences in English.

There are efforts to use syntax theory of SLA to explain why some people acquire the L2 more quickly and more accurately than others. To summarize, a theory in SLA should account for and explain observed phenomena and be used to generate hypotheses that can be tested empirically. SLA theories explain the importance of different parameters (such as language and sentence structure) and how a second language is acquired. As a result theories in SLA can explain and predict constraints on different linguistic features in L2.
2.1.2. EARLY THEORIES IN SLA

Early theories in SLA prior to the 1990s were influenced by the use of behaviorism - a theory borrowed from psychology to account for both first and second language acquisition and the use of a structural description of language. Behaviorism is a theory of animal and human behavior and is explained solely with reference to external factors in the environment. Subsequently, as empirical research increased on both first and second language acquisition the data demonstrated various problems with the behaviorist report of language learning in the field of SLA. Later a post behaviorist era began in which multiple theories appeared to account for SLA. One of the dominant theories at that time which influenced the post-behaviorist era was the Monitor Theory of Krashen (1981, 1982, 1985).

Before the field of SLA theory and research was established, the notion of how people acquired language was closely tied to pedagogical concerns. An outgrowth of the U.S. “Army Method”, the Audio-Lingual Method emerged in the 1950s and borrowed intensively from behavioral psychology and from structural linguistics. Even though the theories in psychology and linguistics developed separately they become closely associated and impacted each other during the 1950’s.

One germane example is Pavlov’s experiments with dogs wherein the sound of a bell (the stimulus) caused dogs to anticipate a meal and they would begin salivating (the response). What was implied was that when the dog heard the sound yet no food appeared, they salivated anyway because of the association of the sound with food which is defined as a classical condition. In addition there was a significance role for the frequency of the stimulus. Each time the response was made to the stimulus the association between stimulus and response was
strengthen. Similarly, in language learning, after repeated experiments a learner might come to associate the pronoun *nous* with the verb form *faisons* even after drilling has ceased.

According to the behaviorist theory, all learning, including language learning, is perceived as the acquisition of the new behavior in which the environment is the most important factor in learning. Learning consists of developing responses to environmental stimuli. If the response receives positive reinforcement it will become habit. If the response receives punishment it will be abandoned. For example in this theory children acquire a language by imitating sounds and utterances that they hear in the environment. If the utterance emanates a positive response, the child will reiterate that utterance again at a later time whereas if there is a negative response, reiteration of that utterance is less plausible. As a result, according to this perspective language learning is not different from any other type of learning: imitation of models in the input and the stipulation of appropriate feedback.

Similarly, SLA occurs when the second language (L2) learner imitates correct models repeatedly. For example, a L2 learner of English can acquire plural markings on nouns by analogy to previous forms: *cat* vs. *cats*. Positive reinforcement of accurate imitations and corrections of inaccurate imitation facilitate the learning process. It is important to note that the salient characteristic of SLA that differentiates it from child language acquisition is that L2 learners have a set of habits –a first language (L1) –that must be overcome in the process of acquiring an L2 which can be a new set of habits (e.g. ‘a woman beautiful’ in Italian vs. ‘a beautiful woman’ in English). Even though behaviorism offered several constructs such as “conditional reinforcement” and “punishment” it does not take into account myriads of other external factors.
The main goal of behaviorist research was to describe what was directly observable and not to explain the processes behind them. On the other hand linguists started to decipher the building blocks of language including sound systems and sentence structure which were not always directly observable. An emerging field of SLA was developing. Krashen’s Monitor Theory, (Krashen, 1981, 1982, 1985) is the first theory in the field of SLA that elucidated a variety of phenomena in language learning ranging from the effect of age on SLA to the irregular outcome of instruction. Unlike behaviorism, Krashen’s Monitor Theory proposed that the dynamic forces behind any type of acquisition are the understanding of meaningful utterances and the interaction of linguistic information in those utterances with innate language acquisition ability.

2.1.3. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THIS RESEARCH EFFORT

Evidence of the effects of the L1 on Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has been accumulating since the beginning of contemporary SLA research in the early 1970s. Current research indicates that the effect of L1 is not only selective but also varies amongst individual learners (DeKeyser 1997, Ellis, 2006; Gass & Mackey, 2000; White, 2007; White & Juffs, 1998).

The perceived extent of the influence of L1 on L2 depends on how one believes that SLA occurs. Different theories that will be discussed in this dissertation imbue diverse roles for the L1 in their explanations of SLA. In order to address these differences, this review of SLA theories will discuss different theories within two different frameworks.

This research effort will evaluate what role the L1 plays with respect to parameters such as input, output and feedback in SLA. A theoretical background will be provided for each SLA theory including how the L1 functions within SLA. Two different perspectives will be provided
in terms of theories which assert that L1 plays a vital role. Other theories which do not attribute any significant importance to the role of L1 will also be examined.

One section of this study will address theories that assign a vital role to the L1 in SLA (e.g. Krashen’s Monitor Theory (MT) (1985); Chomsky’s Universal Grammar Theory (UG) (1981); the Associative-Cognitive Creed Theory (ACC) Ellis, 2006; Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory (SCT) (1978); Processability Theory (PT) Pienemann (2007); and Concept Oriented Approach (CO) Cooreman & Kilborn (1991)).

Another section of this study will discuss theories which do not attribute any significant importance to the role of the L1 (e.g. the Skill Acquisition Theory (SA) DeKeyser (1997), the Interaction Approach Theory (IA) Gass & Mackey, (2000) and the model of Input Processing (IP) VanPatten (2007).

2.1.4. THEORIES THAT ASSIGN A VITAL ROLE TO L1 IN SLA

Krashen’s Monitor Theory (MT)

Krashen’s Monitor Theory (MT) was the first theory to be developed specifically for SLA and was developed by Stephen Krashen in the 1970s and early 1980s. It is connected to Chomsky’s Universal Grammar Theory, which views humans as having a specific faculty for language learning, that is, humans are born with linguistic knowledge. The processes that a child goes through while acquiring the L1 are basically the same processes that L2ers had to go through. Language in general is not learned, it is acquired. Learning refers to obtaining explicit knowledge about the language in terms of grammatical rules. Acquired knowledge is believed to be implicit knowledge (i.e., language knowledge that we have that lies outside of our conscious awareness, like our knowledge about not contracting across traces). As a result, acquiring a second language is being able at some point in the acquisition process to be as natural as L1
acquisition. Spontaneous use of language is not a result of form that is explicitly taught and practiced. It is a result of plentiful, comprehensible input (input that is understood) and interaction that is focused on meaning.

One of the central constructs of MT is the *Input Hypothesis*. The *Input Hypothesis* explains that the only way humans’ acquire language is by receiving comprehensible input. According to MT, humans acquire language in only one way—by understanding the message in the L2 or as Krashen points out, by receiving comprehensible input. This comprehensible input contains language slightly above the current level of the learner’s level of internalized language \((i+1)\). In defining comprehensible input, Krashen introduces two more constructs: \(i\), which is defined as a learner’s current level of proficiency and \(i+1\), which is a level just beyond the learner’s current level. The \(+1\) is difficult to determine, but can be estimated by the teacher. Krashen considers input that is \(i+1\) to be the most valuable data for SLA. Krashen specifies that roughly tuned input will automatically include several levels of input including \(i\), \(i+1\), and probably \(i-1\) and \(i+2\), etc. To be more explicit as long as a teacher or a native speaker does not speak very quickly and does not use complex language to a low level learner, the presence of comprehensible input will be available to the learner. L2 learners (L2ers) will naturally access and use the language allowing the acquisition to take place spontaneously as long as they are exposed to rich and comprehensible input. This is most likely to occur when communication is focused on meaning rather than form. This means instruction is not only about grammatical rules but output (production). Production is considered the result rather than the cause of acquisition. Forcing learners to produce before they are ready can inhibit the acquisition process by taking the learner’s focus away from comprehension and processing of input. Krashen asserted that comprehensible input is a critical aspect of SLA acquisition (Krashen 1981, 1982, 1985).
According to MT theory a large amount of comprehensible input combined with a learner’s innate language faculty is all humans need to acquire a language. Krashen asserts that the learners will naturally access what they need in SLA through comprehensible input. They will just figure it out, without error correction. In fact, error correction and high anxiety can influence the affective filter (high to low anxiety levels) and prevent comprehensible input (Krashen 1982). A learner’s output (production of language), however, is considered insignificant when acquiring a language. Output is only the result of acquisition not the cause. Output that is above a learner’s acquisition level should not be forced because it can inhibit acquisition (VanPatten 1998).

According the Krashen (1985) it is extremely important for learners to be comfortable with their learning environment. L2 learners in a comfortable learning environment will have better access to input in general. In an environment where the L2 learners are forced to produce language, acquisition is inhibited. According to Krashen the affective filter can help explain the variable outcome of SLA across language learners.

In support of MT as well as Universal Grammar Theory (UG), Larsen-Freeman, D. (1975) found the acquisition of grammatical morphemes (-ing, be-auxiliary) by adult ESL students similar to their acquisition in L1. The participants in Larsen-Freeman’s study were 24 beginning adult L2ers of English. The participants had four different language backgrounds: Arabic, Farsi, Japanese and Spanish. Data contained answers to questions which were sought in terms of the acquisition of ten grammatical morphemes: ing, be auxiliary, short plural (-s), long plural (-es), 3rd person singular-s, past regular, past irregular possessive –s, be copula and articles. These morphemes were chosen with the idea that acquisition may take place in a prescribed manner. The Larsen-Freeman data revealed a consistent result across all four language groups in the
acquisition of these ten grammatical morphemes. A correlation of morpheme order and accuracy between L1 learners and ESL (English second language) learners was observed. This suggests an implicit underlying linguistic system. The internal learning mechanism requires comprehensible input to be the impetus to the inborn language acquisition “machine”. This language acquisition device completes the process of constructing the grammar. These morpheme studies and especially the finding that there was a general, stable order in the production of learners across different L1s suggest that internal guided processes together with comprehensible input is responsible for language acquisition.

Universal Grammar Theory (UG)

Within the Universal Grammar Theory (UG) language ability is thought to be a special faculty that is separate from other cognitive functions. The UG paradigm presents the idea that language is restricted by a set of biologically-inherited rules that are activated by linguistic input. The acquisition of language is considered to be a deductive puzzle where larger sets of rules are inferred from a smaller set of evidence. These larger sets of rules are referred to as parameters. A parameter is a binary rule that is triggered by exposure to input and is then responsible for more than one linguistic phenomenon in the language. In this way, a relatively small amount of linguistic data can serve to provide the learner with a wide range of language knowledge.

Chomsky (1981, 1986a, 1986b) proposes that humans are born with inherent linguistic knowledge. UG approaches the logical problem of SLA in the following way. Within the UG language competence is believed to be a unique ability that is distinct from other cognitive faculties. Our genetic makeup is responsible for an innate language faculty that gives rise to an individual’s language ability. What motivated this theory was the logical problem of language acquisition associated with the poverty of the stimulus. Evidence demonstrates that children
acquired knowledge of language that is undetermined by the input; in other words, they come to know things about a language without ever being taught or exposed to it. There is debate over whether the same innate language faculty also applies to adult L2ers.

In the process of L1 acquisition parameter values are then set to their language-specific values (Schachter, 1990). An example of such parameter is the feature of -/+wh movement. For example, English uses a +wh movement and Chinese uses a –wh movement. Languages that use the –wh movement are also known as wh-in situ languages because during question formation the wh-word does not move. An island constraint restricts wh-movement in a particular way (Ross, 1967). An effect of an island constraint is that the sentence involving wh-movement out-of-islands are ungrammatical in English as shown in (1a, where the “*” is employed to define an ungrammatical sentence). Here, what has been extracted out of an embedded wh-clause, an extraction that is impossible since the trace ti refers to the antecedent-anaphor ‘who’ which does not leave a trace. Anaphors do not have the ability to leave a trace and as a result the sentence is ungrammatical since who is undefined. In contrast, in the example provided (1b) is acceptable because the embedded clause is not an island, the trace ti refers to the antecedent ‘Mary’ and the nouns maintain a binding principle in the deep structure of the sentence by leaving a trace. Moreover ‘John thinks that Mary bought’ has a subject control of what John thinks about Mary.

(1) a. *What ti does John wonder [who bought ti]?
   b. What ti does John think [ti that Mary bought ti]?

In other languages such as Chinese, Japanese or Korean, in contrast to English, wh-phrases remain in position and do not move. Consider the examples 2a and 2b provided by Huang (1982): the simple wh-question (2a) and a wh-question in an embedded clause, as in (2b).

(2) a. ni xihuan shei?
   You like who
Who do you like?
b. Zhangsa xiangxin shei mai-le shu?
   Zhangsan believe who buy-ASP books
   Who does Zhangsan believe bought books?

In (2a) there is no wh-fronting. The wh-phrase (shei ‘who’) remains in the object position inside the clause. Also in (2b), in the embedded clause, shei is found in the location of the subject. In English, the wh- movement is controlled by the Subjacency principle which regulates the movement of wh-words. Even though there are no examples of these limits in the input, the L2 learner that has triggered the wh-movement parameter will provide the required constraints of ‘question word’ replacement. Languages with wh-in-situ features would not be constrained in the same way (White, 2007). Once a parameter such as this has been set, other grammatical rules follow from this setting. It is this process of deduction which explains the poverty of the stimulus phenomenon discussed in UG.

UG asserts that the L1 is the initial state for L2 acquisition, but the effect of the L1 on the acquisition of L2 parameters can vary. During the process of acquiring a second language, these L1 parameters need to be reset to L2 values. The notion of parameter resetting in the L2 presupposes that a change takes place in the interlanguage grammar from the L1 parameter value to some other parameter value (for example the change from –/+/wh-movement). Although UG claims that all parameters are initially set by the L1, different parameters may be reset at different times. In other words, the interlanguage grammar at different points may manifest a variety of changes in parameter settings. If the L2 input does not provide the “correct” signal to stimulate resetting, then the L1 parameter settings may persist. Hence, L1 effects may be quite transient in some cases but lasting in others. Depending on the L1 and the L2 in question, the input may or may not motivate resetting to the L2 value (Carroll, 2001; Gregg1996). This has to do with the Full Transfer Full Access Hypothesis (FTFA) which claims that the initial state of L2
acquisition consists of the steady state grammar of L1 acquisition (Schwartz & Sprouse, 1996; White, 1989, 2003). In other words, L2ers initially adopt the L1 grammar as a means of characterizing the L2 data. This constitutes full transfer. As a result, in the light of L2 input, revisions to the grammar may be effected.

In order to explore the phenomenon of parameter resetting, White and Juffs (1998) examined the case of native speakers of Mandarin Chinese (-wh-movement) acquiring L2 English (+wh movement). In this case the L1 and L2 differ in such a way that the L1 grammar could not provide the learner with the necessary knowledge about how to form wh-questions in the L2. If L2 acquisition is UG-constrained, and if these learners have acquired the wh-movement parameter, English wh-movement constraints would be predicted. The study utilized 16 adult native speakers of Chinese that were tested on two tasks, one involving grammatically judgments and one involving production. Results from both tasks suggested that the participants were able to perceive and use +wh-movement parameter constraints in their L2 English. The results are consistent with the claim that parameters can be reset and that interlanguage grammars are subject to principles of UG. This demonstrates that the L1 has a significant impact on the UG framework, in that the L1 is the starting point for SLA, and that the success of L2 acquisition is based on the resetting of L1 parameters to L2 values.

The progression through SLA can then be viewed as the process of resetting the transferred L1 parameters to L2 values. The effects of the L1 on the acquisition of L2 parameters can vary. Different parameters will be reset at different times in an individual’s learning continuum. These transfer effects of the L1 may range from being extremely transient, to being lasting, or even permanent. Studies by Brown (1973) and White (2003) revealed that, in language acquisition, parameter resetting may or may not be achieved.
In addition, White (2003) investigated whether or not explicit teaching could create parameter resetting in the process of second language acquisition, and whether or not these parameters could be applied by the learner to a broader grammatical context. In order to test this, French speaking fifth and sixth graders in an ESL program were divided into two groups. These groups were tested on English adverb placement. One group was given a deductive explanation about adverb placement while the second group was given similar instruction about question formation. Post tests were conducted and while the children who were instructed on adverb placement did quite well compared to those who did not in tests given a few weeks after instruction, after a year both groups reverted to their understanding of adverb replacement prior to any instruction on this grammatical point.

Conclusions from this study show how persistent L1 parameters can be when attempting to acquire an L2, even in younger children. This study also shows how UG seems to play an important role in SLA.

Associate-Cognitive Creed Theory (ACC)

The foundations of the Associative-Cognitive CREED (ACC) are rooted in psychology. Unlike the previously discussed UG framework, the ACC asserts that language is acquired like any other skill. The ACC presumes that SLA happens through processes that are both associative and cognitive. SLA is driven by linguistic competence which emerges as the result of exposure to constructions (form-meaning mappings). The construction of a language involves the development of form and meaning as a map in the mind of the language learners. Learners are sensitive to the frequency of constructions and keep track of these frequencies as part of their learning process. Learners induce grammatical rules on the basis of their prior exposure to the frequency of these constructions. For example, a learner may be exposed to numerous nouns and
extrapolate that some end in –s. After being exposed to sufficient numbers of example the learner may hypothesize that a rule for making a noun plural in English involves adding a “–s”. The more reliable the mapping between a cue and its outcome, the more readily it is learned (Ellis, 1993, 2002).

Moreover, this theory states that we are born as tabula rasa. During language development concepts and connections are built. Rules are induced according to implicit mental tallies of the frequency of how often a construction is encountered in the linguistic input. These rules are generated inductively on the basis of recognizing patterns present within numerous examples in the input (Ellis, 2006).

According to the ACC, there are some limits to the effects of a learner’s L1 in SLA. The brain is tuned by experience because the brain is plastic. During the process of first language acquisition the individual’s learned attention is tuned exclusively to the L1. In childhood the brain has a great deal of neural plasticity, meaning that cognitive associations can easily be formed and then changed as necessary. This allows the language processing mechanisms to be targeted optimally to linguistic input. In the process of SLA the learner begins with a rigid system that is monopolized by the L1 (Ellis & Laporte, 1997). In SLA the problem facing L2ers arises again from an L1 transfer factor, only in this case it is the transfer of those mental perceptual and processing categories and issues of learned attention. During the mental frequency tallying process different features of the input influence how the information is handled. One result of the process of acquiring the L2 is that the initial state for SLA is no longer a plastic system. On the contrary, it is a system that is already tuned and committed to the L1. As a consequence the L2 learner may be exposed to L2 input, but not all of it is assimilated, and therefore SLA is much less successful than L1 acquisition.
If there is a feature in the L2 that is not present in the L1 then the individual’s learned attention will not be sensitive to noticing this new feature in the input. This is important because if a feature is not noticed it cannot be used during the process of tallying. An example of this is the plural ‘s’. If the learner’s L1 does not have the feature of plural morphology, and the L2 does, this feature may not be attended to by the learner. The “s” may be low in perceptual salience, meaning that it is unstressed and difficult to hear and it may also be redundant in terms aiding the listener to determine meaning. This compounds the problem for the L2 learner (Goldschneider & DeKeyser, 2001; Norris & Ortega, 2006). As another example, if a sentence expressing temporal reference contains an adverb and a morpheme indicating tense, the adverb will usually be what an L2 learner will use to establish time. The morpheme may then be ignored because it is redundant in terms of meaning (Ellis, 2006). What is paid attention to, and what is ignored in the new input, has been tuned by the L1.

In both of these cases L1-learned attention patterns have interfered with the perception of L2 input. As demonstrated in the previous examples, when this occurs the ACC calls the phenomenon overshadowing. Overshadowing occurs when part of the L2 input is not processed because of the L1. Learning that a particular stimulus A is associated with X makes it more difficult to learn that another stimulus B can be associated with that same X. In time, if this overshadowing continues, then this attention gap may become permanent. This causes an L2 acquisition problem similar to when an L1 parameter in the UG paradigm has failed to be reset. The transfer of an L1 feature has created an SLA problem. This fossilized overshadowing is termed blocking (Ellis 2006).

Overshadowing can eventually lead to blocking, which is a permanent form of overshadowing. For example, the L2ers’ use of adverbs for expressing time blocks their
acquisition of less salient and less reliable verb morphology. Further evidence for these facts can be seen in the L1 and L2 acquisition of adverbs. Children lack a clear or solid understanding of the meaning of adverbs. However, as a result of their L1 experience adults know that adverbs such as “yesterday” are a reliable and salient means of expressing past time. In a sentence such as “yesterday I walked,” the morphological tense marker is redundant. Successful interpretation of the message does not require morphological processing, but the lack of processing entails a lack of acquisition. It is not just tense that is subject to such effects. Because of this the L2 learner tends to omit the plural-s ending on nouns. These findings are supported by Ellis (2006).

The ACC posits that nonnative outcomes of SLA relative to L1 are the result of overshadowing and blocking, which are two types of learned selective attention.

Sociocultural Theory (SCT)

Like the ACC, Sociocultural Theory (SCT) takes the view that language acquisition emerges in a fashion similar to other cognitive abilities. SCT is a theory of mental development and functioning formulated by Vygotsky. Mental functioning is controlled by three cultural factors: activities (such as education), artifacts (both physical tools such as books and computers and symbolic tools such as language and numbers) and concepts (understanding physical, social and mental worlds) Vygotsky (1978, 1987). Ratner (2002) advocates Vygotsky’s ideas and argues that human mental function is fundamentally a mediated process that is organized by cultural artifacts, activities and concepts. These cultural factors intervene among the relationships between humans and physical reality as well as between humans and their internal mental worlds.
One of the most important constructs of SCT is the zone of the proximal development (ZPD) which had an enormous impact in a variety of research areas among them psychology, education and linguistics. The most frequent referenced definition of the ZPD is:

The distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problems solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86).

The ZPD has fascinated educators and psychologist for a number of reasons. One is the notion of assisted performance which has been the driving force behind much of the interest in Vygotsky’s research. Another persuasive element of the ZPD is that in contrast to traditional tests and measures that only indicate the level of development already attained, the ZPD is forward looking through its assertion that what one can do today with assistance is indicative of what one will be able to do independently in the future. From this perspective, ZPD oriented assessment provides a nuanced determination of both achieved and potential development.

With the ZPD, Vygotsky presents his more universal belief that: “human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them” (1978, p.88). Vygotsky was captivated with the complex effects that schooling had on cognitive development. The activity of participation in schooling occupied, at least in part, learning through participation in socio-culturally and institutionally organized practices. One of Vygotsky’s finding is that learning collaboratively with others leads and shapes development. From this perspective, ZPD is not only a theory of developmental process but also a theoretical tool that educators can employ to comprehend aspects of students’ rising capacities that are in early stages of maturation. By using the ZPD teachers have the potential to generate conditions for learning that may provide increase to specific forms of development in the future.
SCT asserts that language is a cultural artifact which helps us to regulate our mental activity. SCT posits that cognitive abilities form as a result of social interaction. Internalizing the language implies that the L2er has acquired a particular language ability and can use that knowledge to facilitate other cognitive tasks. One way that imitation is attained and internalized is through private speech, which is speech that is self-directed and audible, but not intended to be processed by others (Frawley & Lantoff, 1985). While private speech was originally described in terms of L1 acquisition, a study by Lantolf and Yáñez (2006) demonstrated that adult L2ers do in fact use private speech to facilitate L2 acquisition. Moreover, Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) assert that imitation is happening in private speech and that language acquisition is not expected to take place without private speech being produced.

Although private speech was initially depicted in reference to L1 acquisition, research conducted by Centeno-Cortés and Jiménez (2004) revealed that regardless of their proficiency level adult L2ers also used L1 private speech to facilitate language acquisition. All experimentally tested groups (6 L1 English and L2 Spanish-intermediate, 6 L1 English and advanced L2 Spanish and 6 native Spanish speakers) produced private speech in Spanish when the task was to resolve computer-based challenge problems in the L2. However, it was found that the intermediate students needed to use their L1 extensively to solve the Spanish problems. Although the advanced students employed more L2 private speech, they were forced to shift to their L1 when the problem became too difficult. Even though the advanced speakers attempted to continue problem solving in Spanish, they could not accomplish the task without switching to their L1. The L2 can be used for fluent and proficient social speech; however it is not sufficient to mediate higher-level cognition. The L1 is essential for regulating advanced cognition because producing language in the L2 requires significant attentional resources. The conclusion of this
study is that L1 private speech plays a critical role for L2ers engaged in problem solving because it plays a crucial metacognitive role in the learning process.

Results from Negueruela and Lantolf (2006) also support the importance of the L1 in SLA. The study was based on understanding two different types of past constructions in Spanish: the past preterit, which describes something specific that happened in the past at a specific time, and the past imperfect, which describes things that happened repeatedly in the past. The participants consisted of 12 L1 English students taking L2 Spanish at an intermediate level for a period of 16 weeks. Two types of data from the students were analyzed: conceptual development of the two past tense forms and personal data regarding their learning processes. The results suggested that it was necessary for the students to rely on private speech to internalize the target concepts. It was found that when using L1 private speech the L2ers attained control over the past constructions in Spanish and displayed growth in conceptual development and an improvement in performance. This study supports the findings that prohibiting the use of the L1 during learning could have negative consequences for the L2er.

SCT applies itself to both L1 acquisition and SLA and asserts that the L1 plays a positive role. The availability of L1 during L2 learning development is looked upon not as a negative subconscious bias that cannot be evaded but rather as a technique through which learners can accomplish tasks that would otherwise be unattainable in the L2. The L1 is contributing to rather than obstructing the L2 acquisition.

Processability Theory (PT)

Processability Theory (PT) uses developmental stages to predict how SLA will progress. PT asserts that there is a universal processing hierarchy that leads development. This hierarchy is grounded in Lexical Function Grammar and elucidates how feature unification happens in SLA.
Feature unification is the agreement of different parts of grammatical items within a sentence and is applicable features such gender and number. The hierarchy says that learners will start without any feature unification at all, and will then progress to having appropriate agreement within a phrase, a sentence, and then finally across subordinate clause (Pienemann, 1984). Although different grammatical structures may be present under each of these categories, this hierarchy applies to any language. According to Pienemann (2007) the six stages in this hierarchy are:

1. No procedure
2. Category procedure
3. Noun phrase procedure
4. Verb phrase procedure
5. Sentence procedure
6. Subordinate clause procedure

The first two stages, the no procedure and category procedure, do not require any feature unification, while the remaining four do require feature unification. In this theory, following the stages in order is mandatory and individual stages cannot be skipped. Each stage must be reached before the learner can progress to the following stage.

The 1st stage is No procedure which requires producing a simple word such as “yes” for the L2 learner. Category procedure, the 2nd stage, enables the L2 learner to add an inflectional morpheme to a word (for ex: walk + ed = walked). The 3rd stage is the Noun phrase procedure which permits L2 learner to match plurality as in “two cats”. The 4th stage, Verb phrase procedure, allows the L2 learner to move an adverb out of the verb phrase to the front of the sentence (I went yesterday/yesterday I went). The 5th stage is Sentence procedure which allows the L2 learner to create subject-verb agreement, which may be different across languages. For example, English requires a pronoun, as in It is raining, while Spanish prohibits one, as in Está lloviendo. The 6th stage, Subordinate clause procedure, enables the L2 learner to use subjunctives in subordinate clauses.
Given that this is a universal hierarchy, it would be easy to assume that the L1 does not have a role within PT. PT recognizes that the L1 does have an effect on SLA, but L1 features can only be transferred when the learner has reached the correct stage of development.

A study by Håkansson, et al (2002) investigated whether it would be possible for learners to circumvent the processability hierarchy and transfer a feature of their L1 before reaching the appropriate stage. The subjects in this study were native speakers of Swedish in their first and second years of learning German as a L2. These two languages were chosen for study because they have very similar grammatical features, even though a speaker of Swedish cannot understand a German speaker and vice versa. The feature examined was the verb second structure (when the first word in a sentence is not the subject then the verb and the subject are inverted) because it is present in both of these languages.

It was predicted that if learning is not constrained by the processing hierarchy, then this feature should be produced early in the acquisition process, as it is present in both the L1 and L2. However, if acquisition has been moderated by developmental processability then this feature would not be produced early. In order to test these theories, subjects were interviewed and their utterances were transcribed and analyzed. The results of the study showed that the subjects did not transfer the verb second structure but instead used a prototypical word order and produced utterances that were not grammatical in either Swedish or German.

In accordance with the results from this study the L1 is considered to be a factor in SLA, but only when the learner has reached a stage in which they are able to transfer the features present within that phase of the hierarchy.

Concept Oriented Approach (CO)
The Concept Oriented Approach (CO) consists of a description of an analytical framework rather than a theory. From the functionalist perspective, language is foremost used for communication and does not exist without language users. The basic assertion of the functional approach is that meaning and function influence language structure and language acquisition. Functionalism views language as a mapping of form to function and function to form. Functionalistic approaches to SLA investigate such mappings in interlanguage grammar. How these mappings change as the language learner develops is an important aspect of CO.

In this CO approach language originates from a learner’s need to express certain concepts, such as temporal relations, and the means that a learner uses to convey these concepts. In this manner the CO approach focuses on one aspect of these form and function mappings. A fundamental assumption of CO is that the L2er has access to a full range of semantic concepts from their prior linguistic and cognitive knowledge. Von Stutterheim and Klein argue that “a L2er in contrast with a child learning her/ his first language does not have to acquire the underlying concepts. What she/he has to acquire is a specific way and a specific means to express them” (1987, p.194)

The CO approach is a framework that says all language begins with a need to communicate. Instead of focusing on issues related to form, the CO approach looks at SLA from a functional standpoint. The different aspects of syntax, pragmatics, and semantics are not separated but instead they are all considered within analyses regarding a learner’s communicative intentions.

A primary focus of the CO approach is staged development. The stages contained within this approach to SLA differ from PT. Within this framework the learner’s stages are related to what lexical devices are needed to express different concepts. The first stage is known as the
pragmatic stage (Meisel, 1987). Learners rely mostly on context and scaffolding of their interlocutor’s utterances in order to convey meaning. In the next stage learners begin to use lexical items to communicate the target concept. An example of this development can be seen with the concept of time. Temporal reference can be conveyed solely with the use of adverbs but native speakers also use verbal morphology in order to convey the concept of time. After the pragmatic stage an L2er will begin using lexical items such as adverbs (this is known as the lexical stage) before they will move into the stage where they will begin using morphological items (known as the morphological stage) for this same purpose (Bardovi-Harlig, 1992).

Like PT, these stages are considered to be universal and should apply to all learners regardless of L1 backgrounds. The only influence the L1 has on SLA could be considered to be positive. During L1 acquisition learners not only need to acquire the means to communicate different concepts, they must also cognitively learn the concepts themselves. In SLA the conceptual foundation has already been laid and L2ers must simply learn how to encode them linguistically.

2.1.5. THEORIES THAT DO NOT ATTRIBUTE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO THE L1

In second section of the dissertation Skill Acquisition Theory (SA) and the Interaction Approach (IA) are discussed. SA theory and the IA attribute a predictable influence to the L1, but do not assign a critical role to any of the explanations proffered. In addition, in this section VanPatten’s model of Input Processing (IP), which takes an ambivalent approach to the role of the L1 in SLA, will also be evaluated.

Skill Acquisition Theory (SA)
Skill Acquisition Theory (SA) theory does not attribute a significant role to the L1 in its explanation of the acquisition process. SA theory accounts for how people advance from initial learning to a high level of proficiency in different skills. SA asserts that all skills, not only language, are acquired in a particular fashion. The significant constructs of SA theory include three stages: declarative knowledge, proceduralization and automatization (Anderson 1982, 1983; Anderson, Bothell, Bryne, Douglass, Lebiere & Qin, 2004; Byrnes, 2005) which have also been defined as cognitive, associative and autonomous skills (Fitts & Posner, 1967).

These three stages are different with regards to the nature of their steps and implementation. The first step is obtaining declarative knowledge. This is objective information about the task that is learned explicitly by watching or listening to someone that already has the skill. For example, in the first stage a learner may initially be able to acquire limited knowledge about a skill without attempting to implement it. Even though the knowledge may be gained through perceptive observations, typically it is transmitted in verbal form, visual form, or a combination of both. Following this stage, the learner must act on this knowledge and thereby convert it into a behavior. This is the process of converting “knowledge that” (declarative knowledge) into “knowledge how” (procedural knowledge). This declarative knowledge is then proceduralized—that is, learners use their declarative knowledge to actually practice doing the task. Information is transformed into larger chunks so that the behavior can be executed quickly and smoothly. With continued practice the skill can then become automatized, meaning that the skill can be performed with a low error rate, fast reaction time, and little interference from other cognitive tasks. This process follows a power function, in which there is sharp improvement during the change from declarative to procedural knowledge, followed by gradual improvement that systematically increases as a function of the amount of practice. Procedural knowledge has a
benefit over declarative knowledge in that it no longer requires the learner to retrieve information from memory. Information is transformed into larger chunks so the behavior can be executed very fast. There can be a time interval between the complete acquisition of procedural knowledge and when the behavior can be completed with fluency and few errors. Continued practice is necessary in order to decrease the time required to execute a task (reaction time), and to decrease the percentage of errors (error rate). Such practice leads to gradual automatization, which is the ability to perform a task correctly without devoting excessive attention to it. The change from declarative to procedural knowledge is followed by an exponential increase in function over time as a result of practice (DeKeyser & Sokalski, 2001).

A study by DeKeyser (1997) suggests that language follows these same stages and patterns of acquisition. It can be seen that two aspects of this theory are important: explicit declarative knowledge and opportunities to practice the skill. DeKeyser (1997) conducted a study on the automatization of explicit learned rules of morphosyntax in an artificial L2. Sixty-one subjects were taught 4 morphosyntactic rules and 32 vocabulary items in the artificial language. Results revealed that the learning of morphosyntactic rules is highly skill-specific and that these skills develop gradually over time. Skill specificity refers to the idea that declarative knowledge in one skill area such as comprehension that can’t be transferred for proceduralization and automatization of another skill area, such as production. The implications of this study were that skills are in fact skill-specific and that language acquisition follows a pattern similar to that of other non-linguistic skills. Once the L2 grammar rules have been explicitly assimilated, practice will lead to gradual automatization as measured by reduced reaction time, error rate and a decrease in interference from simultaneously performed tasks.
Another result of DeKeyser and Sokalski from a recent study (2001) suggests that a further implication of this theory is skill-specificity, meaning that declarative knowledge in one skill, such as comprehension, cannot be used for proceduralization and automatization of another skill, such as production.

Factors impeding acquisition within this theory deal with deficiencies in the learning process, such as unclear or inappropriate declarative knowledge and lack of sufficient practice activities. Other negative influences are in reference to the individual learner and include a lack of language learning aptitude and motivation. A difference in L1 background is never cited as either a negative or a positive factor in this theory. As long as the preceding conditions have been met, then the skill should be successfully acquired.

The Interaction Approach (IA)

The Interaction Approach (IA) focuses on the connection between language learning and meaningful interactions between other learners. Language acquisition is originated when there is a pressure to communicate. Features of communicative interactions that foster this learning process are input, output, and feedback. IA subsumes some aspects of the Input Hypothesis (e.g. Krashen, 1982, 1985) together with the Output Hypothesis (Swain 1985, 1995, 2005), Input Interaction and Output Model (Block, 2003) and Interaction Theory (Carroll, 1999).

Input is an essential component for learning in that it provides the crucial evidence from which the learner can develop a linguistic hypothesis. Input allows the L2er to know what is acceptable in the language.

Swain (1985, 1993, 1995, 1998, 2005) asserts that language production (output) forces learners to move from comprehension (semantic use of language) to syntactic use of language. As Swain stated:
Output may stimulate learners to move from the semantic, open-ended nondeterministic strategic processing prevalent in comprehension to the complete grammatical processing needed for accurate production. Output, thus, would seem to have a potentially significant role in the development of syntax and morphology (Swain, 1995, p.128).

Output permits the L2er to test new language hypotheses and attain experience by internalizing and producing language features. Feedback on output may produce negative evidence about what is acceptable in language production. The L2er has the chance to experience these different processes through interaction. The L2ers can distinguish how their speech varies from that of the native speaker (known as “noticing the gap”) by positioning their speech next to that of the native speakers’ output. When an L2ers’ speech is juxtaposed with a native speakers’ output, it allows the learner to observe how his order speech differs from that of the native speaker (noticing the gap) and can alert them to when they are unable to express a desired concept in the target language due to a linguistic deficit (Gass & Mackey, 2000).

Interaction refers to the conversation that the learners participate in. Interactions are important because it is in the context that the learner receives information about the accuracy and inaccuracy of their utterances. Assuming that the errors are noticed the learner has to determine what the problem is and how to modify existing linguistic knowledge. The learner then comes up with a hypothesis as to what the correct form should be. Obtaining further input by listening, the L2ers can confirm or disapprove a hypothesis that she or he may have come up with regarding the nature of the target language. In addition the output may also be employed to test these hypotheses (Gass, 1997).

Feedback is defined as explicit and implicit. Explicit feedback includes correction and metalinguistic explanations. Implicit forms of feedback include negotiation strategies such as: confirmation checks (e.g. Is this what you mean?), clarification requests (e.g. What did you
say?), comprehension checks (Did you understand?) and recasts (a rephrasing of an incorrect utterance using a correct form while maintaining the original meaning). Gass and Mackey (2000) assert that feedback facilitates comprehension of L2 input and serve to draw the learner’s attention to form-meaning relationships. In addition, Gass, Mackey and Ross-Feldman, 2005, assert that a competent L2er intercepts signals from their interlocutor by providing adjustments to the linguistic form, conversational structure and message context. As a result the negotiation for meaning is attained through: confirmation checks, clarification requests and comprehension checks.

These interaction processes occur independent of any L1 knowledge, and they do not change based on L1 differences. The interaction processes may help the L2er to acquire the new language through input, output and feedback, but a different L1 would not alter how these mechanics function in SLA. Because of the stated IA assumptions, the L1 does not play a meaningful role in SLA.

Input Processing Theory (IP)

The Input Processing (IP) theory focuses on the reasons why learners do or do not make what are termed form meaning connections (FMCs). IP theory asks the question of why certain connections are made and not others, and several principles have been created to explain the FMC phenomenon. These principles are grouped into larger categories of processing strategies based on features such as sentence structure, the role of meaning in an utterance, and the cognitive abilities of the brain (VanPatten, 2007).

While the MT, UG, ACC, SCT give the L1 a central role in SLA, IP theory does not discuss or project such a straightforward stance for the role of the L1. IP theory asserts that SLA is largely a byproduct of comprehension even though comprehension can’t guarantee acquisition.
Acquisition is dependent upon learners making appropriate form-meaning connections. A form-meaning connection is how a word is encoded in a grammatical form during the act of comprehension (ex: “Him” means male). SLA is driven to obtain meaning while comprehending and comprehension requires linguistic intake, not just input. Input is the language a learner hears or reads and attends to for meaning while intake refers to linguistic data in the input that the learner attends to and holds in working memory during comprehension. Comprehension for the learner is initially quite difficult in terms of working memory and this has significant consequences for the input processing mechanism. The L2 learner cannot process and store the same amount of information as a native speaker can during real–time processing. As a consequence, the intake does not equal the input for early L2 learners. In addition a good deal of acquisition is dependent upon the learner correctly interpreting what a sentence means (White, 1987, Carroll, 2001).

The role of the L1 is not clear within the IP theory framework. L2 processing strategies may rely on strategies imported from the L1 or L2ers may be using universal processing strategies common to all individuals regardless of L1 background. One of the principles in the previously mentioned processing category of sentence structure is known as the first noun principle. This principle assumes that regardless of L1 background language learners will assign the role of subject to the first noun encountered in a sentence.

Within IP theory there are several hypotheses about how SL input is attended to. The L1 Transfer Principle assumes that acquisition problems would be language specific. Whereas the First Noun Principle assumes a universal parsing procedure (VanPatten, 1984, 1996, 2002, 2007). For example, Italian is a flexible SVO/OVS word order language. The L1 Transfer
*Principle* suggests that an Italian speaker learning Spanish would not have difficulty parsing an OVS structure in Spanish because this structure also exists in Italian.

On the other hand, an English speaker should have difficulties with an OVS structure because English is a rigid SVO language, and no parsing mechanism exists to handle non-SVO structures.

Isabelli (2008) attempted to address the question of which hypothesis is more probable, the *L1 Transfer Principle* or the *First Noun Principle* by examining whether the first noun principle was valid or if L2ers will actually transferring a processing strategy from their L1. This study used native English speakers and native Italian speakers enrolled in Spanish classes to test the plausibility of these principles. Italian is a flexible word order language, allowing both SVO and OVS word orders, and English is a rigid SVO language. It was hypothesized that the Italian students would perform better because Italian allows for the same flexible word order that Spanish does, while English does not.

The subjects were tested on how well they could correctly interpret Spanish OVS sentences. The results of the study were very significant in terms of Italian speakers having an advantage, with mean scores on the target sentences more than four times those of the English speakers. These results suggest that the L1 parser is indeed being transferred and used in the L2. While this would seem to be concrete evidence for the L1 transfer principle, it may just be the case that beginning L2ers use the first noun principle and then at a later time the L1 parser is awakened and transferred.

VanPatten (2007) proposes that a combination of the two principle is possible, stating that the L2 learner might start with the universal parsing procedure and that the L1 parser might
be triggered to transfer at the right stage of development. Isabelli (2008) may have used learners that were too advanced. Additional studies using less advanced students need to be conducted.

2.1.6. CONCLUDING REMARKS IN SLA ACROSS NINE CONTEMPORARY THEORIES

The field of SLA is a new but very relevant field which explains the role of L1, input and output. SLA as a field began in the late 1960s. There was limited activity in the 1970s followed by phenomenal development in research and theory during the 1980s and 1990s. The field of SLA is an interdisciplinary field in both its origin and development.

The field of SLA interrelates directly with four related fields: linguistic, child language acquisition, language teaching and psychology. More recently the interdisciplinary nature of SLA has extended to include even more disciplines, conspicuously, bilingualism and multilingualism, education, cognitive science, anthropology and sociology.

The field of SLA has become an autonomous discipline at the end of 20th century after 40 years of continuous growth. As a result the first decades of the 21st century are therefore the time to make more inquiries on theories that offer an explanation about how L2 is acquired and what is the role of L1 in SLA. In addition these theories have to be implemented in classroom teaching in order to have a successful bilingual or multilingual education.

The nature of language symbol, cognition and knowledge among nine SLA theories

The nine theories reviewed in this examinational research provided a unique view of the nature of L2 knowledge being influence by a combination of linguistic features such as the role of L1 as well as the amount of the exposure of input and output which often follows predictable stages in the acquisition of the L2.
Table 2.1 offers a summary of the key differences and similarities among the nine theories.

Universal Grammar Theory (UG) and Krashen’s Monitor Theory (MT) are rooted in the field of generative linguistics based on Chomsky’s (1981) view that language ability is thought to be a specific faculty in that language is distinct from other forms of cognition; it is a separate faculty, an organ of the mind.

Consequently these theories adopt a linguistic view of language acquisition. These two theories assert that L2 learners’ possess abstract knowledge of ambiguity and ungrammaticality that could have never been derived only from the linguistic input in the environment or L1 knowledge alone. Thus, it is assumed that knowledge already existed in some initial form independent from experience.

These two theories propose that humans are provided with genetic traits which allow the learner, through exposure to the input, to go beyond what has been provided by the input in numerous ways. For example, children and adults are able to comprehend and construct sentences that they have never heard before. Researchers who advocate the UG and MT theories believe that language is controlled by different cognitive functions and as a result the language knowledge is believed to be symbolic.

This symbolic knowledge is perceived to be highly abstract, unconsciously or tacitly represented in our mind in the form of different principles, parameters and categories based on different features. According to these theories the grammatical knowledge of L1 or L2 is disclosed incidentally by deduction from innate abstract knowledge and when grammatical rules are acquired they remained implicitly represented.
In contrast, the Associative-Cognitive CREED (ACC) and Skill Acquisition theory (SA) have their roots in the field of contemporary cognitive psychology and as a result both theories offer a psychological view of language acquisition. The tenet of these theories are that language is taught to be learned and employed through the same cognitive functions that we use for the acquisition of any kind of knowledge (e.g. knowledge about biology, mathematics, computer programming, history).

According to ACC language learning is an implicit inductive task and therefore it is committed to incidental learning and unconscious representations. As a result, humans acquire language through the extrapolation of different statistical patterns provided by input.

This extrapolation is generalized by the brain’s predisposition to learn and is shaped by the language experience and as a result produces the communicative patterns imposed by the environment.

Skill Acquisition theory (SA) suggests that a skill is attained through formal instruction as the starting point. As a result the learning process is a conscious process. DeKeyser (1997) suggests that learning to become a fluent speaker in a L2, is comparable to becoming an expert in anything else. As a result both ACC and SA have the same basic psychological view of language but they differ in how much importance they give to the usefulness and role of the inductive and deductive environment in explaining SLA.
### Table 2.1. The Nature of Cognition and Knowledge of Language Symbolism among Nine SLA Theories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theories</th>
<th>Cognition</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Language symbolism</th>
<th>Mediating function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Krashen’s Monitor Theory (MT)</td>
<td>Linguistic Innate learning and abstract</td>
<td>Abstract deduction Implicit knowledge</td>
<td>Symbolic and Unconscious</td>
<td>Comprehensible input and Affective filter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chomsky’s Universal Grammar Theory (UG)</td>
<td>Linguistic Innate learning and abstract</td>
<td>Abstract deduction Implicit knowledge</td>
<td>Symbolic and Unconscious</td>
<td>Providing examples within context ESL are not blank slates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associative-Cognitive Creed Theory (ACC)</td>
<td>Psychological General cognitive design</td>
<td>Implicit knowledge Association patterns</td>
<td>Unconscious</td>
<td>Skill development proceeds through association, cognitive development and implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Acquisition Theory (SA)</td>
<td>Psychological General cognitive design</td>
<td>Explicit knowledge (deduction) Automatization</td>
<td>Declarative and procedural</td>
<td>Competence in production is not transferable in comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Input Processing Theory (IP)</td>
<td>Psychological Underspecified</td>
<td>Explicit-Implicit knowledge</td>
<td>Functional universal Symbolic Unconscious</td>
<td>Form meaning connection A distinction is made between input and intake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processability Theory (PT)</td>
<td>Psychological Underspecified</td>
<td>Implicit</td>
<td>Functional universal</td>
<td>Recognition of stages of language development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept-Oriented Approach (CO)</td>
<td>Psychological Underspecified</td>
<td>Implicit</td>
<td>Functional universal</td>
<td>Form serves function and that the language serve communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Approach Theory (IA)</td>
<td>Psychological Underspecified</td>
<td>Explicit-Implicit knowledge</td>
<td>Both conscious and implicit</td>
<td>Combines both Krashen’s input and Swain output hypothesis and examined what happens when learners interact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory (SCL)</td>
<td>Social Faculty Relation and situation</td>
<td>Conscious Goal driven Mediated</td>
<td>Both internal and intra-mental Conscious</td>
<td>Social interaction drives cognition and consequently language acquisition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Three observations that the nine SLA theories need to shed light on. Adapted from VanPatten & Williams, 2007, p.227, ‘Theories in SLA an Introduction’.*
The second cluster of four different SLA theories discussed in this research effort also tend to hold a psychological view of cognition but they are much less explicit than the previous four theories about the cognition process. They are more ambiguous with regards to whether language cognition should be understood from a psychological or linguistic perspective or a combination of both. For example the Input Processing theory (IP) assumes that universal grammar knowledge probably constrains the learner hypothesis that L2 learning is variable in its outcome and across linguistic subsystems (VanPatten, 1998). In addition both the Processability theory (PT) and the Concept-Oriented Approach theory (CO) are explicitly driven by the functional approach rather than prescribed linguistic constructs. Both PT and CO assert that with regard to how the language is acquired both theories assume implicit knowledge is present and remain silent as to how L2 acquisition happens.

On another hand, Input Processing theory (IP) and the Interaction Approach theory (IA) assume explicit-implicit knowledge and that different processes interact but neither addresses directly how different processing interactions may occur.

Lastly, Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory (SCL) is perceived differently from all of the other eight theories. SCL, from the language cognition perspective, is viewed as neither a linguistic nor a psychological faculty of mind. SCL asserts that cognition can be perceived as a social interactive faculty. Human cognition is believed to arise from the material, social, cultural and historical context in which human experience is rooted. Language learning is explained through different processes by which the mind appropriates knowledge from “affordances” in the environment. These “affordances” are fundamentally social and start out from our associations to others, utilizing various means including language that mediate our interaction with others and our environment. From the perspective of this theory human knowledge occurs through
participation in social events involving consciousness. As a result, consciousness and intention are the main issues that explain cognition and learning.

2.1.7. THE ROLE OF L1 IN SLA

The nine theories discussed in this study attribute diverse roles to the L1 in their explanation of SLA.

Six theories assign a crucial role to the L1 in SLA: Krashen’s Monitor Theory (MT), Chomsky’s Universal Grammar Theory (UG), the Associative-Cognitive Creed Theory (ACC), Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory (SCT), Processability Theory (PT), and Concept Oriented Approach (CO).

Both Krashen’s Monitor Theory (MT) and Chomsky’s Universal Grammar Theory (UG) view the L1 as potentially the first point of departure for L2 acquisition. Researchers who advocate this theory posit that L1 plays a major role in L2 acquisition and specifically L1 is vital in the early stages for L2 learners. Important questions in determining the veracity of these theories required analyzing the role of L1 in SLA, whether universal grammar knowledge guides L2 acquisition in ways that are fundamentally similar to the way in which it is posited to guide L1 acquisition and whether both factors contribute equally in SLA. Moreover, studies were designed to investigate groups of learners from a specific L1 background (e.g. Spanish, French, Italian speakers) in order to understand how the L2 acquisition occurs based on the different native speakers of L1. Therefore L1 holds a privileged role in these two theories not as a theoretical foundation but also in terms of authentic research practice. In addition, Krashen MT theory also assigns L1 a privileged status in SLA in that L1 functions as “an affective filter” during the moment-to-moment processing of L2 input.
The Associative-Cognitive CREED theory also posits that L1 has a privileged role in SLA. In the early stages of development the brain’s neurons are adjusted and committed to the L1 and the L2 learning is biased and controlled by this learned attention from L1. According to this theory humans utilize their existing habits and, as a result, the forms and functions of L1 linguistic features will be transferred to L2. Certain cues may be missing in L1 and required in L2 but these features will be learned after a rich exposure to the L2.

Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory (SCL), in contrast with the other eight theories discussed in this dissertation, assigns the L1 a very unique and positive role. The Processability Theory (PT) and Concept Oriented Approach (CO) attributes a beneficial role to the L1 for SLA.

The remaining three theories the Skill Acquisition Theory (SA), the Interaction Approach Theory (IA) and the model of Input Processing (IP) do not attribute any significant importance to the role of the L1 in comparison with the previous six theories (e.g. the Skill Acquisition Theory (SA), the Interaction Approach Theory (IA) and the model of Input Processing (IP)). The Model of Input Processing theory (IP) takes an ambivalent stance toward the L1.

Table 2.2 offers a summary of the key differences and similarities among the nine theories based on the role of the linguistic environment such as input and output as well as the significance of the role of L1 in SLA.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theories</th>
<th>The Role of L1</th>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Krashen’s Monitor Theory (MT)</td>
<td>Initial state</td>
<td>The only required element</td>
<td>Developed on frequency of comprehensible input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chomsky’s Universal Grammar Theory (UG)</td>
<td>Initial state</td>
<td>Activates deduction of knowledge</td>
<td>No theoretical status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associative-Cognitive Creed Theory (ACC)</td>
<td>L1-tuned learned attention</td>
<td>Associative learning is input-driven</td>
<td>Subconscious tallying leads to automatization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Acquisition Theory (SA)</td>
<td>Taken for granted</td>
<td>The only required element necessary but</td>
<td>Frequencies of practice and exposure is important in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>not sufficient</td>
<td>automatization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Raise awareness of input misinterpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Input Processing Theory (IP)</td>
<td>L1 ambivalent</td>
<td>How learner process input during</td>
<td>Frequency and meaningfulness of output very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>comprehension is essential</td>
<td>in order to be processed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processability Theory (PT)</td>
<td>Implicit knowledge on the effect of L1</td>
<td>Developmental constraints or functional</td>
<td>Grammatical knowledge is extremely important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>constrains determine what can be processed</td>
<td>Communication is meaning intended driven by acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>which in turns is revealed in production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept-Oriented Approach (CO)</td>
<td>Implicit knowledge on the effect of L1</td>
<td>Developmental constraints or functional</td>
<td>Form-function mapping of language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>constrains determine what can be processed</td>
<td>L2 communicate thoughts that are already present in L1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>which in turns is revealed in production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Approach Theory (IA)</td>
<td>Taken for granted</td>
<td>The only required element necessary but</td>
<td>Significant in combination with other factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>not sufficient</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory (SCL)</td>
<td>Mediating role</td>
<td>Zone of proximal development</td>
<td>Prior knowledge drives new knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cognitive tool for learning</td>
<td></td>
<td>In-Through-Beyond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Important as social interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Collaborative dialogue and private speech)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from the VanPatten & Williams, 2007, p.236, ‘Theories in SLA an Introduction’.  

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2.2. GENRE

Genre is defined as groups of text that share a communicative purpose and that are produce by a certain discourse community (Halliday, 1985). In systemic functional linguistics (SFL) genre is concerned with the relationship between language and its functions in social settings. When texts share the same purpose they often share the same structure and thus belong to the same genre (Halliday, 1985).

In writing instruction the study of genre has become a subject of growing interest at a number of advanced learning institutions in recent years. In the past there have been a variety of approaches to the teaching of writing for L2 learners (students) that in turn have led to several paradigm shifts in the field of English for academic purposes (EAP). One of the main concerns expressed by EAP professors is that even though learners have reached an advanced level in their academic work their level of writing proficiency appears to be lower than anticipated.

Although considerable research has been devoted to L2 writing, less attention has been paid to a comprehensive theory of the teaching of writing. Cumming (1998) and Matsuda (1999) note that L2 instructors are still seeking a coherent, comprehensive theory of the teaching of writing. This goal of this research effort is to provide a synthesis of genre approaches in writing.

Macken-Horaik (2002) suggested that according to the “genre approach” writing occurs in a social context and situation and that a piece of writing has to achieve a specific purpose. The EAP learners have to be instructed in how to relate the purpose of writing to the subject matter in terms of the writer-audience connection and the organization or style of the text. This “genre approach” permits the L2 learners to distinguish how texts are written in different ways according to their function, audience and meaning. Furthermore in the ACIS class the college professors emphasize the difference between different genre sets (e.g. research article vs. master
thesis) in order to make the L2 students aware of how texts differ based on their communicative purpose.

According to Hyland (2003) the writing pedagogies should offer students explicit and systematic explanations of the ways language functions in social context. A variety of methods have been employed in the classroom using the genre approach. Paltridge (2001) employed a framework which was concerned with investigating the text and context of student target situations and thereby encouraging suggestions on writing practices, exploiting text from diverse genre and creating varied genre sets.

The ACIS class materials take into consideration the interaction between text and context. Johns (2002) suggested that academic English has been impelled “to move toward genre analysis through the interest of context use and written discourse” (p.205). With this approach to genre, the concept of context is more specific in that it focuses on particular discourse communities and communicative purposes. This concept follows Swales (1990) who described genre as “a class of communicative events that members share in the same set of communicative purposes” (p.58).

Hyland (2003) asserts that genre analysis is most widely used with regards to L2 instructions. This can be explained by understanding the types of students exposed to different courses who want “to learn quickly about specific language registers and discourse communities so that they can progress rapidly in their work and study” (Johns, 1997, p.206). Bhatia (2004) believes that the genre approach is one of the best ways to help L2 students achieve this goal because genre defines the language used by a specific discourse community.

One way of analyzing the features of a text is by using a ‘Move Analysis’ (Swales, 1990, p.143) in which the professor can deconstruct the structural features of specific genre.
For example various genre can be investigated that include: research articles (Swales, 1990),
business letters of negotiation (Pinto dos Santos, 2002), business e-mail (Gimenez, 2000) and
business negotiations (Charles, 1996), the statement of purpose in graduate program
applications (Samraj & Monk, 2008).

According to Samraj and Monk (2008) the statement of purpose of students written
documents (based on three different disciplines Linguistics, Business Administration and
Electrical Engineering) employed identical moves but variations occurred among steps.

In addition to examining writing tasks in different disciplines, studies have used other
methods, such as interviews to gain a deeper understanding of graduate writing requirements
(Horowitz, 1986; Molle & Prior, 2008; Zhu, 2004). Furthermore a significant amount of genre
research has been conducted regarding move structures (discourse or rhetorical) in academic

Genre analysis of academic writing has been employed to examine the communicative
function of moves within written academic discourse (Flowerdew & Wan 2006; Swales 2004).
The communicative functions of these moves are valuable pedagogically to writing teachers who
teach higher level students in graduate school (Hyland 2004; Swales 2004). Materials for the
teaching of academic writing have been a result of this work on the analysis of moves (Swales &
Feak, 1994).

Furthermore, Lim (2006) notes that academic writings have to consider the organization
of the text as well as the linguistic markers. Thus, the analysis of academic writing has been of
particular interest to the academic community.

Current research has shown that academic writing demands vary across disciplines and
discourse practices and differ among experts and students (Prior, 1998; Hyland, 2009). Thus,
some students display a struggle to follow disciplinary conventions while others are confused by those conventions. ESL college students can be at a disadvantage as their knowledge and expectations or cultural schema are different from those of native speakers (NS) (Hyland, 2009).

2.3. CULTURE

Cultural content has been a topic of much debate in the English language learning classroom. Historically, English language classes are spaces that promote American culture rather than the culture of the English language learner. This nationalistic view is often taken up unconsciously by native English language speakers when teaching English. McKay (2003), points out that “the de-linking of English from the culture of Inner Circle countries… suggests that teaching methodology has to proceed in a manner that respects the local culture of learning” (p. 19).

Lessow-Hurley (2000), Bennett (1997), and Lantolf and Thorne (2006) assert that instructors teaching college language students have to be encouraged to use the content of the L1 culture of their students as a central feature of the content of their classes. Yet, there has been resistance to this position due to imposition of historical, colonial-based education systems, a resistance that comes from the outmoded ‘Inner Circle’ model (Kachru, 1985) which proposes that English language development must use English speaking culture as the content of the class rather than the culture of the first language of the English language learners.

In addition researchers argued that culture and content cannot be separated. Lessow-Hurley (2000) asserts that “The relationship of culture and language has been of interest to anthropologists and linguists since the early twentieth century” (p. 97). Moreover, learning a
foreign language requires an understanding of a foreign culture (Bex, 1994; Zaid, 1999). Bennett (1997) affirmed that:

A fluent fool is someone who speaks a foreign language well but doesn’t understand the social or philosophical content of that language. To avoid becoming a fluent fool, we need to understand more completely the cultural dimension of language (p.16).

According to Vygotsky (1978) when acquiring a L2 it is vital not only to learn the target language but the culture as well. Baker (1996) asserts that “Communication includes not only the structure of language (e.g. grammar, vocabulary) but also who is saying what to whom, in which circumstances” (p.11). Therefore, in this research effort the writing class ACIS aims to increase the students’ awareness of the connection between the content, organization, language, format and values (COLFV model), values that are shared between the writer and the audience.

Furthermore, Lightbown (2000) claims that:

…learners need a great deal of time, as well as opportunities for exposure to language in a variety of context, before they can master its many subtleties. In addition students in a foreign language learning environment face a particular challenge because their classroom exposure to the language leaves them without adequate opportunities to learn appropriate pragmatic and sociolinguistic features of the language (p.450).

Moreover the SDSU students in ACIS class are not only introduced to appropriate pragmatic features such as different possibilities of word choices in order to reveal the writers’ orientation or to influence the readers perspective (e.g. connotation, figurative language such as metaphors, similes) but also the sociolinguistic register of the language (e.g. prescriptive vs. descriptive views of language).

The importance in considering the culture of the English language college student in the process of second language acquisition is supported by Vygotsky (1978) and Cummins (2000).
For Vygotsky, every function in the student’s cultural development appears twice first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (inter-psychological) and then cognitively in the thought process of the student’s (intra-psychological). For Vygotsky (1978), all the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals. For Cummins (2000) social language is context-embedded, that is, comprehension is aided by familiar cultural context clues and modeling and/or demonstrations.
CHAPTER III

METHODS

This chapter describes the design, research context, participants, data sources and data analysis used in the present study. In order to analyze the ESL students’ writing an analysis on two levels, the text (genre analysis) and the sentence level (miscues) was conducted. Additionally, hedging in ESL students was employed to see if any differences in the frequency of hedging are found among different cultures.

Qualitative and quantitative analysis was used in this study. The qualitative methods were used to support our data by providing examples from both ESL students’ writings and linguistic professors written interviews. Quantitative methods were employed to reveal if there were significant differences among 20 different languages and possible correlations between different types of miscues (verb, articles and subject verb agreement). It is worth mentioning that the qualitative data, with regards to miscues, provided us with the examples from students writing and an interpretation based on the context of the text whereas the statistical analysis (in a strictly-mathematical sense) provided us with information regarding whether there were significant differences between the means.

Furthermore, six written interviews with six linguistic professors were conducted in order to reveal the linguistic forms that are required in order to acquire the writing academic genre.

3.1 DESIGN

Due to a lack of qualitative and quantitative data with regard to the role various L1s play in SLA the current research examined 20 different L1s among 141 ESL students. The current study is both a qualitative and a quantitative study based on content analysis
employing correlation. A written interview completed by each of six linguistics professors was used in this research effort. The ESL student writings of 141 students who completed the ‘Advanced composition for International Students’ (ACIS-305W) course in the years 2010, 2011 and 2012 were analyzed.

The study has as an independent variable (IV) which is the ESL students’ academic writing. The dependent variables (DV) are: linguistic course approach (interviews), students writing (text level genre analysis, sentence level miscues, L1) and hedging (culture). This can be represented as a multivariable function \( y = f(a, b, c) \) by a single IV (outcome) and three DVs.

### 3.2 Research Context

The reason for selecting SDSU was that the researcher already has been part of this research community for many years. In addition, the researcher attained a Masters in applied Linguistic from SDSU. The researcher already knew many experts in the field with whom she collaborated in this research effort. The reason for choosing the ACIS (305W) course is that this course is an advanced composition course for students of English as a second language.

A description of the Linguistic 305 W is provided. In order to clear the Upper Division Writing Requirement at SDSU with this class students must have completed the following prerequisites.

1. Completion of 60 units by the end of the semester.
2. Completion of G.E. composition classes (Ling. or RWS 100 and 200, or equivalent courses transferred from other colleges or universities).
3. Fulfillment of the Lower Division Writing Competency requirement.
Note: The Ling 305 W meets the Upper Division Writing requirement for many but not for all majors’ (Linguistics 305W-Spring 2012 Syllabus).

The student populations who attend this class are 1.5 generation, international, senior, graduate students and other categories. The course objectives were to develop reading and writing flexibility by demonstration the ability to read and write a variety of texts used in academic and professional discourse. In addition, a goal is to improve critical skills by evaluating and editing others’ and one’s own writing. The genre read in this course included: on-line articles, commentaries, reports, book reviews, proposals, flyers, resumes and letters. The motivation for assigning readings was for ESL learners to understand the writer’s strategy and to read critically with regard to what makes/doesn’t make a text effective. The writing assignments included the following steps: activating the background knowledge, definition of key terms, reviews of example texts, analysis of features for the genre, brainstorm ideas/topics, outline of the paper, draft one, peer editing, revision, draft two, professors feedback, revisions, proofed reading and final draft. The brainstorm skills included the targeted audience, the topics, purpose, writer values and genre/sub-genre. The writing samples employed in this course were: prompt, professional examples and student examples. Thus the ESL learners wrote: genre analysis essays, professional profile articles, proposals, resumes and letters (Professor 1).

The reason for choosing the data set (141 ESL students) from only one professor was that although the researcher had previously asked multiple professors in 2010 to save their data for future publications only one professor complied. Many universities in U.S. have a substantial number of foreign students who have different L1s than English. Therefore, the need to provide ESL students with a course which provides them with the tools required for academic writing are important nationally and not limited to SDSU. The nature of the ACIS class is to provide the ESL students with academic writing skills required for their academic endeavors.

### 3.3 PARTICIPANTS

The participants involved in this study are composed of two groups. The first group is composed of six linguistic professors. The second group is composed of 141 ESL students.
3.3.1. SIX LINGUISTIC PROFESSORS

The reason for selecting these six linguistic professors was that each had taught ESL classes for at least five years and expressed an interest in this researcher topic. Furthermore, these linguistic professors wanted to contribute to their own field of inquiry and perhaps have an impact toward teaching ESL students. The six linguistic professors hoped to gain deeper insights into the writing demands that ESL students need to master.

The six linguistic professors vary in age range from 30-70 and include three male and three female subjects. All professors have either a Master’s Degree or a Ph.D. in Linguistics. All of the six linguistic professors have taught at various locations in the US and abroad, having a wide range of views concerning teaching of ESL in different countries (e.g. teaching ESL in US vs. Germany).

3.3.2. 141 ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS

The writing documents of all 141 students who completed the course ‘Advanced Composition for International Students’ (ACIS) at SDSU (in the Linguistics Department) during 2010, 2011 and 2012 were analyzed. This number was determined because it includes all of the students who completed the course in each time period from a single collaborating professor. Thus, this was a body of already existing data and there was no interaction between the researcher and the students and the collaborating professor granted permission to analyze the previous students’ written work. Data was shared with the researcher electronically in a Microsoft Word document.

Since this data was confidential and the students were assigned numbers at random by the professor of this class the ESL students’ writing assignments could not be correlated with any other information besides their gender and first language. The only information about the ESL
students provided to the researcher was their first language and gender. Additionally it was mentioned by the professor of the class that all of the students had to be junior or upper division students. Furthermore some students already had an undergraduate degree and were applying to graduate schools.

The ESL students’ writings comprised three consecutive years from 2010 to 2012 for all of the ESL students who completed the 305 W classes for one section. See Appendix 2 for students’ examples. Additional sections were employed in SDSU based on the ESL students’ needs and different department requirements for their ESL students.

3.4. DATA SOURCES

3.4.1. SIX LINGUISTIC PROFESSORS WRITTEN INTERVIEWS

For this research effort the same written interview was conducted with each of the six linguistics professors. The reason for selecting a written interview was that the written language is more cognitively demanding than the spoken language (e.g. writing is denser than speaking, with more complex sentences, more ellipsis). Speech relies on face-to-face propinquity and frequently refers to what can be perceived or to objects that can be in the framework of speaking (e.g., this, there, that one, etc.)

Furthermore, Berman and Slobin (1994, p.22) suggested that notifying the linguistic professors with a hard copy of the questions in advanced “will minimize the burden on memory” of the participants. The researcher in this study provided the linguistic professors with an electronic file of the questions. The linguistic professors mailed a hard copy of their answers within 48 hours. The 48 hours limitation compelled the linguistic professors to think about what linguistic theory or genre approach was implemented the most in their teaching.
Hence 48 hours limitations limit access to previous publications or convoluted research to answer the questions. The written interview output from each of the six linguistic professors was analyzed completely as part of the study. Appendix 1 provides the eight questions addressed by the six linguistic professors.

The written interview protocol included questions regarding the writing characteristics for a ESL students, the theories guiding the understanding of SLA (which theories attribute a positive or negative mediation function to the ESL student’s L1), what types of miscues do ESL students employ in their writings, what type of metadiscourse (genre approach moves and steps) do the linguistic professors employed in their teaching and how are the ESL students’ first cultures implemented in their writings. Furthermore, what challenges do the six linguistic professors have to overcome with regard to teaching writing to ESL students who come from different backgrounds, different fields of inquiry and different L1s. The questions addressed in the written interview are provided in Appendix 1.

The written interviews from the six linguistic professors were saved by the researcher and each professor was provided with a random number from 1 through 6.

The data sources employed in this study consisted of six written interviews provided by the six linguistic professors. Their answers were analyzed by this researcher with respect to five different themes as the six linguistic professors suggested: (1) writing characteristics for ESL students; (2) theories in second language acquisition (SLA); (3) types of miscues the ESL students implement in their writings; (4) general metadiscourse or genre analysis in teaching ESL writing; (5) culture and cross-cultural conditions that hinder or promote the teaching of ESL writing as well as the challenges the professor encountered in teaching college ESL students.

Each written interview was analyzed based on themes and then compared with the answers from
all of the six written interviews. The themes were defined clearly by the professors whereas the researcher only compared the written data. The interviews were included in this research effort to see the professors’ view of what is required with regard to linguistic knowledge for ESL students to be efficient in writing English in academic settings.

**3.4.2. 141 ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS’ WRITTEN DOCUMENTS**

The data sources employed in this study from the 141 students were comprised of only one written document for each of the 141 students who completed the course ‘Advanced Composition for International Students’ (ACIS) at SDSU (in the Linguistics Department) during 2010, 2011 and 2012. The 141 ESL students’ written assignments provided to the researcher by the professor of the ACIS were attained from the students either as class assignments or as a final written exam for the class.

The materials are represented by the 141 students’ writings and include four different genre types. The first genre type was a summary of a published commentary. The second type of genre was a statement of purpose for applying to a graduate program. The third type of genre was a reflection on genre analysis and how might the ESL students’ understanding on genre analysis, as demonstrated by COLFV analysis, assist them in their future academic and professional life. The fourth type of genre was to demonstrate an understanding of a genre analysis based on different articles. All of these assignments were given by the professor of the class. It is worth mentioning that these assignments have a wide range of 4 different genres because the professor of the class asserted that all of these genres are required to be acquired by ESL students in order for them to be efficient writer in academic settings.
All of the 141 students’ writing were examined by the researcher based on different variables (e.g. text level genre analysis, sentence level miscues, L1) and hedging (e.g. culture). The motivation for selecting these students’ documents was to compare how different genres were employed by ESL students (e.g. summary of a commentary vs. statement of purpose). In addition, the researcher hypothesizes that despite using data from 4 different genres the ESL students’ writing miscues are employed in the same manner (e.g. miscues are not dependent on genre but by the level of acquisition of ESL students).

3.5 ANALYSIS

All written interviews from the six linguistic professors were analyzed based on different themes. In addition, the 141 students’ writings were analyzed with regard to metadiscourse (moves and steps) analysis in two different type of genre. An analysis regarding miscues employing qualitative and quantitative methods was conducted. Additionally, an analysis of the frequency of usage of hedging employed by ESL students was conducted. An overview of the analysis for each domain is provided bellow.

3.5.1. SIX LINGUISTIC PROFESSORS WRITTEN INTERVIEWS

The six written interviews were analyzed by the researched based on themes. Deductive coding procedures that built upon the key themes in the research questions were employed. Since these were written interviews the research found five common themes in all of the six interviews. Each theme was analyzed individually and compared among the six professors. The most relevant assertions are cited as the linguistic professors asserted them. The researcher only commented and compared the assertions’ made based on the themes addressed.

The researcher twice reviewed each written interview. In addition, the researcher discussed with the linguistic professors whether any additional clarification was required. It is
worth mentioning that since these were written interviews all of the answers were extremely cohesive and coherent. These findings are presented in chapter four.

3.5.2. 141 ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS WRITTEN DOCUMENTS

The 141 students’ writings were analyzed with regard to a number of variables which are discussed below.

3.5.3. METADISOURSE ANALYSIS MOVES AND STEPS USED IN SUMMARY OF A COMMENTARY AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE (SOP)

The first analysis was with regard to a metadiscourse analysis among 62 students. Hence, the 62 students’ writings included two types of genre: a summary of a commentary (43 students) and statement of purposes (19 students). The analysis was based on students’ papers between 2010, 201 and 2012.

Previous genre analysis (e.g. moves, steps) models influenced the researcher (see Kanoksilapatham, 2005; Lim, 2006; Samraj, 2008; Samraj & Monk 2008). Thus, the research was based on the students’ writings. The moves and steps in both type of genre were defined after the researcher analyzed all of the students’ writings. A move was perceived as a main idea that contained both the writer and the content purpose of what the student wanted to convey whereas a step was a subunit which provided detailed evidence to support a claim.

First the researcher read all of the students’ writings and found a common pattern among students. For example, some students in the SOP started to introduce themselves where other started with the background of their parents. This was a deductive coding procedure in which the researcher read each ESL students’ written document and marked on the page the main topic of
each paragraph. This procedure was employed for all students. After that the researcher reviewed
the data again and started to compare each main idea (move) among students.

After the general patterns of moves and steps were defined by the researcher based on the
students’ writings the researcher had to analyze in more detailed each student’s writing and see
what moves and steps were employed by each student. At a later time each student’s moves and
steps was written down and the frequency of usage was counted. In addition, if a student did not
use a move or a step that was mentioned and all of the differences in students’ writings with
regard to variations were described in chapter 5.

At a later time, experts in the field of genre provided the researcher with a few
suggestions which were implemented in the researcher’s findings. Each move and step was
counted by the researcher based on the usage frequency for each student and these findings are
presented in Table 5.1 and Table 5.2, respectively.

3.5.4. MISCUES EMPLOYED BY ESL STUDENTS

An analysis of 141 ESL students’ writing miscues was conducted by examining all of
the students’ writings with regard to three different kinds of miscues: article, verb (e.g. verb
forms and verb tenses) and subject-verb agreement miscues. The miscues analysis was
employed by both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Qualitative Analysis

Article miscue categories were defined for those cases in which a student did not employ
the correct form of an article or a student omitted an article. One example is provided below. In
addition, incorrect forms were underlined within the examples and when an article was omitted
in the writing (the edited version) it is provided in parentheses.
(1) Genre analysis is (Article ‘a’) writing summary of (Article ‘a’) story of publication that focuses writing about (Article ‘a’) particular story (ESL student 2, L1 Arab).

Verb miscue categories are as follows: verb tenses (VT) and verb forms (VF). In addition, subject-verb (SV) agreements are addressed. Some examples are provided under each of the three types of miscues.

VT miscues were employed when there was a miscue of verb usage with regard to time (temporal miscue). This was labeled as a tense miscue. Below are a few examples of the types of VT miscues (temporal). In these examples the ESL student does not use the correct form of the verb to express the intended time.

Ø Yesterday he has eaten a fish taco. Yesterday he ate a fish taco.
Ø Right now he eats a burrito. Right now he is eating a taco.

With respect to VF miscues (excluding subject-verb agreement) in the examples provided the ESL students appear to understand the time category and use of verbs that are expressed but use the incorrect form of the verb.

Ø He wented to school yesterday. He went to school yesterday.
Ø He has eated three meals today. He has eaten three meals today.

In the above cases the ESL students have reached a stage of appropriate understanding of the use of verbs for the time concepts of L2 (English) but have not reached a stage of accuracy with the form. This type of miscue could be an indication that they are becoming more fluent in the use of L2, compared to the use of a tense miscue (temporal miscue).

In the third type of verb miscue, SV agreement miscues can be considered a subset of VF. This SV category has been separated from VF because SV agreement can be particularly indicative of L1 transfer issues as demonstrated in the following example:
He has a nice time there every year. They eat ice cream every day.

Inter-rater reliability was addressed using Kappa statistics (the researcher and two additional linguistic professors analyzed the data simultaneously with regard to these three kinds of miscues). Each one of us had a file with the students’ data and had to find all three kinds of miscues in each written document. At a later time the researcher and the two linguistic professors met and compared the findings. If a discrepancy in frequency occurred in one written document that document was revised again by all three members. The results are found in chapter 6.

Quantitative Analysis

With regard to miscues a quantitative analysis was also conducted. In addition, the researcher and two mathematics and physics professors collaborated to perform a statistical analysis of students’ writings using the SPSS statistical software package (2012.) The reason for the researcher to collaborate with experts in the field was to hear another perspective and possible explanations. Furthermore, inter-rater reliability was acquired by having experts review the work.

The data set consists of 141 cases representing 141 ESL students and twenty different first languages (L1). Each case consists of five fields: gender, native language defined as the (L1) and three scores based on a written assignment. The three scores based on a written assignment consist of the number of verb miscues (verb form and verb tenses), article miscues and subject-verb agreement miscues. Data analysis and descriptive statistics were conducted. Furthermore, in order to achieve greater statistical significance, the L1 categories were grouped by (presumed) language similarity.
The Pearson correlation coefficients for each pair of miscues were calculated. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) among different miscue variables (articles, verbs and subject-verb agreement) were conducted. Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of variances and the Dunnett T3 post-hoc test were used to determine the group variances.

ANOVA in this research effort was employed in order to test the null hypothesis that all of the means ($\mu_1=\mu_2=\mu_3$, where $\mu_1$=verb miscues, $\mu_2$=article miscues, $\mu_3$=subject-verb agreement miscues) were equal. In addition, in order to assess the assumption that variances among the three categories of miscues from which the samples were drawn were equal, Levene’s test of homogeneity was employed. It is worth mentioning that we have 20 different languages among 141 students which were grouped in 8 language categories (e.g. N Asia composed of Japanese and Korean vs. SE Asia composed of Thai and Vietnamese). Note that even though the same test could have been done pair-wise using multiple t-tests, a total of 21 tests would have been required. This would inflate the error rate. If the probability of falsely rejecting the null hypothesis on an individual test is taken as 5%, the probability of making at least one false rejection is $1-(0.95)^{21} = 0.659$. Using ANOVA, the probability of a false rejection is 5%. The post-hoc Dunnett T3 was employed in order to determine if the means for some group of languages differ (e.g. means of the Romance-Cushic differ from SE Asian-Cushic).

There are many possible post-hoc tests. SPSS provides 18 varieties, each with its own strengths and shortcomings. The choice depends primarily upon whether variances and sample sizes of the test categories are equal. Sample sizes are obviously unequal. Levene’s test for homogeneity of variance determines whether the variances are the same. In this case, neither sample sizes nor variances are equal, so the Dunnett T3 is the post-hoc test of choice.
3.5.5. AN ANALYSIS OF HEDGING IN 141 ESL STUDENTS’ WRITINGS

In this study the categories of hedging used by Holmes (1998), Hyland (1996a, 1996b, 1998) and Varttala (2001) were employed. The classification of hedging devices for this research effort was adapted after Varttala (2001) and consisted only of two main categories: modal auxiliaries and full verbs.

The modal auxiliaries examined were ‘can’, ‘could’, ‘may’, ‘might’, ‘must’, ‘should’, ‘will’ and ‘would’. The full verbs were categorized in two categories: non-factive reporting verbs and tentative linking verbs. The non-factive verbs addressed in this study were four: ‘suggest’, ‘imply’, ‘claim’ and ‘propose’. There were 3 tentative linking verbs analyzed for this dissertation: ‘appear’, ‘seem’ and ‘tend’.

The researcher used the AntConc software package (2014) in order to analyze the frequency of usage of each type of modal auxiliaries, non-factive reporting verbs and tentative linking verbs. The word counts for the entire data set were 88,0321 words.

The researcher employed the AntConc software package (2014) in order to compare the frequency of usage of ‘will’ and ‘would’, ‘can’ and ‘could’ within 6 languages: German, Lao, Somali, Swedish, and Vietnamese. In addition, the AntConc software package (2014) was employed in order to provide the frequency of usage of each type of modal auxiliary, non-factive reporting verb, and tentative linking verb specifically for the 60 ESL students who had L1 Spanish. Additionally, dispersion plots for all 141 students and for 60 the L1 Spanish students.

The AntConc software package (2014) provided the number of hits and length of each student writing for the linguistic form desired (e.g. modal auxiliaries). A concordance is defined as a list of desired linguistic words (e.g. will) highlighted within a specified document or document offered in a manner as to signpost the context in which that linguistic form was used.
In addition, ‘concordance plots’ were provided by the AntConc which allowed us to see the relative position where the desired form was used by the students within the text (e.g. ‘will’ located in the introduction vs. the end). It is worth mentioning that all of the students’ data from the 141 written documents were transferred into a ‘corpus file’ and then analysis was conducted. In addition, when the hits/frequency of the desired linguistic marker was provided in the case of ‘will’ was 510 whereas the hits frequency of ‘would’ was 149 for all 141 students. As a result the researcher had to save all of this ‘concordance/dispersion plots’ individually and at a later time deleted the student written documents which employed the form less than 5 times (for the case of ‘will’). The saved dispersion plots had to be transferred to an addition computer design program in order to combine the plots based on the linguistic form desired and the number of students. The results of the dispersion plots inform us as to where these words tend to occur in the text (e.g. beginning versus end).

3.6. PSYCHOMETRIC ANALYSIS

Validity Caveats and Suggestions

According to different statistical measurements different kinds of validity can be employed: authenticity and content, construct, criterion and consequential. Only two types of validity were addressed in this study; content and construct validity were examined through a linguistic lens (e.g. text and sentence level analysis).

Based on this research effort two questions are posed:

Q1. Do the ESL students’ writings really tell us about their linguistic efficiency in writing beyond the genre (topic), the role of the L1, culture and their linguistic ability in the moment or situation they write?
Q2. What is the correlation or more important its magnitude (the strength of the correlation) between what ESL students’ writing analysis demonstrated (e.g. miscues) and other linguistic skills the ESLs have?

Furthermore, the ACIS course at SDSU is the measure of ‘Academic English’ of ESL students. Since ACIS is under the linguistic department which designed the TOEFL test the authenticity and content validity of this advanced class was supported by previous empirical studies: Biber, Conrad, Reppen, Byrd, Helt, Clark, et al., 2004; Cumming, Grant, Mulcahy-Ernt & Powers, 2005; (authenticity and content validity) Rosenfeld, Leung and Oltman, 2001; Wang, Eignor & Enright, 2008; (concurrent criterion validity) Xi, 2008 (criterion related and predicted validity).

Reliability, Generalizability and Sensitivity Caveats and Suggestions

In this research effort inter-rate reliability, correlation between different variables (e.g. the role of L1, miscues etc.) were employed. There can be a tradeoff between validity and reliability.

As a result, other models of assessment besides ESL students’ writings and professor’s written interviews should be employed to achieve a reliable perspective of what is required for ESL students to be efficient writers. Longitudinal studies should be employed and it should be considered that the same ‘written academic English task’ given at different times may not be comparable due to the fact that ESL students either acquire or experience a decline in English skills.

One caveat is that higher order skills such as depth of comprehending academic English writing skills are better measured by performance assessments of different genre sets (e.g. SOP vs. reflection on the L1 students culture essay). One suggestion is that future researchers may investigate cognitive models (learning progression) to monitor the distribution of miscues in
student writings over time (change/not, cluster/not) since it is paramount to see the ESL students’ distributions of change.

The evaluations of psychometric values are posed as queries: is validity in many circumstances enhanced by ESL writing performance assessments? In addition, how many tasks are required in writing (e.g. coherence, cohesion) and how many of these tasks can be considered feasible as supportive evidence of reliability and generalizability.

3.7. LIMITATIONS

One of the limitations of this study is that the participants in this study are enrolled in the ACIS class in SDSU. Therefore, the outcomes of this study have inherent limitations such as not including other universities at this time and being limited to adults. This study is limited to the subjectivity of the respondents and their linguistic awareness at the time of their writing response. It is worth mentioning that some participants may major in linguistic therefore they are not novices in different linguistic theories or writing academic genre. The strength of this study is that it includes participants from 20 different L1s and as a result a deeper understanding of how L1 affects SLA may be more generalizable.

3.8. SUMMARY

This study included six written interview with six linguistic professors. These interviews were deductive coding procedures based on the key themes in answers.

Additionally three different types of analysis genre, miscues, and hedging were employed in 141 students writing. The genre analysis (move, steps) was employed in order to emphasize how text are written in different ways according to their function, audience and meaning. Furthermore, this study analyzed miscues in L2 English (based on L1) through both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Thus a general outline of the type of miscues addressed
was presented. Furthermore, when ESL students write in English they are influenced by their L1 culture and as a result in this analysis hedging was employed in relationship to the distribution of frequencies and dispersion plots.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE WRITTEN INTERVIEW DATA FROM SIX LINGUISTIC PROFESSORS

This part of the dissertation will address the results and discussions reports on the first and second question of the study:

1. What role does the first language (L1) plays in the success of ESL international college students in acquiring writing literacy skills in their L2 English in order to meet the institutional composition requirements of the CSU system?

2. What are the writing characteristics that are expected for ESL international college students as they acquire L2 English as described by the Advance Composition for International Students’ (ACIS) professors?

This section of the study sought to examine the role of the university professor’s when teaching writing to English Second Language (ESL) international college students in the San Diego State University (SDSU) and what factors influenced the professor’s approach to teaching the course. The course is titled ‘Advance Composition for International Students’ (ACIS). The ACIS course is a requirement for any foreign student to complete satisfactorily in order to earn a degree at San Diego State University. Six linguistic professors were part of the study and all had taught the ACIS course during the years 2007 to 2012. A semi-structured written interview was used in spring 2014 to ascertain their opinions and/or reflections (see Appendix 1).

Interview findings

The interviews of the six ACIS linguistic professors yielded five themes that were derived from their interview written responses.
The first theme relates to the writing characteristics an ESL student (foreign college students) had to adapt in order to convey different ideas. The second theme speaks to the importance of implementing and analyzing linguistic theories from the real-life environment of ESL classes. The third theme centers on the type of miscues the ESL students implement in their writings according to the linguistic professors. The fourth theme relates to the general metadiscourse or genre analysis in teaching ESL writing from the linguistic professor perspective. The fifth theme focuses on culture and cross-cultural issues that hinder or promote the teaching of ESL classes as well as the challenges professors encountered in teaching college ESL students.

4.1. WRITING CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ESL STUDENT

The first theme addressed in this research effort is addressing what are the writing characteristics of for an ESL student from the six linguistic professor perspectives from their written interviews. According to the interviews linguistic professors asserted that even though a general pattern of language structure exists in academic English this general pattern may be not be acquired in the initial stage by ESL students. Professor 2 speaks to the initial assessment of an ESL student’s work. Thus Professor 2 states:

When beginning an ESL writing course, I always have the students provide me with a writing sample so I could assess their needs. I look for organization of thoughts, use of transitions, trends in grammatical errors, punctuation, vocabulary and word-use, and the overall ability to effectively and thoroughly respond to a prompt. This helps me gain a better understanding of students’ problem areas and allows me to prioritize and emphasize certain topics (Professor 2).

Furthermore, a common theme found within the professors’ responses was the suggestion that in many cases ESL students in their first stage may translate utterances from the first language (L1) to second language (L2). The translation motamo (word by word) from one
language to another may be problematic if the ESL students have different structures in their L1 (e.g. SOV languages versus OVS languages). Another difficulty found within the written interview data from the linguistic professors suggests that ESL students when they translate a word from L1 to L2 may have different meanings (false cognate English empathy versus Spanish empathy). Furthermore, if ESL students do not have a specific linguistic form in L1 (e.g. modal verbs) then that form might be problematic to acquire in L2 English. Professor 1 reflects on the ESL students’ translation from L1 to L2 as they begin the writing process in English. Hence the professor 1 states:

The first thing I look for is the ability to convey the idea. For an emerging writer, I feel this is a great challenge. Oftentimes the meaning is obscured, and I feel this is mostly caused by syntactic errors. Namely, the writer translates an idea from L1 to L2 word for word. For an L2 writer, it is hard to “regress” to simplified expressions, but that is what an emerging L2 writer has to accept and do. It is always interesting when I explain the L2 writer’s ideas back to her or him the way I understand them, and when he or she gets surprised about how the meaning of what he or she originally wanted to say changes. They are surprised when they realize that even articles, choice of modal verbs, and commas affect meaning (Professor 1).

It is worth mentioning that in terms of writing characteristics few linguistic professors have addressed the issue that cultural understanding or cultural expression may affect the ways ideas are conveyed. Furthermore, for ESL students it is difficult to understand collocations, metaphors and other linguistic devises that may be culture-specific. Professor 4 speaks to the understanding of the roles of the different parts of speech ESL students need to acquire in order to develop native-like writing. Hence the professor 4 states:

Emerging writers of a second language, particularly those writing for academic or professional purposes, are looking to be native-like in their writing. Therefore, with writers of this population, it is important to look for native characteristics. In terms of grammar features, the places that learners struggle to reach native-like proficiency is in word form accuracy and complying with English phrase structure rules. Therefore, I look to see how a learner demonstrates his or her understanding of the roles of the different parts of speech and how these parts fit together to form meaningful ideas. This is particularly challenging when writers go beyond the more simplistic, canonical rules of
English and start to attempt to employ the variations that are allowed to express more of the subtleties that language allows for. Additionally, I try to monitor things such as collocations or cultural understanding, as well as cultural expectations of organization within a text (Professor 4).

In addition, the content and clarity of the written text are very important features in writing. Professor 6 asserted that the “originality and depth of thought” are significant features that should be considered when ESL students write.

The two main writing characteristics that I look for in emerging writers of a second language (English) are content and clarity. Content is very important in writing because the ideas hold the most weight in academia. A well-written paper with virtually no grammar errors is of very little value if the ideas expressed in the paper are not sound. Therefore, students always must be sure that they answered the prompt or followed the assignment guidelines. Also, they need to be sure that they provided enough relevant details and support their argument. Originality and depth of thought can also help them be successful in their writing. However, if the grammar errors make it difficult to understand the writing, the writing also falls short because the reader cannot understand the ideas the writer is trying to convey. Thus, clarity of expression is also very important for success in academic writing (Professor 6).

Another finding identified under writing characteristics suggested by the linguistic professors is that in order for ESL students to be able to write coherently and cohesively in English the professor has to consider the student’s dominant culture as well as their writing style. Professor 5 underscores being sensitive to the dominant culture of the ESL students and her/his writing style. Therefore professor 5 states:

I look for the beginnings of a sense of style within sentences and then, additionally, I look for a sense of style in a chain of sentences. This sense of style arises from students finding their own voice and presenting this voice in their second language. Using English to articulate their voice on particular subjects is the crux of where the writing teacher engages with the student to encourage the development of ideas that they already have in their first language into a new vehicle of communication that is often uncomfortable (the medium of English). Dealing with this often-uncomfortable medium will be dealt with in different ways by different students depending on their first culture and their personality (Professor 5).
The concept of trust between the professor and student is identified in order for ESL students to be receptive in developing written ideas in a meaningful manner. Moreover, it was also mentioned that a professor has to create an environment so that student’s feel safe enough to receive constructive criticism effectively as proposed by Krashen’s affective filter hypothesis. Professor 5 speaks to the importance of creating trust in the instructional process.

Since identity and communication are intricately linked, having students put ‘themselves’ forth by communicating in a new vehicle is a lot to ask. This is especially so in the written medium where one’s errors and inconsistencies appear more permanent and thus often more vulnerable than in spoken communication. Consequently, a degree of trust is necessary to be built and established between teacher and student. Without this trust student expression in L2 will be shallow, thin and somewhat “cookie-cutter’ like in the sense that they will be following templates rather than reaching into themselves for expression (Professor 5).

Furthermore, professor 5 places emphasis on creating an instructional environment that a student’s sense of anxiety and receptivity to feedback. Professor 5 asserts:

Additionally, I want to see a student operating from a big picture. That is, I want to see strategic development of an overall schema by students managing the big picture by devising and developing effective sub segments within this schema so as to give a meaningful overall presentation of an idea. My role as a teacher is to develop the trust so that students can feel at ease to explore ideas, and also, I want to create an environment so that students feel safe enough to receive constructive criticism effectively (Professor 5).

The first question asked about the role of first language (L1) plays in the success of ESL international college students in acquiring writing literacy skills in their L2 English. In response to this question, nine theories of SLA were examined. The findings suggest that 6 of 9 theories support the notion that L1 plays a meaningful role in SLA.

In support of the notion that L1 plays a meaningful role in SLA, Krashen’s Monitor Theory (MT) asserts that L1 plays an important role in SLA and based in this theory, a large amount of comprehensible input combined with a learner’s innate language faculty is sufficient
for the L2 learner to acquire a language. Theories such as the Universal Grammar (UG) and the Associative-Cognitive Creed (ACC) assign L1 as a key role and as an agent for what can be considered to be a wide range of phenomena in SLA. Within the ACC, SLA begins with an input-driven system that is already tuned and committed to L1. Within the UG the learner is attempting to change parameters already embedded in her/his L1. In contrast to the UG and the ACC, the Interaction Processing (IP) theory asserts an ambivalent approach to the role of L1 in SLA. IP states that L2 parsing may involve the First Noun Principle, or the L1 Transfer Principle, or a combination of both principles, with the implication that the effect of the L1 is still unclear.

The Processability Theory (PT) and the Concept-Oriented Approach (CO) attribute a reduced importance to the influence of L1 in SLA. PT asserts that the L1 transfer follows a hierarchical pattern. According to the PT the L1 can influence SLA when the learner is developmentally mature enough that the language feature can be transferred. CO is also based on universal hierarchical staged development but in this theory the L1 provides positive support in the form of foundational cognitive knowledge. The L1 is not examined as a significant construct in SLA. This can be contrasted with the Sociocultural Theory (SCL) which contends that the L1 grants vital support for the L2ers. The nine theories investigated in this study promote distinctly different viewpoints about how the L1 functions in SLA, and with the majority supporting the importance of L1 in the SLA process.

With respect to the notion that L1 interferes in SLA, in this study the role of L1 in SLA has been discussed from a variety of theoretical perspectives, and depending on the theory it may or may not cause interference in L2 acquisition. Whether or not it causes interference, the use of L1 in the classroom has often been problematic for teachers of English in English speaking
countries. Many classroom teachers take a draconian attitude toward the use of L1 in the classroom and manage their classrooms in order to prevent the use of L1.

While some may claim success by maintaining strict rules against L1 use, such success may be more a result of learners acquiring the language despite the methodology used in the classroom. Assigning success to the classroom method without also ascribing success to the natural ability of learners to learn languages can lead to false assumptions about classroom methodology. Many language learners learn despite the kinds of input and instructional methodology found in a particular classroom environment. In addition, a case can be made that L1 use in the classroom can facilitate L2 acquisition. When teachers use positive L1 transference and point out negative transference, students may potentially optimize their classroom experience to optimize their SLA learning process.

4.2 THEORIES IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION (SLA)

The second theme from the written interviews is related to the nine theories in SLA. The written interviews with the six linguistic professors suggest the assertion that L1 plays a major role in SLA. American professors will assert that their English L1 makes learning an Asian language very demanding while claiming that fluency in a language such as Spanish, Italian and French will make learning a second romance language much easier.

Although it seems intuitive to assume that L1 plays a prominent role in SLA, in the analysis of the written interviews data it was apparent that the major theories in the fields of linguistic and education revealed different perspectives on the importance of L1. In some cases the role of L1 may be enhancing or deemphasizing (lending more gravity to universal effects of
language processing) L2 learning. Professor 2 speaks to the influence of L1 in acquiring L2 and asserts:

Depending on each student’s first language, interference from the L1 could be more or less prevalent. When a student’s first language is also Germanic, I have seen how quickly the student will feel comfortable with spoken and written English. However, an over-reliance on the similarities shared between a speaker’s L1 and L2 can also lead to mistakes. For example, I often witness German speakers pronouncing /v/ as [w] and vice versa, since there is no phonological distinction in German. Another example of this is when Spanish speakers studying Italian pronounce intervocalic /s/ as [s] when it should in fact be pronounced as [z] in Italian. In addition, in the case of languages that do not have articles, a learner’s L1 definitely makes this otherwise simple topic significantly more complicated, causing this to be a problem long after beginner levels of the study of English (Professor 2).

Several linguistic professors discussed the importance of different linguistic theories not only in understanding the role of L1 in SLA but also in understanding the students’ miscues with respect to the role of L1 in SLA.

One professor made referenced to the Universal Grammar Theory (UG) theory developed by Chomsky (1965), which postulates that humans are born with inherent linguistic knowledge. This theory asserts that language is restricted by a set of biologically inherited rules that are activated by linguistic input.

Several professors mentioned Processability Theory (PT), which was developed by Pienemann (2007). PT theory asserts that there are universal stages that guide development in SLA. The universal stages that guide start with are producing a simple word such as “yes” and then a matching plurality such as “two cats”. After that the ESL students will progress through stages demonstrating appropriate agreement within a phrase, within a sentence, and finally across subordinate clauses. Those professors that view PT to be universal amongst their students in their writing class, suggests, as in the case of Professor 1, who asserted that:

In the PT, first use a situation to convey the meaning. You use adverbials such as yesterday for the day before. Then you move on to past tense to carry the meaning of the
past construction. These are the stages that L2 learners go through. You cannot escape these stages with your students. This is a theory I really like and it makes sense to me (Professor 1).

Considering that there are nine (9) linguistic theories that attribute different roles to L1 in the acquisition process in L2 English, beyond PT, Professor 1 further asserts,

I think that all of the theories we covered in SLA all of them make sense and all of them are applicable to teaching ESL. It is just that it is good that we have them as different theories. I think that all of them can be applied to understanding L2 acquisition not only L1. For example if you remember within the UG language ability is thought to be a special faculty that is separate from other cognitive functions. The acquisition of language is considered to be like a puzzle where larger sets of rules are inferred from a smaller set of evidence. Even within UG you do not start from the beginning teaching someone to speak. For example, you don’t teach how to form a subject in the sentence. The basic concepts are common in languages. That is very basic; of course, UG goes deeper than that. That’s what I am saying (Professor 1).

In addition, the majority of the six linguistic professors referred to the Krashen’s Input and Affective filter theories, Input Processing, Associative Cognitive Creed and Vygotsky’s Sociocultural theory. One interesting finding is that linguistic professors often explain why one specific theory is more relevant to them and how this guided their teaching based on different approaches suggested by different theories as professor 2 asserted:

Aspects of VanPatten’s model of Input Processing, the Associative Cognitive CREED, and Vygotsky’s Sociocultural theory all contribute to my understanding of language acquisition and influence my instructional approach. I think there is value in VanPatten’s Processing Instruction model where explicit information is given about the target structure and processing strategies and structured input activities that are used. I also find the Associative Cognitive CREED’s method of bringing meta-linguistic knowledge to learners’ attention extremely valuable. In particular, I find the Associative Cognitive Creed’s encouragement of using explicit negative evidence to demonstrate to learners what cannot be done in a language, to be a wonderful approach. Just as optimality theory focuses on constraints limiting the phonology and syntax of a language, rather than rules creating the phonology and syntax, teaching students what is “illegal” in the English language can be very effective in error avoidance. This also allows for students to be creative in their writing, knowing what to avoid rather than mimicking forms they have been taught as correct.
In regards to Sociocultural theory, I am a strong advocate of determining individual’s zone of proximal development and utilizing scaffolding in order to help each student reach his or her full potential (Professor 2).

In the process of discussing one or more of the SLA theories, the linguistic professors expressed their personal opinion as to why they agree or disagree with a specific tenet. Professor 4 provides us with four personal insights and he/she asserted:

There are a few general ideas about the acquisition of a second language that guide much of my teaching, and these tenets come from both teaching experience and research-driven theories. For example, I believe in the idea that you get better at what you practice. Skill Acquisition Theory shows that to improve with listening, you need to practice listening. …In addition to moving from explicit awareness to implicit understanding in the form of automaticity, and practicing the skills in the ways that you wish to improve (Skill Acquisition Theory), the type of input and required output is important for the learners. The Associative-Cognitive CREED suggests that high exposure to the target language is important in acquisition, and that these materials should be as authentic as possible. Though I do not necessarily agree with what seems like an over-reliance on authentic input in language learning, I do believe that high amounts of input (and output) lead to acquisition, and that authenticity is absolutely essential in reaching native-like levels and for efficient language learning. Practicing in inauthentic ways slows down acquisition and has students improve in ways that they will never use. Though most forms of instruction cannot be perfectly authentic, this is still something to strive for. For this, the general goals of the students’ learning needs to be known so that instruction can be tailored (when possible) for their specific needs. Finally, I believe that the Vygotskian-Sociocultural principles are important in the learning experience. Work with the expert peer and scaffolding are necessary parts of the language learning process. It is important to remember that significantly more of a learner’s cognitive resources are being devoted toward language tasks than a native speaker, and the cognitive demand needs to be reduced to allow for success for the learner. However, it should not be over-simplified so that the learner is not challenged. This is when the expert peer becomes important. In many classes, production is where acquisition takes place. It is precisely here when the students need the instructor most, to play the role of the expert peer. To guide a learner toward successful use of appropriately challenging target language requires some help and some feedback from an expert. Without this feedback, bad habits are formed when mistakes are consistently made. An expert peer can call attention to mistakes and assistant the learner in correcting them before inaccurate rules are fossilized. Though there are more theories that influence my instruction on some level, these are some of the more prominent ideas that I try to incorporate into my instruction (Professor 4).
Moreover, some professors, in addition to addressing a theory, provided examples from personal experience. One professor suggested that motivation is an extremely essential factor in SLA. Furthermore, a linguistic professor provided examples in the manner that she/he tries to motivate the students. For Professor 6, Dörnyei’s (2012) theories on motivation are important:

Two other theories that guide my teaching practices are motivation in learning and sociocultural theory. Dörnyei’s theories on the role in motivation guide my approach to teaching second language learners, especially in writing which can be one of the hardest second language skills to acquire. There are a variety of motivational forces that drive second language learning, and my understanding of these forces helps me guide my students to success. I try to motivate my students by helping them believe in themselves, offering help when they feel like quitting, explaining the pedagogical value for various in-class and out-of-class assignments, and by making sure outside factors do not negatively influence their progress. These strategies are sometimes directed to the whole class or specific individuals. Overall, in my over ten years of teaching, I feel that the influence of motivation in learning cannot be overlooked (Professor 6).

Professor 6 also speaks to two other theories by Dekeyser (2007) and Vygotsky (1978), respectively. The first focusing on skill through observation and analysis which is followed by practice and the second on the notions of human learning that is social in nature and requiring scaffolding from instructors.

One SLA theory that guides my understanding of language acquisition is Dekeyser’s Skill Acquisition Theory. Students first acquire knowledge about the skill through observation and analysis, which is followed by practice and eventually automatization (as cited in VanPatten & Williams, 2007, p. 98-99). Vygotsky’s Sociocultural theory defines how I approach teaching. According to Vygotsky (1978), “human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them” (as cited in Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p. 211). Similarly, I believe that adult language learning must be social in nature and requires scaffolding from instructors, peers, and other tools in order for students to be able to self-regulate their language usage (Professor 6).

Some professors addressed Krashen’s Input Theory that provides distinction between ‘learning’ and ‘acquisition’. Professor 5 relates this theory to ‘error correction’ and provides an explanation of why writing instructions is difficult.

Krashen’s input hypothesis and his distinction between ‘learning’ and acquisition’ have been important influences on my understanding of language acquisition. In addition, the
work of Steven Pinker (The Language Instinct) has been important to my work as well. Pinker’s work has explained and extended the work of Noam Chomsky’s innate model of language acquisition. For me, consequently, my understanding of Pinker, Chomsky and Krashen in my everyday teaching yields class work and activities where I facilitate students’ own innate ability to develop linguistically. This facilitation happens though providing students with input that I develop in order to be immediately and readily understood by language learners. As a natural consequence of viewing language acquisition in this way, the place of error correction in instruction has changed. In the same way that error correction does not help babies to walk (although it may appear to do so!) neither does error correction help students acquire a language. Students will acquire structures and produce structures when they are ready. Since writing classes are production based (along with speaking skills) and they are not as time dependent as speaking, writing pieces can be looked upon as a sculpture that is reflected upon over time and therefore there would be a place for chipping away here and there (error correction) unlike speech production (Professor 5).

Another interesting finding that a few professors mentioned is the interconnectedness of the students’ first language and their culture. In professor 4 prior excerpt asserts what may be acceptable in one culture may not be acceptable in another culture.

Depending on each student’s first language, interference from the L1 could be more or less prevalent. When a student’s first language is also Germanic, I have seen how quickly the student will feel comfortable with spoken and written English. However, an over-reliance on the similarities shared between a speaker’s L1 and L2 can also lead to mistakes. For example, I often witness German speakers pronouncing /v/ as [w] and vice versa, since there is no phonological distinction in German. Another example of this is when Spanish speakers studying Italian pronounce intervocalic /s/ as [s] when it should in fact be pronounced as [z] in Italian.

In addition, in the case of languages that do not have articles, a learner’s L1 definitely makes this otherwise simple topic significantly more complicated, causing this to be a problem long after beginner levels of the study of English (Professor 4).

Overall, although the professors addressed different linguistic theories that may provide different ways of explaining the acquisition in L2 English, the interviews data suggests that L1 is more widely implemented as a mediating function. Furthermore, a specific linguistic form may not be acquired in the first stage of acquisition of L2 English which is not ascribed as a negative mediation function to the ESL student’s first language. Professor 6 states:
I believe that there may be transfer from the L1 to the L2 when students write academic papers in English. Students may be thinking first in their L1 and then translating directly into English. The errors may occur when the grammar is different. For example, I currently have a Chinese student whose most predominant errors in her writing are verb tense and form errors. In Chinese, verbs are not inflected which may be the source of her difficulty in using the correct English verbs in her writing. I’ve also noticed that lower level Arabic students tend to have problems with capitalization and punctuation in English since in Arabic it is much different.

In terms of specific SLA theories, VanPatten’s (2007) Input Processing theory may explain some reasons for adult ESL students’ miscues. I have noticed that when students are trying to convey meaning, especially ideas that are more complex and require more critical thinking, their focus may be on meaning, not form, resulting in grammatical errors. VanPatten’s (2007) Primacy of Content Words Principle states, “Learners process content words in the input before anything else” (p. 117). When students do not notice the grammar in the input, the proper grammatical forms are sometimes not used in the output (Professor 6).

Furthermore, regarding a negative mediating function one linguistic professor maintained that this judgment depends on the reader and the audience. Professor 5 offers a different perspective in that we should not only consider the ‘narrow linguistic world of the American reader’ but in many circumstances when we are writing for ‘an international audience’. Thus, one solution is to allow for ‘wider syntactical and morphological parameters than in American linguistic patterns’. Professor 5 explains the narrow linguistic world of the American reader in the following three statements:

First language ‘interference’ is more of an issue, in terms of my teaching, with adults than with children. As most teachers and language learners have experienced, years of neuron pathway use in L1 in adults tends to initially disallow alternative patterns in grammar, vocabulary use, and discourse structure.

Be that as it may, what is often intriguing to listeners of second language speakers is the form of English that the first language has imparted to ESL communicators. Often accented speech enhances and enriches meaning rather than detracts from it. Academic writing is a special case where alternative grammars and metastructures (read ‘accents’) are often judged negatively.

This judgment is related to audience. There are many different pockets of ESL students in the United States. Many of our students in four-year university-type situations will be writing for an international audience rather than the narrow linguistic world of the American reader. Consequently, as teachers, we need to help this particular student groups address their future audiences. With this in mind, we need to allow wider
syntactical and morphological parameters than American linguistic patterns. In many cases this means taking the time to learn grammar, vocabulary and other structures that may be perfectly acceptable to academic non-American, fluent, nonnative English reading audiences (Professor 5).

It is worth mentioning that several professors emphasized that L1 culture and cultural values might be important linguistic features that shape the students’ writings. Professor 1 states:

I believe that language skills are acquired through exposure and practice. Additionally, explicit instruction is necessary to shed light on language aspects that are either not salient enough in input or are overshadowed by L1 characteristics. Therefore, these language aspects are often predictable. I think L1 and L1 culture play a role in ESL learning, especially in adult students. Based on my experience, both as an ESL student and instructor, adult students frequently employ L1 syntactically features and rely on L1 cultural values in the learning process. This can impede the process of first of all noticing and also acquiring linguistic and cultural features. SLA theories, such as CREED, take this under consideration (Professor 1).

4.3 TYPES OF MISCUES THE ESL STUDENTS IMPLEMENT IN THEIR WRITINGS

The theme number three addressed by the six linguistic professors in their written interviews was regarding the types of miscues the ESL students implement in their writings. The interview data suggest that all linguistic professors provide a general assessment of miscues based on writing patterns observed in their students’ assignments. Several professors related the miscues to the L1, to the ESL students’ level of second language acquisition or to the understanding of miscues using different linguistic theories. All linguistic professors provided examples of miscues, such as a word choice and in addition they provide an explanation of why that type of error occurs. Furthermore, a few professors not only addressed different language proficiency and writing levels the ESL students must acquire (e.g. from the beginner to advanced) but they also addressed the problems ESL students may encounter within each stage. One of the challenges for advanced students has been the general organizational structure and the
understanding of specific linguistic discourses such as metaphors, collocations and idioms. Thus professor 4 elaborates on miscues:

Though specific types of miscues or errors may vary across learners, there are a few general types of common errors that can be seen in L2 learners’ writing assignments. The most common of all errors could quite possibly be word form errors. This mostly includes students using a word of a part of speech that cannot appear in the context in which it was written. For example, the following expression can be a common mistake in an ESL student’s paper: “I want to have successful”. This is a mistake because of the form of the word “successful.” This is an adjective, but in this context, you need to have something. Something needs to be a noun, so we cannot end this sentence with only an adjective. This kind of error is particularly common, and demonstrates the student’s lack of understanding of phrase structure rules. The student has a particular concept in mind that (s)he is conveying. However, the student is unable to implement appropriate phrase structure rules. This is quite a common type of mistake and is one of the harder, conceptually more challenging types of errors to correct (which is probably why it is so prevalent). Additionally, fitting in with word form errors, are errors of agreement. This typically will involve processing within phrases (these cars vs. this cars) or between phrases (as in subject-verb agreement). These errors of agreement involve processing beyond the individual word and are quite common mistakes involving the correct word, but the wrong word form.

Word choice errors are also quite commonplace. The increased reliance on google to translate when writing in a foreign language only increases this problem. Students think of a word in their native language that they want to say, then translate it into English and put down the first word that comes up. The results of this are similar to what we can imagine if we type a word in English, then look up synonyms, and replace the correct word with any word on the synonym list. Though some of the central meaning will be correct, the connotations or secondary meanings of the word will almost undoubtedly not line up. Though students can study rote memorization techniques of a vocabulary word, they often will struggle with sense meaning. It is because of this lack of sense understanding that students will so often have word choice errors.

Continuing along, language becomes more diverse and non-canonical with higher level, native-speaker academic writing. As students start to experiment with this, mistakes are commonly seen in collocations, idiomatic use of prepositions (or idiomatic use in general), and with general organizational techniques. Students start to demonstrate a better understanding of canonical rules and structures, but struggle with the variations that are allowable within these guidelines. The exceptions to the rules are often over-extended or used in inappropriate situations. High levels of exposure and awareness-raising help the most once students reach these higher levels (Professor 4).

Furthermore, several professors identified or correlated the SLA theories with different error patterns. Additionally, the linguistic professors ascribe the students’ writings miscues with regard to the students L1. Professor 1 describes an example:
One example is the Arabic and Chinese students who omit the copular “be” in their L1. As a result, in their writing assignments in L2 they extensively used sentences that omitted the copular “be” (e.g., “San Diego Ø hotter than Chicago” vs. “San Diego is hotter than Chicago”). And I have these students in my class and these errors are all over their writings. Another main problem with many languages such as Chinese, Korean, and Russian is that they do not use an inflection for the third person singular. As a result my students’ writing assignments are showered with this type of mistake (e.g., “She work hard” vs. “She works hard”). Raising the students’ awareness of these features may cause an improvement in their L2 writing. This is real life data to see what a theory is telling us and see it in the real life in the students’ writing (Professor 1).

Another linguistic professor referred to their own L1 (Spanish and Italian) and provided perspective not only as a linguistic professor but also provided very specific examples of miscues implemented by ESL students whose L1s were Spanish and Italian. Moreover, explanations of why these types of miscues may occur are provided. The same linguistic professor asserts that miscues are omnipresent even in the native-speaker writing. This is more closely correlated with ‘correct punctuation with multi-clause sentences’ and ‘complicated tense-aspect structures such as future perfect progressive’. It could be that academic English requires more convoluted utterances. Professor 2 elaborates on miscues in L1 (Spanish and Italian):

The types of errors ESL students make are usually dependent on their first language and their level. For example, a student whose first language does not include articles will have trouble remembering to include articles in his/her English writing. When these students do include articles, they are often used incorrectly. When a student’s first language is Italian, where the simple past (passato prossimo) is usually depicted through a form that resembles English’s past perfect, the past perfect is often overused and misused in the student’s writing. Another error I come across from students with Italian or Spanish as their first language (or any student with an L1 that pronounces the orthographic /i/ as [i] rather than [ɪ] or [ai]) is the use of this when intending to write these. When a student’s first language uses roman script, there is often interference from the first language that can cause spelling errors. This is especially true with vowels. In addition, when a phoneme or phoneme distinction is not present in a student’s first language, spelling errors are often made. For example, many of my Japanese students struggle with distinguishing /r/ and /l/ and often use the /r/ when they mean to write /l/ and vice versa.

In regards to student skill-level, subject-verb agreement, restating the subject and/or omission of the subject, articles, pronouns, adverb placement, negation, fragments, word use and correct tense-aspect form and usage are problems I have come across very
frequently with low to intermediate students. With high intermediate to advanced students, I tend to come across issues such as run-on, comma splices, and errors in punctuation, wordiness, organization, and problems with participle usage. The more advanced students also make the errors I mentioned for the lower-level students, but to a lesser degree and less frequently.

Certain aspects of grammar seem to be problematic for the majority of students, regardless of their first language. Prepositions, especially idiomatic collocations, seem to be a universal problem area. I think this is due to lack of sufficient exposure to many academic terms that are collocated with specific prepositions, as well as the sometimes abstract nature of prepositions, and the inconsistencies of preposition use even among native speakers. I think correct punctuation with multi-clause sentences is also a struggle for ESL students of all backgrounds. Although, I have noticed that this is a problem with native-speaker writing as well. More complicated tense-aspect structures such as future perfect progressive, also tends to cause trouble for students of all backgrounds (Professor 2).

Another interesting finding is that a few professors redefined the word ‘miscues’.

According to one linguistic professor ‘what might appear to be a miscue’ may be a ‘cultural expression or self-expression’ of the writer. It is worth mentioning that one of the arguments constructed was that in the world there are ‘twice as many non-native speakers of English’ than ‘native speakers of English’. According to the linguistic professor the reader may be the one to judge which linguistic discourse should be employed. Furthermore, the linguistic professor also refers to different cultures (e.g. English, US, Australia) that may have different standards. Professor 5 points to the importance of differentiating between self-expression, cultural expression, and a miscue:

It would be important to distinguish between self-expression, cultural expression and a miscue. Sometimes what might appear as a miscue is actually a fully understandable form of communication and the ‘miscue’ may be the ‘flavor’ (cultural expression and/or self-expression) of the writer. I have seen many writing and grammar teachers disallow many forms of vocabulary and grammar because they do not fit into their very narrow set of acceptability. Current theories in world English posit a greater variety of options than ‘inner circle’ cultures often prescribe English, U.S., and Australia (Professor 5).
The fourth theme addressed in this research effort is addressing the metadiscourse or genre analysis in teaching writing. The metadiscourse or rhetorical approach suggested by the linguistic professors in the written interviews indicate that they provided a general outline to their students as to what a rhetorical approach is and how it differs among the various genre (e.g. research article vs. dissertation). Professor 1 provides specific details as to what a rhetorical structure may require:

The rhetorical structure depends on the genre the students produce. Generally, L2 learners follow a common structure of 1) introducing the topic, 2) developing the topic using explanations and examples, and 3) restating the main idea. I see a lot of variation in terms of which steps are comprised within these moves. L2 writers, as well as L1 writers, may jump on to explaining and exemplifying the topic before giving some background information. Furthermore, they may conclude their writing by adding explanations and exemplification of a new topic. I feel that our students may benefit from understanding how each step contributes to the achievement of writer’s purpose. In my writing (and reading) classes, I employ a genre analysis. Before a writing assignment, I have my students look at sample writings and have them chart the texts based on what each segment of the text does to contribute to achieving the purpose of that writing. Students can also chart their own writing (Professor 1).

Furthermore, several professors offer explanations as to how moves and steps may vary among different genres and how ESL students may improve their writing by implementing a coherent and cohesive linguistic discourse. Move can be defined as a main idea that contains both the writer and the content purpose of one wants to convey. A step is a subunit and provides details evidence to advocate or gainsay a claim. Professor 2 provides insights into the structures produced by ESL students, their writing gaps and how to improve their writing:

When reading students’ writing assignments, I often find a lack of organization or an over-reliance on a formula they must have learned somewhere along the way. When organization is lacking, I often find it difficult to uncover the writer’s thesis, and often times the thesis is non-existent. When analysis of other texts is required, many students turn their papers into long article summaries rather than an argument essay, or whatever the prompt-specified. I find students struggle as much with addressing the prompt as they do with the English grammar. When a clear thesis statement is included in a written
assignment, often times it is found either in the middle of the paper or at the end. This could be due to the organization used and taught in their native-countries. When a student over-relied on a formula, their papers lack fluidity as their transitions seem forced and often do not properly connect ideas.

When introducing different genres and writing tasks, I draw students’ attention to the different moves and steps employed within a specific genre by presenting a sample paper. I annotate the sample paper, emphasizing which parts of the paper (moves) are necessary to the genre and task and how they are achieved (which steps are taken). I also point out which parts of the paper are due to the writer’s personal style, which parts could be improved, and what types of things would be unacceptable or awkward in the particular genre I am teaching about. I am also sure to completely break down the prompt. I find that failing to respond to every aspect within a prompt often leads the student to write a paper of a different genre. This consequently leads to a poorer grade despite how accurate the student’s grammar may be (Professor 2).

In addition, several linguistic professors provided an outline to the ESL students of what might be required in order to advocate or refute a position based on an argumentative essay. For example, one professor provided an example of a cause-effect essay. One linguistic professor asserted that ‘there are different approaches’ that ‘the writer must take’ while ‘providing a target language can help with this purpose’. Professors 4 described the metadiscourse process provided to ESLs to acquire the knowledge and skills in writing:

Most typically, we see these metadiscourse markers as signs of transition. How these are presented depends on the type of writing the student is given. For example, in a cause-effect essay, students may be given transitional phases that introduces causes, introduce the relationship between events, or introduce effects. This way, the students take on a few of the phrases that they are most comfortable so that they do not jump from concept to concept without any discourse markers (Professor 4).

It is worth mentioning than one of the linguistic professor conveyed what specific moves were employed in his/her class. The chosen profiles were from Time Magazine and the linguistic professor described how students first identified the moves using a graphic organizer and then provided an outline of their own profile. Finally the students wrote narratives about a particular cultural value. It could be the case that students in their writing have different possibilities to implement the moves learned. According to the linguistic professor exposing the students to the
same genre in different ways (e.g., 3 sample texts) may benefit the ESL student enormously in understanding the organizational structure.

I apply genre analysis in my teaching of ESL writing. For example, for the first writing unit in my low intermediate writing class, we read profiles of some of the most influential people in the world in *Time Magazine*. After reading the profiles, the students wrote similar profiles of themselves or someone they know. However, before they began writing, I wanted them to analyze the genre or organizational structure of profiles (Professor 6).

4.5 AMERICAN CULTURE EMPLOYED IN TEACHING ESL CLASSES AND THE CHALLENGES PROFESSOR ENCOUNTERED IN TEACHING ESL STUDENTS

The fifth theme addressed in this research effort focuses on culture and cross-cultural issues that hinder or promote the teaching of ESL classes as well as the challenges professors encountered in teaching college ESL students.

Contrary to the goal of supporting an indigenous culture of learning, the interview data from all of the six linguistic professors suggests that the cultural knowledge acquired by students in their L1 is important to allow for transfer of linguistic contextual knowledge when writing in L2 English. When the cultural knowledge of L1 is dismissed the acquisition in L2 might be impeded given the lack of contextual understanding.

Thus, several linguistic professors pointed out that they try to educate themselves as much as they can in their students culture by reading articles and by having discussions with students who have different background knowledge from that of the professors. This is an extremely important endeavor by a linguistic professor since by knowing about their student’s cultures they can predict the challenges that their students might encounter in learning and understanding the complexity of the L2 language. Furthermore, it was suggested that the linguistic professors are culturally sensitive by acknowledging, respecting and encouraging
students to use their cultural knowledge from their native language. Professor 4 provides insights into elements of cultural awareness:

The first way to incorporate multicultural perspectives in teaching is to educate yourself in the different cultures of your students. Currently, I read articles and attend trainings that provide information about the cultural background of my students. This helps to better understand student expectations of themselves, the instructor, and the learning process. Also, it helps to understand the students’ individual cultural differences as well as learning goals. By doing all of this, it is easier to understand where everyone is coming from and what they expect or want out of this experience. This allows the instructor to better meet the needs of the class.

After educating yourself in the culture of your students, you can better anticipate the challenges that they might face in the ESL classroom. Some cultures have a drastically different approach to teaching language, so the students will expect the teacher to behave differently in the class, and to expect different levels of effort from the students. Therefore, it is unfair to think that, just because we are teaching in the United States, that students have a complete understanding of the United States educational system. If teachers provide paper and pencil on the first day of class, then it is unfair of me to think negatively of my student who comes to class “unprepared” by American standards.

Cultural expectations must be part of the instruction because cultural fluency is part of language fluency. When I teach high-level pre-university students, I clearly, regularly, and explicitly express my expectations of them as students, modeling these expectations after those that they can expect at the university level.

It is also important to be culturally sensitive. It is not fair to simply say that you are in America now, you must think as an American. Though they will be evaluated based on American expectations, the alternate cultural viewpoints of the student must be acknowledged, respected, and even encouraged. Seeing things from a different perspective can be quite valuable and should not be disregarded. Beyond simply being valuable to allow diversity of thinking, different cultures have different values that must be respected in order to make the students feel comfortable. For example, pairing a married Saudi woman with a group of single men may be culturally insensitive and cause a lot of discomfort for the students. An instructor must do his best in order to be sensitive to cultural needs. Public error or behavior correction may be very embarrassing and insulting in some cultures, or ignoring a student’s attempt to negotiate may be considered disrespectful. Though students will often understand that these offenses are committed out of ignorance, it is greatly appreciated when these values are dignified and respected rather than ignorantly violated (Professor 4).

According to another linguistic professor the cultural ways of a student are often revealed by encouraging the students to write about their own ideas which promote ‘genuine curiosity’ that is culturally based in their thinking and are pertinent to their experiences. Furthermore, if suggestions have to be made regarding specific issues or questions then they can be dealt with
through an approach that is ‘peer-addressed in small groups rather than teacher-addressed’. For linguistic professors who may have a similar L1 as their students, the professor’s insights may benefit the students since they already share similar background knowledge and similar cultural values. Professor 5 reflects on encouraging students to write on their cultural perspectives or ideas:

For me, one way I acknowledge the cultural component of a student is to encourage their ideas, whatever they might be, and facilitating their ‘hanging’ these ideas onto the form locally expected in academic writing (the five paragraph essay, for example). One way that I encourage and incorporate the developing and sharing of cultural perspectives is to systematically have students participate in free writing exercises that do not include any restrictions on language structure whatsoever. In these exercises students are rewarded for the ideas they produce and share and are never corrected with regard to grammar, spelling, paragraph structure or other prescriptive forms. If there are questions about content, these questions are peer-addressed in small groups rather than teacher-addressed. In these cases there is a certain amount of trust and genuine curiosity regarding student ideas, and these ideas are often culturally pertinent. In this way students share their culture without having the often-grueling dual task of dealing with form while at the same time sharing content (Professor 5).

Another linguistic professor explained that he/she shared his/her experience as a Greek American to the students as a way to emphasize the importance of cultural ways of being and writing narratives with students. Moreover, this linguistic professor preferentially selected prompts that permitted students to share elements from their own cultures. In addition, this linguistic professor also encouraged these students to share information about their language. If relevant topics were addressed (e.g. environment) then student may relate the selected topic using their own cultural perspective. According to this linguistic professor it is extremely important to have ‘an interest in my students’ culture and language. It helps me build a rapport with them, learn more about where they are coming from, and teach them in a more effective way. Professor 6 elaborates on cultural perspectives:
I definitely share my experiences as a Greek American to my students. When I lived in Greece in my 20s, I had to grapple with adapting to the culture and becoming more fluent in the language, so I can empathize with my students. I also encourage them to share their experiences and explain how their cultures are different from American culture. Whenever possible, I like to choose writing prompts that allow students to share elements of their culture. For example, for one writing assignment, my students wrote about the effects of cultural misunderstandings in nonverbal communication, such as hand gestures and body language. For example, in some essays, my Saudi students discussed how misunderstanding can occur with hugging. In Saudi Arabia, men and women do not hug each other in Saudi Arabia, but this is a common form of social interaction in the U.S. By explaining the causes and effects of these misunderstandings, I believe I helped my students become more culturally conscious and adapt better to studying abroad in the United States. I also asked my students to write a problem-solution essay about an environmental issue affecting their countries. Environmental pollution is a serious issue in the world, and I felt that it was important that they relate it to their home countries.

In addition to the writing assignments, I encourage them to share information about their language and culture in group work and class work activities. Even when I am preparing them for a writing assignment not related to their country, I encourage them to relate the topic to their own culture and also to activate any background information they have about the topic. For one class, I was preparing them to write an argumentative essay about whether guns should be allowed on university campuses in the United States. Before reading and learning more about gun laws in America, we had a class discussion about what they knew about the gun laws in America, what the gun laws were in their home countries, how people in their countries view guns, and finally how they felt about guns individually. It was important for me to get their perspectives about guns. In order to be able to build knowledge, I think students need to relate to what they already know about the topic, and one important source to tap into is their culture. Overall, it’s important to me as an instructor to show an interest in my students’ culture and language. It helps me build a rapport with them, learn more about where they are coming from, and teach them in a more effective way (Professor 6).

Cultural accommodations were identified by linguistic professors as an essential awareness in working with culturally diverse cultures. A professor provided an example of accommodation that deals with female student from Saudi Arabia. Professor 2 describes the following situation:

When dealing with a multi-cultural classroom, there are many steps I have to take in order to accommodate everyone’s learning and comfort requirements. For example, I work with many students from Saudi Arabia who, if female, refuse to work with male students. When assigning group work, I either let the students choose their partners, or am sure to pair a female student from Saudi Arabia with another female student (of any ethnicity). When no other females are present, I allow the female student to work alone if
she prefers. Once the students feel comfortable in their learning environment, they are much more receptive to learning (Professor 2).

Moreover, in the case of gender respect, some professors have experienced differences in the ways males and females are treated in their role of professor. Such incidents have occurred when male students from a non-western culture may not hold the same respect for a female professor as they do for a male professor. Professor 2 describes:

As a woman, I have also experienced how male students from some cultures do not hold the same respect for female instructors as they do for male instructors. In these cases, I have had to simply exert my authority if disrespect or disruptions occur and do my best to deliver instruction they would consider worthy, despite my gender (Professor 2).

Another area of cultural awareness is the problem that in some cultures a student’s personal opinion is not valued. As a result the student does not provide his/her opinion in their writing assignments and prefer to use the ideas of the author. Thus, the idea of what is considered plagiarism may differ across cultures. One may argue that reiterating what other authors have asserted is paraphrasing and as a result students may only provide the author’s perspective using the data in the main source that was provided by the instructor. In Latin the phrase is ‘nanos gigantum humeris insidentes’ with a current meaning “one who discovers by building on previous discoveries”. Thus, different cultures may perceive paraphrasing from different cultural perspectives. European cultures acknowledge that prior work may be approached in a different manner than in other cultures. Thus, Europeans may be more concerned with valuing what is considered previously stated ideas than paraphrasing by Isaac Newton “If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants” (Hawking, 2003, p. 1).
To expand the number of ways ESL college students can express themselves Professor 2 shared the utilization of different teaching methods that target the visual, tactile and aural in order to guide the students in their SLA:

When it comes to teaching, I take into account barriers students may have due to their culture. For example, I am aware that in many communal societies the thoughts of the individual are trivialized. This is reflected in student writing when a student focuses on summarizing the ideas of an article without including his or her perspective. In these situations, I emphasize the importance of the personal opinions and/or critiques of the student writer. In addition, the ideas of what constitutes plagiarism vary from country to country, so I am sure to explain our plagiarism policy in detail. I also teach paraphrasing and quoting in depth in order to show students how to incorporate the ideas of others without accidentally plagiarizing. When accidental plagiarism does occur, I discuss the issue with the student in an understanding manner, realizing that the notions of plagiarism differ from culture to culture (Professor 2).

To increase student participation in the classroom setting, Professor 2 shared some insights by reflecting on classroom interactions:

Depending on the student’s cultural background, a student will be more or less of an active participant in the classroom. Since some cultures encourage speaking up in class, where others expect students to be silent while absorbing the information, I need to take certain steps in order to avoid an unbalanced participation from the students. I incorporate nomination when asking for student responses to ensure everyone participates, and I set up one-on-one meetings with students in order to ensure everyone receives answers to their questions (Professor 2).

One significant recommendation made by one linguistic professor is that professors of SLA need to be aware of who their students are and how to begin connecting with them. Another recommendation is for a professor to have an understanding that the students in her/his class may come from different cultures and with different linguistic norms. Thus, linguistic professors have to ‘acknowledge their culture perspective immediately’. Professor 3 asserts:

Well, depending on what their culture is, such insight can give you an idea of where to start. Is the ESL student from a culture that has a language similar to your language? Does the ESL student originate from a culture that has a written language? What are their customs on talking with one another? I believe that you have to acknowledge their culture
perspective immediately. Find out as much as you can about the person and where they come from (Professor 3).

In addition, another linguistic professor mentioned that when teaching an ESL class in the USA, one will have a very diverse student composition and as a result one has to be aware of the culture in which, one is writing. Professor 1 elaborates:

In my classroom we are all from Non-American cultures, myself included. All of us, we bring our own culture to the classroom. I know that my students’ writing assignment will be affected by their own writing style which is rooted in their own culture. So you can’t really tell somebody to change their writing style but you can help student understand that a writing style is like clothing, picking out different outfits for different occasions. You are the creator for all of them but they are all different for different situations. So I have to help students understand that they are using their own style but they create appropriate versions for the appropriate culture. Again this has to do with challenges because I am not familiar with their culture…So for example you know in Somalia when you write to someone but I really don’t know how they write in Somalia and I have students from Somalia so I just raise students awareness because you have to be aware of the culture in which you are writing. This is also a challenge which goes beyond English teaching (Professor 1).

Moreover, Professor 1 believes that the language of writing has to be adjusted to the language of your reader. According to this linguistic professor it is impossible to know the cultures of a very diverse group. As a result of this diversity each student brings a different cultural perspective yet the instructor has to raise the students awareness of the culture in which they are writing. Professor 1 provides an example:

So you are an American businessman and you are writing a letter to your fellow businessman in Japan. You are writing in English because your partner speaks English. But your English has to be adjusted to the culture of your reader so even though you are writing in your own native language the culture of writing has to be adjusted to the language of your reader. So in a writing class for both NNS and NS understanding the culture of the reader and writer is essential (Professor 1).

A new paradigm proposes that English language learners should be allowed to use their cultural knowledge of their first language as a central feature in writing about a given content topic in their classes. There has been resistance or opposition to this assertion due to the
perpetuation of a historical colonial-based education system. Kachru (1985) points to such resistance comes from the outmoded “Inner Circle” model of academia which proposes that in learning the English language one must only use the English speaking cultural context rather than the culture of the first language of the English language learners. Other researchers argue that learning a foreign language entails a comprehension of a foreign culture (Bex, 1994; Bennett 1997; Zaid, 1999). Baker (1996) states that:

A language indexes its culture. A language and its attendant culture will have grown up together over a long period of history and be in harmony with each other. Thus the language that has one has grown up is the culture that best expresses that culture. Its vocabulary, idioms and metaphors are the ones that best explain the cognitive and emotive level of that culture (p.64).

One of the linguistic professor advocated that learning different skills in ESL requires the understanding of the English speaking culture, but the students’ first language plays a vital role in contextualizing meaning. Furthermore, the four main domains (reading, writing, speaking and listening) as well as additional skills such as vocabulary, utterance structure, pauses and turn taking are different in the respective culture of the discourse community. Thus, it is essential to make the students aware of different linguistic differences (e.g. exchanging-information) among cultures. Professor 1 provides one approach in the following paragraph:

So when you do vocabulary in English you have to relate to culture saying why do they say it in this way? Why do they use this expression? You have to give students situations where such expression would be used. Even from level 1(initial) it is interesting that you begin by introducing two people. Two people meet and you exchange information about yourself and you do the small talk, you chat. So that is how you begin learning a language. That allows for using a lot of culture because in different cultures people greet in different ways and the amount of language that they exchange is different. Do they come close to each other, do they stay apart (Professor 1).

In addition to the need to incorporate the culture of the students in one teaching, it appears that visual rhetoric also plays an important role for L2 learners. L2 learners who have to
contextualize a text, which can be complex, may find that a visual gives context to the language being learned.

It could be the case that ESL students, like young children, they are limited by short memory and language production in the earning of a second language. As a result, visual rhetoric may be an effective way to provide a rich exposure and encourage practice in producing language. Professor 1 discusses the importance of visuals in the beginning phases of learning a second language:

Textbooks for all levels of L2 learners, but especially for the beginner, have a lot of pictures because students don’t understand anything and they need to have the picture to relate the language to the context. So you have to talk about the picture, what is in the picture and then again what it has to do with culture. People meet on the train in Europe while going to work is not common. In the USA, for example, on the East coast or New York, Chicago people go to work by train. So it can be weird for the ESL students to have two people sitting on a train going to work. So again you have to explain the culture (Professor 1).

In support of the use of images/visuals, Kress (2003) takes the position that images carry meaning and may provide the text with auxiliary information to the extent that the text is no longer the prevailing resource of generating and communicating meaning. Cousin (2008) also found visual images can be employed to unwrap meaning and generate triggers for discussion. Moreover, images are more abstract and open to different interpretation than the written text. As a result visual images may guide students to a more profound and tailored form of engagement. Cappello (2005) suggested that:

Photography has demonstrated its usefulness for qualitative inquiry when the participant’s perspective and intensions are important data. This is especially true when the participants are children limited by memory, language, and school settings (p.181).

In summarizing how American culture is employed in teaching ESL classes, it is worth mentioning that all of the six linguistic professors find that the student’s first language and
cultural knowledge is extremely important in order for the student to become a coherent and cohesive writer and realize that the content and the organization of a text may differ among different genre sets. Thus the linguistic professors respect and encourage their student’s to use their prior knowledge and advise the students to implement their prior knowledge in their writing.

Overall, Professor 1 provides a good statement that summarizes the importance in incorporating the cultures of their students in the teaching of a second language (English), by stating:

I believe that culture plays an important part in shaping our teaching perspective; thus, the way we aim to achieve a purpose varies from culture to culture. This is also observed in writing. Students in my writing classes come from a variety of cultures. When they read a writing prompt, they all approach in a way specific to the culture from which they come. Oftentimes I hear students say that certain aspects of, for example, academic essays, as approached in the U.S., are unnecessary or too direct. They say their idea is clear and should be part of everyone’s general knowledge, so their essays sometime lack necessary support. In short, the assumptions L2 writers make about their reader’s background knowledge and interest in the topic may result in vague and weak writing. I think it is important to analyze samples paying attention to content and organization. It also seems to help when students discuss their audience before the actual writing. A good starting point is to have students write to a person who is culturally similar to them, and then move on to writing to a variety of hypothetical readers (Professor 1).

In addition, the written interview data suggests that from the perspective of the six linguistic professors there are many challenges that they face in the teaching of English as a second language. First, the students come from very diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds as well as possessing different academic disciplinary knowledge. Professor 1 explains:

One of the challenges I face in my writing classes is meeting students’ specific needs. Each student goes on to become part of a different community, with different values. A lot of my students become part of the U.S. academic community; nevertheless, some of them go on to write to audience outside the U.S. My goal is creating culturally flexible writers. Furthermore, my students have different majors, and thus different interests, purposes and readers. Tailoring curriculum to meet the needs of such a variety of students is a challenge (Professor 1).
Another challenge faced by linguistic professors is the homogeneity of the students’ enthusiasm, general aptitude and idealistic anticipation for the speed of acquisition in L2 English. Professor 2 discusses some of the issues:

Each course has brought its own challenges. When teaching ESL writing at the university level, I was faced with the challenge of teaching Generation 1.5 students along with true second language learners. The type of problems each group of students struggles with varies greatly, so I had to cover more material in order to meet the mixed population’s needs.

Even when the population is more homogeneous in the sense that there are no Generation 1.5 students included in the course, skill-level can vary greatly. This makes it hard to reach the lower-level students without boring the higher-level students. When targeting the higher-level students, making the material accessible and comprehensible to the lower-level students becomes a challenge. When student level variation is not an issue, each student still obtains his or her own unique set of problems. This is why individual written and oral feedback are so essential to the improvement of each student’s writing (Professor 2).

Another interesting finding is that the student’s first langue may encourage or impede the student to acquire and use a specific linguistic or grammatical feature (e.g. English beautiful woman vs. Romanian woman beautiful). Thus, the linguistic professor first has to acknowledge the linguistic feature that could create a possible problem and second the linguistic professor must make the students aware of linguistic or grammatical feature problems. Professor 4 discusses these occurrences:

There are a myriad of challenges that are present in teaching ESL writing, though many of them depend on the level of the student’s writing development in L2. There are the universal challenges of student motivation and interest, general competencies, and unrealistic expectations for pace of acquisition. There are even pedagogical challenges such as keeping the instructors on the same page as to what the expectations of students entering and exiting each class. But these are general problems, some that even occur in other departments beyond just ESL. In terms of ESL specific, some problems that occur is cultural in-grouping. Sometimes, members from the same country or that speak the same language may form an in-group and develop negative opinions about the language abilities of students from different countries. As a result, they may become negative classmates, or even lose motivation
themselves because of a false sense of overconfidence. And an overconfident learner is not usually looking for opportunities to learn. One final thing that is a challenge in ESL is that of fossilized errors. Depending on a learner’s language history with English, (s)he may have some grammatical errors that have become part of the idiolect and be fossilized. Overcoming bad habits significantly slows the acquisition process as you need to unlearn something at the same time as learning something new. This is a common challenge facing teachers and students alike in ESL (Professor 4).

Another realization is that writing may be a very daunting process even for the native speaker. As Vygotsky suggested, writing and critical thinking may go hand in hand. As a result, one linguistic professor suggested that some students may be habituated to think and write based on their own culture that may yield different linguistic patterns than what some linguistic professors are teaching. Professor 5 provides a possible solution, that is, to provide more ‘parallel patterns’ that need to be learned:

The challenges of teaching an ESL writing course include helping students see that writing is a way of representational thinking. Often times the representations that we are asking the students to produce can be quite different or even contrary to their culturally accustomed ways of thinking. Making it clear to students that we are offering them a second way to express themselves while recognizing that their own way of self-expression in L1 is historically and intellectually valid and respected. Be that as it may, introducing parallel patterns that need to be learned to accomplish the goals of the English writing course can be quite demanding for less flexible language learners (Professor 5).

One professor mentioned that a goal for teaching ESL, despite all of the challenges, is to bring both short-term meaningfulness and long-term satisfaction. It is the calling of his/her heart and that one feels that one expresses oneself through hard work. Professor 1, being a L2 learner of English, feels that he/she needs to help L2 students to communicate successfully in both speaking and writing:

Teaching ESL writing brings me short-term meaningfulness at the end of the semester, seeing the students’ appreciation reading their comments. On the long term what I do is not only a job. I found my calling, I express myself through my work and I feel that I
need to help ESL student how to communicate effectively in both speaking and writing. I wouldn’t be able to stop teaching ESL, it is who I am. I express myself through my work (Professor 1).

4.6 SUMMARY OF WRITTEN INTERVIEW DATA FROM SIX LINGUISTIC PROFESSORS

Table 4.1 through Table 4.6 provide the characteristics identified by the six linguistic professors of the ACIS course with regards to five different themes. Theme five is divided into Tables 4.5 and 4.6. Thus Table 4.5 entails the linguistic professors’ views on culture and cross-cultural conditions that hinder or promote the teaching of ESL writing. Moreover, Table 4.6 states the linguistic professors’ views with regard to the challenges professors encountered in teaching college ESL students.

Overall the five themes identified through the six linguistic professors provide an awareness of challenges faced in working with college students whose L1 is not English and who need to meet the California State University writing course requirements to receive their degree.
Table 4.1. Linguistic Professors’ Views of Writing Characteristics of ESL Students.

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<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Challenging points for professor of SLA writing</th>
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| 1. Centers on writing characteristics of ESL students that have to be adapted in order to convey different written ideas. | • General pattern of language structure exists in academic English and this general pattern may not be acquired in the initial stage by ESL students.  
  • ESL students in their first stage tend to translate utterances from the first language (L1) to second language (L2).  
  • ESL students’ cultural expression may affect the way that ideas are conveyed in L2.  
  • ESL students have difficulty understanding collocations, metaphors and other linguistic devises that may be culture-specific.  
  • ESL students struggle to reach native-like proficiency in the use of word form, accuracy and complying with English phrase structure rules.  
  • ESL students need understanding of the roles of the different parts of speech to develop native-like writing.  
  • ESL students, to be able to write coherently and cohesively in English, require that the professor consider the student’s dominant culture as well as their personality.  
  • ESL student’s writing that focuses on originality and depth of thought is a significant developmental skill in L2. | • Teaching an overall schema to manage students’ development of academic writing.  
  • Understanding culture and personality of the ESL student in order to reduce learning anxiety and in creating trust between student and instructor.  
  • Understanding the L1 cultural expressions of ESL students.  
  • Understanding language structures of the ESL students from different language backgrounds. |
Table 4.2. Linguistic Professors’ Views on the Importance of Implementing and Analyzing Linguistic Theories from the Real-Life Environment of ESL Classes.

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<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Challenging points for professor of SLA writing</th>
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| 2. Points to the importance of implementing and analyzing linguistic theories in SLA from the real-life environment of ESL classes. | • L1 is more widely implemented as a mediating function and L1 culture and cultural values might be important linguistic features that shape the students’ writings.  
• All of the theories covered in SLA make sense and can be applicable to teaching ESL.  
• American instructors will assert that their English L1 makes learning an Asian language very demanding while suggesting that fluency in a language such as Spanish, Italian and French will make learning a second romance language much easier.  
• The major theories in the fields of SLA and education reveal different perspectives on the importance of L1.  
• There are tenets that come from both the teaching experience and research-driven theories (e.g. the idea that you get better at what you practice). Skill Acquisition (SA) Theory shows that in order to improve listening, you need to practice in listening.  
• High amounts of input (and output) lead to acquisition and authenticity is absolutely essential in reaching native-like levels and for efficient language learning.  
• The importance of first focusing on skill through observation and analysis and following by practice and requiring scaffolding from instructors.  
• Writing facilitation happens though providing students with input that are developed in order to be immediately and readily understood by language students. | • Understanding the utility of each of the SLA theories (e.g., MT, UG, ACC, SA, IP, PT, CO, IA, SCL).  
• The role of L1 may be enhancing or deemphasizing L2 learning, as in the case of Asian vs. romance languages in learning a second language.  
• The role in motivation to guide the approach to teaching second language students, especially in writing which can be one of the hardest second language skills to acquire.  
• Interconnectedness of the students’ L1 and their culture and the fact that Int’l students in 4-year university-type situations will be writing for an Int’l audience rather than the narrow linguistic world of the American reader. |
Table 4.3. Linguistic Professors’ Views on the Type of Miscues the ESL Students’ Implement in their Writings.

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<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Challenging points for professor of SLA writing</th>
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</table>
| 3. Focuses on assessing the type of miscues the ESL student’s implement in their writings. | - General assessment of writing miscues is related to ESL student’s level of second language acquisition.  
- Word form errors demonstrate the student’s lack of understanding of phrase structure rules.  
- Word choice errors are a commonplace, often reliance on Google translations when writing in a foreign language.  
- ESL students struggle with vocabulary word meaning.  
- When ESL students start experimenting language usage mistakes are seen in collocations, idiomatic use of propositions.  
- ESL students writing miscues are associated to their primary language lead to error patterns.  
- Correct punctuation with multi clauses sentences is a struggle for ESL students of all backgrounds.  
- Miscues that may appear to be a miscue may be a cultural expression or self-expression of the writer.  
- With the changing world demographics, twice as many non-native speakers of English in the world, teachers need to discover what future audiences of their students will be. | - Addressing different proficiency and writing levels that ESL students need to acquire.  
- Addressing advanced ESL students general organizational structure and specific linguistic discourses.  
- Providing high levels of exposure to writing rules and awareness of higher levels of native-speaker academic writing to improve their L2 writing.  
- Increase understanding of L1 and ESL levels to provide ESL students with aspects of L2 grammar that are problematic for the majority of students.  
- Distinguishing between self-expression, cultural expression, and a miscue. |
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<th>Theme</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Challenging points for professor of SLA writing</th>
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| 4. Focuses on general metadiscourse or genre analysis in teaching ESL writing. | • Providing a general outline to ELS students as to what a rhetorical approach and how it differs among various genres (e.g., research article vs. thesis).  
• L2 writes, as well as L1 writers have tendency to jump on to explaining and exemplifying a topic before giving some background information on the topic.  
• Examining sample writing and have students chart the text to see how each step contributes to the achievement of the writer’s purpose.  
• Explaining how “moves and steps” may vary among different genre for coherent and cohesive linguistic discourse.  
• Students writing assignments lack organization or an over reliance on a formula they must have learned somewhere along the way.  
• Providing outline to ESL students of what may be required in order to advocate or refute a position based on an argumentative essay, while providing target language.  
• Exposing ELS students to the same genre in different ways (such as sample of different texts) to understand the organizational structure.  
• When students have a good model and understanding in organizational structure, it helps in organizing their writing. | • Providing students with an understanding how each step in the writing process contributes to the achievement of the writer’s purpose.  
• Students struggle with addressing prompts as much as they do with the English language.  
• Pointing to writer’s personal style and what would be unacceptable, awkward in a particular genre.  
• Providing awareness of the purpose of different aspects of a writing assignment and the respective organizational structure. |
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<th>Theme</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Challenging points for professor of SLA writing</th>
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| 5. Focuses on culture and cross-cultural conditions that hinder or promote the teaching ESL. | • Cultural knowledge acquired by students in their L1 is important for linguistic contextual knowledge when writing in L2 English.  
• Being culturally-sensitive by acknowledging, respecting and encouraging students to use their cultural knowledge of their native language.  
• Cultural ways of a student is often revealed by encouraging the students to write about their own ideas that promote genuine curiosity by using selected prompts that permit students to share elements from their own cultures.  
• Cultural awareness that in some cultures the students’ personal opinion are not valued or the authority of a female instructor.  
• Increase student participation by actively engaging ESL students in the classroom setting by using different teaching methods that target their visual, tactile and aural senses in their SLA development.  
• Understanding that ESL students come from different cultures and with different linguistic norms.  
• Incorporating the culture of the students into one’s teaching, through the use of visual rhetoric can play an important role for L2 students by facilitating to contextualize a complex text visually in the second language being learned.  
• Student’s first language and cultural knowledge is extremely important in order to become a coherent and cohesive writer, yet realize that the content and the organization of a text in the English language may differ among different genre sets. | • ESL professors need to educate themselves as much as they can in their students culture.  
• Encouraging students to write on their cultural perspectives or ideas.  
• Providing for cultural accommodations as an essential awareness in working with culturally diverse cultures.  
• Providing ESL students’ opportunities to expand ways of expressing themselves.  
• Students’ writing assignment will be affected by their own writing style that is rooted in their own culture.  
• Getting ESL students to understand that the culture of the reader and writer is essential. |
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<th>Theme</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Challenging points for professor of SLA writing</th>
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<tr>
<td>6. Identifies challenges professor encountered in teaching college ESL students.</td>
<td>• In teaching college ESL students as they are mastering writing in English, they come to from different academic majors, and bring different interests, purposes and types of reading and writing requirements for their major.</td>
<td>• ESL students’ enthusiasm, general aptitude and idealistic anticipation for speed of acquisition in L2 English.</td>
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<td>• When targeting the higher-level students, making the material accessible and comprehensible to the lower-level students becomes a challenge. …individual written and oral feedback are so essential to the improvement of each student’s writing.</td>
<td>• ESL students’ come to the ACIS course, with different skill-levels that can vary greatly.</td>
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<td>• Knowing how first langue may encourage or impede students in acquiring and using specific English language linguistic or grammatical features.</td>
<td>• The challenges of teaching an ESL writing course includes helping students see that writing is a way of representational thinking.</td>
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<td>• The myriad of challenges that are present in teaching ESL writing, though many of them depend on the level of the student’s writing development in L2.</td>
<td>• Working with college ESL students with different academic majors on how to communicate effectively in both speaking and writing.</td>
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<td>• Another realization is that writing may be a very daunting process even for the native speaker and in connecting writing and critical thinking to go hand in hand.</td>
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Table 4.6. Linguistic Professors’ Views of the Challenges Professors Encountered in Teaching College ESL Students.
CHAPTER V

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS OF METADISCOURSE ANALYSIS MOVES AND STEPS USED IN SUMMARY OF A COMMENTARY AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE (SOP)

In this chapter metadiscourse analysis (moves and steps) were employed in order to investigate 62 students’ writings which included two types of genre: a summary of a commentary (43 students) and statement of purposed (19 students) based on students’ final papers between 2010, 201, 2012.

This part of the dissertation will addressed the results and discussions on the third question:

3. What kinds of metadiscourse (genre moves/steps, metadiscourse) are employed by ESL international college students in their final ACIS writing assignments based on two different kinds of genre: summary of a commentary and statement of purpose?

5.1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

This chapter of the study examines two types of genre analysis of students’ writings using the ‘moves and steps approach’ for analyzing international students’ writings in their final course assignments. The first analysis used the students’ summaries of a commentary written by Johan Hari describing issues of piracy affecting Somali’s seas. Thus each of the ESL students had to write a summary of the specific commentary ‘You are Being Lied to About Pirates’ by Johan Hari, The Huffington Post, January 4, 2009. The second analysis required each student to write a ‘Statement of Purpose’ for applying to a graduate program.
Thus, this chapter is outlined in two sections. The first section addresses the expected moves and steps which may be emerge in ESL students’ in a summary of a commentary based. These moves were determined by the researcher, based on an inductive analysis of 43 ESL students’ writing samples. The second section of the chapter presents the expected process of the six moves and steps in writing a ‘Statement of Purpose’ to apply to graduate programs. These moves were also determined based on an inductive analysis of the 19 ESL students’ writing samples. However, deductive codes based on the professor’s assignment, were also considered.

5.1.2. RESEARCHER OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF THE COMMENTARY ‘YOU ARE BEING LIED TO ABOUT PIRATES’ BY JOHANN HARI

In his commentary ‘You are Being Lied to About Pirates’ the author Hari (2009) addressed issues of piracy that affects Somalia’s seas. The author supports his assertions by citing historical facts: the Western world dumped nuclear waste in Somalia’s sea which had a negative effect on the local population (e.g. cancer), and the abuse of Somalia’s coastal fishing resource by illegal fishing and overfishing which affected the local population with regard to the food availability. Furthermore, the author compares and contrasts how pirates were perceived through history. Contrasting the Somali pirates with how ‘American’s founding fathers paid to protect America’s territorial waters, because they had no navy or coastguard of their own’…and had a rhetorical question ‘Is this so different’.

The author concludes with another rhetorical question, ‘but who is the robber’ based on the fact that the gentleman who is an emperor is not labeled a pirate when he steals from ships (because the actions of those with power will never be perceived as evil). Hari (2009) presents a conversation between Alexander the great and a captured pirate:

What you mean by seizing the whole earth; but because I do it with a petty ship, I am called a robber, while you, who do it with a great fleet, are called emperor (p. 1).
5.1.3. GENRE ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS WRITING: A SUMMARY OF A COMMENTARY

‘YOU ARE BEING LIED TO ABOUT PIRATES’ WRITTEN BY JOHAN HARI

A genre analysis (moves and steps) was conducted on students’ written summaries of the commentary, ‘You are Being Lied to About Pirates’ by Johan Hari, published in The Huffington Post, and January 4th, 2009. This data set included the summaries from 43 students (32 female and 11 male) from ESL classes conducted at SDSU in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

In addition, the ESL professor’s instructions are provided:

‘1. Read the commentary on p.37 called “You Are Being Lied to About Pirates”’ by Johann Hari. As you read, underline and annotate as described on p.33.

2. Write a short summary of “You Are Being Lied to About Pirates” (130-150 words)’.

(Final Exam 305W 2010, 2011, 2012)

Since no specific summary characteristics or attributes were named as expectation in the summary, the researcher identified the following moves and steps for the summaries of a specific genre, which was based on the students’ writings. The moves were implemented by all students. Variations occurred in the frequencies of the steps employed. Examples from the students’ writing are provided following the descriptions of the moves and steps.

Based on the researcher’s perspective with regard to moves and steps for this type of genre (summary of a commentary), Table 5.1 presents the result of the genre analysis based on students' writings and indicates that the summary of this type of genre may contain five moves: (1) restatement of the issues proposed by the author; (2) comparison of the issues; (3) assertion of the author knowledge; (4) cause and effect dynamics; and (5) recommendations.

Move 1: Restatement of issues (War on Pirates)
Students’ summaries of the commentary contain a distinct move that states the overall issue being discussed. In their summaries the students provided a succinct depiction of the issue addressed in this commentary. The students provided different examples about how people have misunderstood pirates. This assertion appears at the beginning of the summary of the commentary and serves as a short introduction of what is going to be discussed according to the students’ writings. All of the students employed the move 1 with the step 1.1 which was paramount in order to introduce the topic of the summary.

Move 1, Step1.1 Introductory restatement

This step in the summaries positions the spotlight on the main topic of the commentary and is more explanatory, providing several reasons for justifying the topic discussed. Furthermore, some students provided additional information about specific pirates and the location of the conflict. In this case pirates are Somalian fisherman and the location is the coast of Somalia.

This step was employed by students’ in their summary at the beginning of their assertion. This step allowed the reader to know what the main topic that the article addressed was and in some instances what were the issues and consequences of that specific topic.

The data suggest than in the students’ writing some students were very concise by only offering information about the topic which was the ‘pirates’, whereas other students in their writings had to navigate the reader not only about the topic but the importance, consequences or cause-effect dynamics related to the main topic of ‘pirates’. Student 24 and 43 wrote:

In the “You are being lied to about Pirates,” Johann Hari states that still in 2009 pirates exist, called the Somalian pirates, who were declared enemies by the government of several countries, from US to China. However, scandals have always existed and the reason for this fight might not have justice. Merchants or navy sailors became pirates due to how they were treated; terrible conditions affecting the way they lived and ended up dead, and for this reason they were the first to rebel. Pirates began a new ship administration and also demonstrate that life on the ship didn’t need to be as devastating as it was on their days (Student, 24).
In "You are Being Lied to About Pirates," Johann Hari uncovers the truth behind the idea of the pirates as "one of the great menace of our time" by explaining that throughout history, the governments have manufactured this idea in order to keep oppressing and taking advantage of the weak (Student 43).

Furthermore, some students in their summary only asserted what the problem is without providing any additional information regarding the cause that created this situation. Student 26 wrote:

In the article “You are Being Lied to About pirates,” Johann Hari states that in the year 2009, a group of powerful developed nations such as England, the United States, including China joined forces to fight against the piracy taking place in Somali waters (Student 26).

Move 2: Evaluation of the matters (Comparison of the matter)

According to the students’ writings depicts the chronological unfolding of how the pirates were perceived through a historical lens and how they are perceived today. It is worth mentioning that different students revealed different periods of time from 1650 to 1730 and 1731 to 1991 and lastly from 1992 to 2005, describing varied events, thus the students’ importance of events was different. Move 2 was used by all of the students with the variation of referring to either Step 2.1 or Step 2.2. It is worth mentioning that preponderance of the students found that historical perspective of pirates was found to be important in contrast of how they are perceived in our times.

Move 2, Step 2.1 Historical Perspective (Pirates viewed through a historical lens) and Step 2.2 Contemporary View (Pirates in our times) provide a broad outline from a historical perspective of how pirates were perceived in different periods of time. In addition, some students referred to the example of a book written by Marcus Rediker which was mentioned in the commentary.

Move 2, Step 2.1 Historical Perspectives

This step was used by those students in their summary who wanted to provide a historical perspective of the pirates’ lives. This step was implemented in various by referring to a historical book or to historical facts mentioned in historical archives. Students 12 and 35 wrote:
By quoting a historian’s book, he covers the wicked and unfair maritime environment that results in the emergence of pirates, arguing that pirates are actually the first to work a different way in sea. He gives examples of pirates’ being impartial and kindness to explain crowds’ support of their romantic heroes (Student 12).

In “you are being lied to about Pirates,” Johann Hari tries to demystify the idea most people have about pirates: the ugly and mean bearded man. Viewing pirates as intrinsically bad started with the British, in the XVII century. Hari explains, however, that sometimes pirates are just regular men who grew tired of being abused and decided to rebel (Student 35).

Move 2, Step 2.2 Contemporary Views

Furthermore, there were students who employed both steps 2.1 and 2.2 in this move simultaneously. One explanation could be that students in their summary writing wanted first to explain the reasons that made people become pirates and then explain how pirates change over time. Student 13 wrote:

You are being lied to about pirates” is consists of several circumstances that why pirates choose the way they live. Briefly, Hari introduces the history of pirate, and he explains that the reason to become a pirate is the same as the past and the present. It happened from people who resisted the way their employees, the merchant service or Royal Navy, continued. They demanded some changes to their employees such as welfare or a better labor environment, but they were still treated unfairly. Therefore, their lives became more harsh and cruel. The first pirates pursuit egalitarian the most. Even a captain who was elected by pirates and slaves were all treated equally. This could be a part of labor revolution. Nowadays, Somalia pirates become the major global topic. Every single time, one of world cargo ships are kidnapped or attacked by them. However, there are invisible truths (Student 13).

Move 3: Reflections/assertions of the author’s knowledge

Move 3 was employed only by 72% with a tendency to perceive the author’s comments as positive, negative or neutral in regards to the qualities’ to pirates. It is worth mentioning that only 16% refer to the negatives qualities of pirates but that was attained by creating a juxtaposition between what is perceived as desired and what was perceived as ‘negative character characteristics’.

Move 3, Step 3.1 Positive assertions, Step 3.2 Negative assertions and Step 3.3 Neutral assertion provides one or more reason for selecting this topic. In general the students perceived the pirates as
positive. Very rarely the students’ depict the pirates as negative. First, pirates may be perceived positively by being ‘popular’ based on their good deeds such as rescuing African slaves and living with them as equals. Second, pirates may be perceived negatively as being ‘unproductive thieves’. Third, the perception of pirates may be neutral based on what the historical data suggest based in the students’ writings.

Move 3, Step 3.1 Positive assertions (Pirates were popular)

This step was employed by students who wanted to offer a perspective as seen through a positive lens either on the experience or life of the pirates. These actions are conveyed through a positive lens by emphasizing the good deeds and actions of the pirates’ journey. Students 1 and 11 wrote:

But in fact, Piracy resulted from an effort to abolish the unfair regimen that merchants and navy sailors followed. Piracy was characterized by a democratic way of taking decisions, a life style without torture, and an egalitarian way of dividing their resources (Student 1).

The author Hari, gives supporting evidence to back up his main point. He states that pirates weren’t going to suffer as other merchants working long hours and being treated as slaves in the ships. They decided to have their own ship and treat everyone as equals, including African slaves (Student 11).

Move 3, Step 3.2 Negative assertion

One interesting finding is that in some cases of students’ writing there was juxtaposition between positive deeds ‘made decision together’ and negative deeds ‘they were pirates’. It could be the case that in this approach the reader has access to both worlds; the one where pirates ‘were to rule the ship just as most countries do’ or the one where pirates are perceived as not being senseless or savages but rather they were ‘romantic heroes’. Students 17 and 43 wrote:

Moreover, pirates were the first to rebel against that world. When they had a ship, they were to rule the ship just as most countries do. They elected the captains and made decisions together. Also, when African slaves escaped, pirates help them and accepted them the same way they
accepted others. Even though they were thieves, pirates were not senseless or savages, they were “romantic heroes (Student 17)).

In some of the students’ writing, pirates were perceived only through their negative deeds as espoused by governments:

Hari starts off asserting that the idea of the pirate as a senseless savage was created by the British government in a great propaganda heave (Student 43).

Move 4: Cause and Effect Dynamics

Move 4 was paramount within the summary and was used to comment on either cause or effect historical perspective, contemporary view or both perspectives. It could be perceived that students, in their summary, perceived that the main topic about Somalia is based on cause and effect on the historical perspective that pirates were mistreated (cause) and piracy was used for survival (effect) which was then correlated to our present times when the Somalia government collapsed (cause) and the effect on Somali’s population was devastating including starvation and sickness. Move 4, Step 4.1 Cause and effect on historical perspective and Step 4.2 Cause and effect on contemporary view where omnipresent in the students summaries.

Move 4, Step 4.1 Cause and effect on historical perspective on pirates

This step provides information of mistreatment by ship captains (cause) and the piracy as a way to survive (effect).

Move 4, Step 4.2 Cause and effect on contemporary view

This step was seen through the collapse of Somali government (cause) and piracy as a way for fisherman to survive (effect). There are additional causes such as European actions. European people, through their illegal actions, have overfished Somalia’s coastal ocean (cause) and that had an effect on
Somalia’s population who were teetering or starving. Europeans started to dump nuclear waste in Somali oceans (cause) and that had an effect on Somalia’s population who became very sick by having strange rashes, nausea and malformed babies. All students employed supportive evidence Move 4, Step 4.1 Cause and effect on historical perspective and Step 4.2 Cause and effect on contemporary view or a combination of both steps.

These steps were present in the students’ writings who wanted to delineate how the nuclear waste dumped in Somalia’s oceans (cause) has had an effect on Somalis population. Students 3, 4 and 8 wrote:

Johann Hari states that it is they, the pirates, who should be defended by the UN and not the British, since Somalia and their people, are the victims not only for their loss of land but also for the oppression along their seas. Hari clearly supports his claim by suggesting various facts throughout the history: the Western world spreading nuclear waste to pollute Somalia’s coastal life, stealing seafood as it being one of Somalia’s greatest resources (Student 3).

European ships throw away their trash in the shore of Somalian and they fish all things in the Somalian sea. Therefore the Somalian has nothing to eat and live (Student 4).

The pollution on the Somalian Sea, caused by pirates, caused people to suffer from diseases, allergic reactions, malformed babies, radiation sickness and 300 people died (Student 8).

Furthermore, it was found that some students were very explicit about the cause and effect on the contemporary view of pirates and how the nuclear waste and overfishing affects the Somalia’s food supplies. Students 17 and 27 wrote:

The Western world was stealing Somalia’s food supply and putting nuclear waste in the sea. European ships were also taking food supply from Somalia’s seas (Student 17).

It is worth mentioning that while some students perceived a more subtle cause and effect relationship other students perceived that this relationship has to be made clear in order for the audience to know what forces are involved.

However, after the collapsed of Somalia’s government, European ships discarded their nuclear waste in Somalia which caused health problems for many Somalians. In addition, European ships also possessed Somalia’s greatest resource: seafood. As a result, Somalia supported the piracy for the country’s defense (Student, 27).
Move 5: Recommendations

This move was notable in terms of departing from the present problem and connecting it to a possible future solution. Steps supporting in this move include 5.1 Recommendations for Practical Solutions, 5.2. Concluding Restatement and 5.3 Concluding Restatement with a Summary. Move 5 was dominated by the use of step 5.2, the Concluding Restatement, which was employed in the same linguistic manner as the author.

Move 5, Step 5.1 Recommendations for Practical Solutions

This step explains that Somalia’s population requires help and a promising solution is stopping illegal activities by the West. In their summaries, some students referred to the concluding restatement in commentary through the rhetorical question, ‘who is the robber?’ which may invite the reader to have his or her own opinion.

It is worth mentioning that according to the students writing the authors’ final anecdote makes the reader acutely aware in regard to any assertions proffered by the Western world. Thus making an effective argument that the role of pirates could be examined from both the historical and contemporary perspectives.

This step was employed only by 16 of 43 students. Instead of using a concluding remark as the author does with a rhetorical question, the students in their writing, tried to convey the problems that Somalia has and to provide a solution or assert at least the atrocities performed by the European nations. Student 10, 12, 13 wrote:

It all appears that the true robbers are being covered just because they are big companies or European nations more powerful than Somalians (Student, 10).
He closes by convincing that the 2009 piracy war is unfair under the cover of big force robbing global resource (Student, 12).

Later on, it becomes global issue, but those companies still evade paying the compensation. This is how the pirates have emerged. Yes, this cannot be acceptable reason to be a pirate, but those pirates have their own story either (Student 13).

Moreover within this move one variation occurs. This was viewed as being few possible alternative problems or “sane solutions” which should be addressed. Students 16, 31, 35 wrote:

Hari also reveals the fact that according to a Somalian news site, the majority supported the piracy as a form of national defense. He closes by emphasizing that there are other problems to look at rather than putting the guilt on piracy (Student, 16).

In this situation is where the pirates appear. In reference to an independent Somalian news site, “piracy is strongly supported as a form of national defense (Student, 16).

He then questions, who is really the robber, pirates or the “suppose victims” or citizens? (Student 31).

This situation created room for many Somalian fishermen to become “pirates” – or the “Volunteer Coastguard of Somalia,” as they define themselves. This does not justify making hostages or committing atrocities when hijacking ships; nevertheless, what reaction should one expect when nothing is done to stop the destruction of the Somalian sea? The only “sane solution” to this problem, according to Hari, is acting up and helping the Somalian end the Western misuse of their coast (Student 35).

Move 5, Step 5.2 Concluding Restatement

Those students who invited readers to have their own opinion utilized this step 5.2. Students used rhetorical questions: ‘Is this so different?’ ‘Who is the robber?’ in a similar manner with the author of this article. The students offered the reader to think critically and decide on their own about what the final judgment conclusion should be. Students 3, 4, 7, 34, 37 wrote:

Hari closes by saying that, whether it is done by a good mean or not, the acts of those with power – better call them “oppressors” – will never be considered evil as to those being oppressed with or without fault (Student 3).

Hari closes by stating a question to its readers to ponder who the real pirates are thus making his arguments even more powerful (Student 4).
His main point is considered in the end, how can we call the Somalis robbers when all we did was treating their land that way? To conclude, Johann Hari finishes his text by making us wondering of the real identity of the robber (Student 7).

The writer also refutes opposing views and encourages the reader to be critical towards the Western world. He asks a rhetorical question, “but who is the robber”, due to the fact that the man who is the ruler of an empire is not called a pirate when he steals from ship (Student 9).

Hari emphasizes how pirates have been mistaken for bandits instead of people who are just protecting their resources (Student 9).

Johann Hari finish his article with a quote from a pirate Great Emperor Alexander who demanded to know the meaning by keeping of the sea. The pirate responded: “What you mean by seizing the whole earth; but because I do it with a pretty ship am called a robber, while you who do it with a great fleet, are called emperor (Student 37).

Move 5, Step 5.3 Concluding Restatement as a Summary

It is worth mentioning that only a few students wrote their concluding restatements in a manner that was different than that of the author who posed an empirical question. The concluding restatement in these students’ writings consisted of very convoluted summaries of the purpose, reasons, explanations and empirical facts about why as the reader should also be interested in this topic. This example is extremely powerful. Student 24 wrote:

Author Johann Hari uses different strategies such as narration of stories about pirates, description of the pirates life, gives explanation and effect of why Somalian people became pirates and the consequences of their actions, he also gives evidence such as the evidence from the newspaper giving some statistics and makes comparison to give the conclusion of his article (Student 24).

Table 5.1 summarized the findings of the moves and steps found in students’ writings in the summary of a commentary.
Table 5.1. Moves and their Constituent Steps in a Summary of a Commentary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commentary Summary</th>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Move 1: Restatement of issues (War on Pirates) proposed by the author</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1.1 Introductory restatement</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move 2: Evaluation of the matters (Comparison of the matter)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2.1 Historical Perspective (Pirates viewed through a historic perspective)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2.2 Contemporary View (Pirates in our times)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move 3: Reflections/assertions of the author’s knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3.1 Positive assertions (Pirates were popular)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3.2 Negative assertions (Unproductive thieves)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3.3 Neutral assertion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined steps (3.1+3.2; 3.1+3.3; 3.2+3.3)=6=13%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No steps employed</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move 4: Cause and Effect Dynamics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4.1 Cause and effect on historical perspective</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4.2 Cause and effect on contemporary view</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined step (4.1+4.2)=9=20%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move 5: Recommendations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5.1 Recommendations for Solutions</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem: Somalia requires help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution: Stop the West atrocities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5.2 Concluding Restatement</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical questions: “Is this so different?” “Who is the robber?”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5.3 Concluding Restatement as a Summary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No steps employed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Number and frequencies (Nr. and Freq.) refers to the number of student writings which employ the moves and steps.

5.1.4. CONCLUDING FINDINGS FOR STUDENTS’ SUMMARY OF A COMMENTARY ‘YOU ARE BEING LIED TO ABOUT PIRATES’ WRITTEN BY JOHAN HARI

The data analysis based on the 43 students’ writing samples with regards to genre type summaries of commentary indicated that the Moves 1, 2 and 4 were the most prominent moves based on the frequency of usage. Thus, the frequencies of distribution of the data suggest that the Move 3 and Move 5 were more scattered and these moves were not employed by all students. Furthermore, different students may have different views of what is required in a summary of a commentary.
Move 1, the introductory restatement, was employed by all students. Move 2, evaluation of the matters, was employed by all students either using step 2.1 or step 2.2. Move 3, was employed by 72% of students whereas 28% students never used this move. Concerning Move 3, students felt they have to take either a positive, negative or neutral assertion toward the pirates. Only 9% of students created juxtaposition between a positive and neutral or negative and neutral assertion regarding the pirates as perceived through their own personal lens. Move 4 was employed by all students. Thus, 21% of the students’ refer to both steps 4.1 and 4.2 simultaneously. It might be the case that the article had a high resonance regarding the cause and effect on either a historical or contemporary view regarding pirates or both simultaneous. Furthermore, only 88% of the students had a final statement, which was either a recommendation or a rhetorical question or a summary.

5.2. METADISCORSE OF MOVES AND STEPS IN THE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE (SOP)

The second type of genre analysis examined a writing assignment that called for applying to a post-graduate program. Nineteen (19) ESL college students were asked to write a Statement of Purpose for their application.

The genre addressed is a statement of purpose (SOP) is writing is intended to be submitted to an academic program (e.g. biology, physics, law school, linguistics, etc.). The purpose of SOP serves to prepare the student to think about what specific academic community she or he desires to integrate professionally. The audience is the admission committee of a given institution of higher education.

In the SOP letter the readers should learn about the applicant’s previous experience and the applicant’s knowledge in her his field of expertise. Subtopics within the statement of purpose are intended to provide the admission committee reader with insights as to who the applicant is and why is
this applicant different than other applicants, what does the applicant know and understand about that profession (based on her his field on inquiry), and what is the purpose of the applicant for pursuing a graduate program (e.g. inquisitive nature, attain more knowledge in the field, contribute to the field of study).

5.2.1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE CONTENT

The ESL College students were informed that the content of statement of purpose in general include the following information. First an information about the applicant (prior knowledge), secondly what makes this applicant more competitive than other candidates (e.g. the candidate was a member of an Olympic team), thirdly what the applicant knows about the discipline of inquiry, fourthly in what way the applicant hopes to contribute to or benefit the chosen profession, and fifthly the reason for wanting to pursue an academic endeavor or degree.

In addition, the SOP may include sixthly additional information if the applicant knows members of the committee (e.g. in the same academic interest such as second language acquisition) then the applicant may appeal to a specific professor who has the same interest in the field of inquiry. Thus the applicant may explain in what way his/her goals and interest match with a program in the university. Seventhly at the end of the SOP the applicant should summarize in what ways that applicant’s qualifications are suitable for the selected university program that may include background knowledge and qualifications relevant to the program. It is worth mentioning that the applicant should reflect on the assumptions the admission committee members will be making as they read the statement of purpose to graduate school.

Thus, genre was defined in the spring final:
Moreover genre is a category of writing that is distinguished by its content, organization, language, format and values to achieve the goal of reaching audience for a specific purpose (spring 11, final).

Organization

The organization of this kind of genre (SOP) may vary depending on the field of inquiry. One may argue that in social sciences a personal anecdote may be employed in the statement of purpose whereas in hard science one should discuss background knowledge, explain interest and goals and summarize the applicant knowledge and qualification (and how the applicant may contribute to the field). The statement of purpose should be coherent and cohesive with each paragraph focusing on one topic and ideas that should be developed with the appropriate linguistic devices (e.g. details, description and explanatory).

Language

The language employed in the statement of purpose should be academic, persuasive, and personal and the vocabulary should be suitable for the targeted audience. The linguistic word choice should project achievements and goals (pursue, goal, look forward to, come to appreciate.); use of the nominal (e.g. undertaking, working, concluding). Moreover, the applicant should avoid clichés, verbosity and reiteration. The utterance structure should entail complete sentences. Modal verbs should be employ in order to delineate a future probability (would, will) with regard to the applicant goals and interest. The tense should be past simple or present perfect to convey background knowledge and accomplishment, and present tenses to depict interest and goals. The voice should be generally active with transition to passive voice for retaining the main topic. The linguistic discourse should sustain parallel structures with proper use of coordination, subordination and transitional clauses.
Format

The length of the statement of purpose should be 1-2 pages and consisting of 250 to 500 words, while focusing on organization, coherence and cohesiveness.

5.2.2. METADISCOURSE OF MOVES AND STEPS FOUND IN THE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE (SOP)

The statements of purpose of nineteen (19) ESL college students were analyzed for moves and steps. The data analysis using codes (based on themes) form students writings.

The genre addressed in this analysis was the statement of purpose. The purpose was to become a member of an academic community. The audience was the admission committee. Content variations in the SOP were expected to occur based on the field of inquiry the students were applying to (e.g. hard science experiments attempt to, explain phenomena whereas soft science makes observations).

Table 5.2 shows the moves and steps employed by the student in their SOP writings. All of the students employed the 6 moves but variations occurred among the steps employed by ESL students. An analysis of each move and corresponding steps provides insights into the ideas and career goals of the 19 ESL college students.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move 1 Statement of issue</th>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1.1 Introductory statement</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce your experiences/goals that lead you to pursue an academic degree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1.2 Ascertain the program and the university you are interested in. Explain why?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move 2 Conveying background knowledge</th>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 2.1 Write your credentials/degrees/GPA earned Contributions/publications/awards</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2.2 How you developed an interest in that field</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move 3 Motivations for applying to grad school at a specific university</th>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 3.1 Motivation to attend grad school</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3.2 Motivation to that specific grad school (alumni)… Same interest in research effort topic as a professor</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move 4 Reflect your experience (personal knowledge/individual self-examination)</th>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 4.1 Assert your qualifications</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4.2 Experiences/Legacy (e.g. Parent have advanced degrees e.g. PhD or attended specific university)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4.3 Assert why and how you are the most suitable candidate</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4.4 How you may be uniquely different from other candidates (e.g. an Olympic athlete)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move 5 Concluding Remarks</th>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 5.1 Provide your relevant experience/training</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5.2 Correlate you post graduate learning to future academic endeavors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5.3 How you will contribute to the community and/or the field of inquiry</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move 6 Concluding Restatement</th>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 6.1 Summary/ Summarize your strength as a candidate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Number and frequencies (Nr. and Freq.) refers to the number of SOPs that employ specific moves and steps.*
Move 1 Statement of the issue

In the first move, step 1.1 and step 1.2, it was found that in the introductory statement the majority of the students said who they are and sometimes offered additional information such as their nation of origin and why they are interested in a specific graduate program. Students 60, 68, 71, 73 and 76 wrote the following:

I want to obtain a Master’s Degree from SDSU with a specialization on Finance and my interest is focusing on corporations. I am particularly attracted to the MBA Program at SDSU because it has a challenging curriculum and an excellent reputation in the San Diego business community. My name is XXX (Student 60, Financing).

As a pharmacy school applicant, my interest in Pharmacology stems from many different aspects. The possibilities to conduct experiment for cures of deadly pathogens and to provide assistance to those in need have driven me to pursue a career in Pharmacology rather than other medical careers. Growing up with grandparents who have high blood pressure, diabetes, and Alzheimer’s disease, I’ve witness their being forced fed ten to twenty pills per day for years due to the lack of Pharmaceutical advances during that time. This painful memory became one of my strongest motivations to pursue a career as a Pharmaceutical research scientist (68, Pharmacology).

Becoming a knowledgeable person takes commitment, disciple and time; becoming wise entails having the experience to make the correct decisions. Being an enthusiast of the Sociology field, I understand the vast amount of topics and difficult issues that Sociology encompasses. As I attended community college, I learned the many ways of approaching topics such as poverty, juvenile delinquency. Choosing Sociology as my career has made me aware of the complexity of the issues that our society faces, and how much is needed in order to tackle said issues (Student 71, Sociology).

Science has been a passion of mine from the time I was a child, whether it was building pasta cars for my fifth grade Science Olympiad team or eighth grade science projects that allowed me to set objects ablaze for “experimental purposes.” Today, that childish enthusiasm for science still exists in me. My name is XXX and the reason I am writing this application for admission is my interest in the Master’s of Microbiology degree at San Diego State University (Student 73, Microbiology).

My name is XX. I plan to apply for studying in UCLA Producing and Directing program after I get my bachelor degree of Media Studies major from San Diego State University next May. Now, let me talk a little bit background information about myself (Student 76, Media Studies).
One interesting finding is the way students stated who they are using an approach that appears to correlate with the program the students are applied for. The students who applied for financing, economics, business, marketing, media, social work, and political science, physical education-coaching revealed at the beginning of their SOP who they are and to what university they were applying (e.g. my name is.., I want to obtain). Thus these students employed the epistemic “I”.

On other hand students who applied to nursing, pharmacy, sociology, microbiology asserted the importance of being in that field first (e.g. science allows to be employed in an experimental field). Students who applied for nursing and pharmacology, conveyed the importance of being in the selected field, also provided explanations not only using an experimental perspective but also how the experimental research directly applied to human lives. Their interest was to conduct experiments to cure deadly pathogens but also to use the research findings to help people with different medical problems (e.g. high pressure, Alzheimer’s disease).

For students who applied for hard science programs, they first wanted to acknowledge the importance of that field and then provide information about themselves. Moreover, many fields in the hard science have to deal with life-related issues (e.g. diagnose, treat, conduct research) which may be different than the challenges posed by the field of marketing, business, finance and media.

Move 2 Conveying background knowledge

Move 2 was employed by all of the students (100%) with variations in the linguistic discourse based on their respective academic community. A general pattern, that was used regardless of what program or field the students applied to, was found that suggests that all students provided information as to what kind of undergraduate degree they have and from what university. In addition, it was found that only students who had a high or relatively high GPA revealed that information in their SOP whereas
other students were vaguer (e.g. maintained a respectable GPA). It could be the case that they wanted to acknowledge their hard work from the undergraduate journey. Student 60, 71, 73 provided the followings insights:

I earned my bachelor’s degree, majoring in Finance, at San Diego State University in December 2011. My overall GPA is 3.1 and my official GMAT score is 600. I am applying for admission to the SDSU MBA Program with an emphasis in Finance for the Fall 2012 semester (Student 60, Financing).

Being a student of a California State institution has given me the training and many skills required to go forth and apply them towards my field in a successful manner. After completing my Bachelor’s Degree in Sociology, I look forward to continue my learning process and work towards becoming truly knowledgeable in my field. I believe that becoming a part of the graduate program that this institution offers will help me achieve this goal (Student 71, Sociology).

Currently, I am an undergraduate student enrolled at San Diego State University and am majoring in Microbiology. My undergraduate studies have prepared me very well for a post-graduate degree in Microbiology. Since attending San Diego State University I have maintained a respectable GPA and have gained valuable laboratory and research experience. My background studies in microbiology have prepared me well and have made me even more passionate about pursuing a master’s degree in microbiology (Student 73, Microbiology).

The SOP coded data suggests that in general the few students from China provided an additional explanation of why they have a high GPA and related that to their holistic knowledge.

Finance is the most popular major in most colleges in China, especially in the eastern coast, which has a better economy and a higher consumption level. The field is broad, ranging from the Microeconomics to Managing Business Risk, covering the basic discipline of accounting as well as organizational behavior. The reason why I get high GPA in my major is not only because of the hardworking but also the comprehensive understanding of the related courses. I prefer to have a full body of knowledge rather than the separated courses, which will consume too much time if we treat them independently without any connection (Student 65, Finance).

The linguistic discourse with regard to academic achievement for some students is enthusiastic and laudatory, such as “triumph academically”, which suggested that some students wanted to provide the admission committee with a positive motivational outcome. Moreover, students who were not modest in their assertion of their achievements by using linguistic forms that expressed ‘I am certain’
which implies the view that s/he does not have any doubts about being capable of achieving academic success. Other students used the expression of ‘I am certain’ in contrast with the use of the linguistic discourse ‘I believe’, ‘I feel’ that was employed by some students in soft sciences. Student 61 asserted:

My excellent time management skills have allowed me to not only triumph academically but also to gain practical knowledge through my diverse work experience. I am certain that my dynamic background will prove to be a valuable asset for this program (Student 61, Political Science).

One appealing finding in the SOP writing assignment is that some students who applied for programs related to business (e.g. international business administration) were creative in conveying not only their background knowledge but also wrote on the social justice issues they had to overcome in order to attain a university degree. Of interest is that only students related to the field of business or finance revealed being fluent in different languages and having a global knowledge of the word. It could be the case that providing one person’s experience such as crossing international borders everyday between countries may provide the student with a different perspective as to how the world is perceived in two different locations and what challenges one has to overcome in order to succeed. Student 64 commented:

Ever since I started grade school, I have been crossing the border every day to attend school. Since I have dual citizenship, my parents always believed that having an education in the U.S. would greatly benefit me as opposed to having an education in Mexico. But in this decision there was a hidden benefit that came from the everyday experience of crossing the border from one country to the next. Being a student living in Mexico for most of my life and completing my studies in the U.S. has greatly opened my panorama when dealing with international business. Imagine crossing the border from a third world country into the United States every day and seeing all the different business ventures in the U.S. that are not available across the border and vice versa. Seeing this every day, I believe gives me an advantage in identifying different business opportunities that could be very profitable. Therefore, having a master’s degree both in the U.S. and Mexico and being professionally prepared in both languages would greatly help me in doing business on both sides of the border. This I believe will help me in my short and long term career goals (Student 64, International Business Administration).
One may conclude that while all students employed ‘Move 2’, yet the way the information was conveyed about their background knowledge differed among students depending on their field of study and country of origin. Some students were innovative in their reference to a social justice issue.

Move 3 Motivations for applying to grad school at a specific university

Move 3 was employed by all students (100%) with the caveat that some students provided the reasons for applying to graduate school at a specific university whereas other students attempted to find an explanation of why one university or program may be a better match.

Within these moves only a few students who applied in fields such as biology, microbiology, pharmacology and sociology identified what requirement were needed for the field of interest, and further provided the reason for applying to the selected university. Student 68 specified such requirements:

Students studying Biochemistry were required to work with various lab equipments (Centrifuge, NMR, Microscope, and Spectroscopy) as well as to learn laboratory techniques. Preparing samples with specific concentration, measuring techniques, analytical techniques satisfy Western University’s applying requirement (Student 68, Pharmacy).

Western University has many appealing qualities that make it stands out from all other Pharmacy schools. However, there are two main reasons, which attracted me to apply. First of all, Western University has a unique patented 16 block system. During each block students will be allowed to fully immerse in the fundamental subjects before moving on to more sophisticated subjects. Another reason is the 98% first-time board exam passing rate, which will allow me to acquire a job soon after graduating the program (Student 68, Pharmacy).

One interesting finding is that few international students first try to justify their motivation as to why they chose the U.S. versa their country of origin to pursue a university degree, and only after making this argument was completed the students addressed the motivations for their field of study. Student 70 explained:

I chose to do my bachelor in America because I wanted to get new perspectives about the world, and to get to know people from different cultures in order to get a broader view of life. Another big reason why I chose to study in America was because I wanted to develop my skills in
English. I decided to study sociology because I find it important to develop my knowledge of how society, and human social activity works. It is essential to have knowledge about how people and society function since I will be working with helping people develop in life. My minor in industrial and organizational psychology will give me the information I need to know the structures, and functions in the world of businesses (Student 70, Individualize job coaching program).

Furthermore, few students used their country of origin as a pivotal opportunity for understanding the social complexity in their field of expertise. Student 71 elaborated:

Growing up in a third-world country and being part of different social classes here in the United States has made me come to appreciate the importance of studying such matters in a way that conveys urgency to achieving a solution to them. Having experienced many different facets of the social ladder, I can relate to many types and ways of living. Keeping this in mind serves as a strong motivator to pursue my goals (Student 71, Marketing).

Interestingly, a few European students not only revealed that they are familiar with the program that they applied to, moreover, they conveyed their own expectations as to how they will benefit personally from the program and its specific knowledge. Student 72 asserted:

As a German student I experienced already a lot by studying abroad in the US. Many classes at SDSU give me a basic understanding of what marketing is about and therefore, I will be prepared for a master program like EMBS. I expect from that master program that I will be trained to develop more skills in marketing in order to have the tools and best practices to fit into an international sports company like Nike that mainly produces sports clothing and shoes. Additional motivation is to improve my capabilities in English and other languages (Student 72, Marketing).

Within the SOP data a very limited number of students could connect their motivation to a specific program and connect their previous work with a specific professor. The reason may be that students believed that they must previously attain a degree from the selected university or previously work with a specific professor. This might be true but one recommendation is that students can attain classes through extended studies or simply knock on a professor door that has the same interest as the applicant.
As an undergraduate I have worked in research labs studying the microbial causes of cardiovascular disease with the same professors that will be teaching the courses in the post-graduate program. My main motivation for applying into the program is my passion for biology and the wonderful experience I have had at San Diego State University as an undergraduate. Acceptance into this program would allow me to enhance my research and take advantage of the vast landscape that San Diego provides to conduct field studies whether it be in the forest or the ocean (Student 73, Microbiology).

One may conclude that while all students addressed their own reasons for applying to graduate school, some variations occurred between how the arguments were presented and connecting their field of inquiry to a specific professor.

Move 4 Reflect your experience (personal knowledge/individual self-examination)

While all of the students tried to reflect on their personal experiences, only 9 students related their experiences to their parents’ experiences, whereas others based their reflections on their own life experience, challenges or possible queries. Only 6 students could persuasively assert in what way they were uniquely different from other students. It could be that this is one of the main criteria, which differentiates the applicants (e.g. there are limited numbers of candidates with Olympic training or are bilingual). For the purpose of this study being unique was identified as a different step (4.4). Furthermore, only 6 students addressed why they would be more suitable than other candidates given that students have to know many intricacies of the selected field of study.

One example of how one student related her interest of the field selected to her father knowledge of the field of study. It is worth mentioning that she never shares what is her personal experience and why she is interested in the field. Student 74 claimed:

Since the age of 12, I knew I wanted to earn a Master’s in Business Administration (MBA) at McGill University in Montreal, where my father earned his Masters and Doctorate degree. For years, he has shared with me his amazing experience as a student at McGill. He talked about the highly motivated professors and how the classes were of interest to him (Student 74, Business).
Furthermore the reflection on the student’s experience may be attained more effectively when the students compared their own experience with their parents and provide the reasons for choosing in some cases different careers and why. Student 67 explains:

I was born and raised by teacher parents; therefore, a teaching career was familiar to me. My parents wanted and supported me to be a teacher, but I was interested in business field. One day, my aunt, who is a professor of English at University in Korea, suggested to me the education industry in Korean, especially English education, has a great potential, so I decided to take an introduction linguistics class in order to get additional information for my future business, and the class changed my future. The introduction linguistics course provided me abundant knowledge and impression. I learned something what I had not learned. I had been learning English since I was an elementary school student, but I felt it was the first time I acknowledge that I learn a language. It was a new science and I was impressed how the languages are made. This is how I started my career (Student 67, Linguistics).

In the case of students who applied to the fields of microbiology, pharmacy and sociology, they related their previous work or research with the similarities of the work undertaken in their graduate program. On other hand, students who applied to the fields of business, marketing and economics revealed how their undergraduate degrees improve their analytical problem solving skills. As previously mentioned, it could be that different fields of inquiry require different skills and students have to address these fields of study differently. Student 78 and 69 stated:

As an economics major in college, I developed excellent analytical skills and improved my problem-solving ability, but I feel that should study deeper especially in the field of business strategy, finance, and market forces. To realize my career goal, I clearly must enhance my abilities in these as well as other areas of business (Student 78, Economics).

I’ve also had the pleasure of volunteering at Sharps Memorial Hospital in Rancho Bernardo for 2 years, during the time I’ve was able to gain a considerable amount of pharmacy experiences, such as utilizing pharmaceutical equipment’s and learning the properties of each specific drugs (Student 69, Pharmacology).

Another way students reflected on their own experience was through the challenges they had to overcome, especially being the first member in the family to go to college and attain a degree. It is worth
mentioning the contrast between students who have families who have attended college knew parents who already have the academic schema and knew how to navigate the system and being the first in their family. Furthermore, the expectations to attend graduate school may be different for each student. For a student who has a father with a PhD, the path to a college degree will be subtly understood whereas for the first generation student s/he will need to uncover the expectations and overcome other academic obstacles. Student 62 claimed:

Being the first generation in the family to go to college makes me really proud of myself. Life is full of opportunities but only the hard workers can recognize them. I have to admit that is not easy to obtain an education but the commitment to my goals is more important than anything else. I like to stand out in the crowd and only the best can do that. My education plan consists of learning and extracting all the information from school but I also want to make my school proud of me. I consider myself one of a kind and I want to prove it with my actions (Student 62, Business).

Moreover some students feel that their personal character makes them more competitive than others. Student 62 wrote:

I am a person that never gives up, and I determined to work hard until I am satisfied, and achieve my goals (Student 62).

Of interest was to find that 6 students perceived themselves as being more qualified than others based on their unique personal experience, knowledge of language or being polyglot, and having understanding of diverse cultures. These 6 students made it a point to let the admission committee know that they are well-rounded individuals. Student 61 claimed on such strength:

I speak three languages: Spanish, English, and French. Having received an American-style education in Mexico for ten years, and then having studied not only in San Diego but also in Montreal has helped me appreciate the solid geostrategic alliance between these countries. My awareness of the constant inter-play of interests between nations has shaped my character and strengthened my passion for international affairs (Student 61, Political Science).
Furthermore, another wrote on her/his experiences in engaging in two different countries simultaneously (e.g. Mexico and U.S.). Being an international citizen of the world is especially helpful when the students apply for International business administration. Student 64 wrote:

I am already an international citizen with enough knowledge in both Mexican and American societies to conduct proper business yet, I believe I still lack the further education that USD and its exchange institution in neighboring Mexico will provide to me. I believe that I am a unique student since I experience a daily change in the country I am in and am able to identify these business opportunities that other without this experience wouldn’t have (Student 64, International business administration).

Overall, the SOP written assignment suggests that there are many ways in which students may reflect on their own experiences. These experiences recall the challenges as the first member in the family to attain a college degree, understanding the world as an international student and citizen, through knowing different languages, and through their works in laboratory or hospitals. These experiences are all unique and in their own way revealing the intricacies of human nature.

Move 5 Concluding Remarks

Although all students employed Move 5, only 3 students provided an understanding of their career beyond their post-graduate training and only 3 of 19 students correlate their graduate learning skills to their future academic endeavor.

In many circumstances when the students correlate their graduate learning to future academic endeavor it was revealed very generally without allowing the admission committee to know what specific career students have in mind. Moreover, the struggle that an academic degree requires entails a large amount of money and time, which was perceived as a challenge. Student 60 claimed:

I greatly hope that I am able to experience assignments that are closely related to actual work situations. Accordingly, I will be better prepared to obtain a job that appeals to me. Completion
of the program will require a significant time and money investment; however, I am willing to make this sacrifice as it is an investment in myself (Student 60, Finance).

The most ubiquitous concluding statement included a hypothetical contribution to the field. Contributions were notable in terms of departing from the present research and connecting it to the wider world of future research. Interestingly, the contribution to the field was generally directed toward others such as communities, individuals, and countries. In the students writings the future research was signaled with hedging: ‘benefit from’, ‘contribute’, and ‘allow me Students 62, 63, 65, 66, 68 wrote:

I can see myself in the future doing business and using all my knowledge outside in the world. I want to create business that people would be happy to deal with and that the earth would benefit from. I want to leave a path that other could use as an example and I want people to remember me as a good man (Students 62, Business)

My education with my BS in Nursing, minor in psychology and Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner degree I will be able to offer the most and best of my knowledge to any community setting. I can give my service at homes, hospitals, and clinics; and even travel to those areas with people in need. My career education will allow me to keep on with my goals, which are to help and aid the ill. I will be able to work with just about anyone including those with major mental illnesses (Student 63, Nursing).

The various intern opportunities in multiple companies, the fresh experience to travel across the whole California and the sense of honor to serve the business, making small contribution to the economic development would be the best achievements in my career life. As the saying goes, “one is good at what he likes ”, the MSA program will absolutely prepare me for my future and career success (Student 65, Finance).

I plan to continue working with clients at a micro level but also expand my work base and apply for jobs that hold a higher position in management, such as program managers and directors. This would allow me to change policies or programs to provide the best outcomes for the homeless population being served. I hope that I one day I am able to design well developed programs that offer services to maximize the empowerment of individuals and support their self-sufficiency (Student 66, Social Work).

I wish to introduce better management and financing skills in order to offer my dear mother country a healthier economy besides rapidly increasing GDP. Therefore, I hope to improve myself with this post-graduate study and obtain more up-to-date practical skills in business management to help my future career (Student 68, Finance).
Moreover, within this Step 5.3 it was found that some students not only mentioned the benefit to others but how the students personally will benefit for the rest of their life from the knowledge acquired. Student 73 explained:

A post-graduate degree in Microbiology would allow me to enter the work force as a researcher and continue the rewarding work of searching for cures to diseases. The knowledge I will gain from the program will be priceless and benefit me for the rest of my life. I hope to be fortunate enough to carry on my childhood fascination with science until the day I become an old grey haired man (Student 73, Microbiology).

Move 6 Concluding Restatement

Only 3 students employed Move 6. It could be that many students considered their concluding remark as part of Move 5 and did not providing a final thought. The concluding statement in the students writing was perceived as a cultural value which implies the importance of academic achievement and how it varies among different academic discourse communities (e.g. finance new law, microbiology new genetic techniques). Students 64 and 61 wrote:

In conclusion, this post graduate program will allow me to experience an education in business in both countries and will give me a broader scope as to the different entrepreneurial opportunities I decide to pursue in the future (Student 64, International Business Administrations).

In the future I hope to serve as a vessel of knowledge and inspiration to future generations; therefore I am aware that it is imperative that I drench myself in knowledge and wisdom in order to be a reliable source. I am convinced that I will accomplish my goals for my persistent and disciplined personality has helped me achieve many academic successes along the way (Student 61, Political Science).

5.2.3. CONCLUDING FINDINGS IN THE METADISCORSE IN STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This research effort was based on 19 ESL college students’ writings of SOP which identified the rhetorical moves and steps of SOP. The data suggested that Moves 1-5 may be important moves in SOP
since all ESL students employed these moves. Move 6 was found in only 3 of 19 students’ writings, which make this move more of an elective based on ESL students fields of inquiry. Furthermore, variations observed in steps under each move indicate that these steps are also optional but that they can play a significant role in expressing ideas. In many instances students had overlap between different steps such as developing an interest in a field of their selected academic-study that may be related to their motivation to attend graduate school. In addition, under Move 4 (Reflect your experience), Steps 4.3 and 4.4 were only found in 31% (6) in the students’ writings.

One possible explanation is that it is hard to think about reasons of how ones is uniquely different from other candidates at least in terms of one’s academic achievements or how the student is more suitable to be accepted to a program than other students.

The general pattern for addressing the SOP assignment was to follow the sequence of Move 1 through Move 5. It is worth mentioning that few students started their narrative with Move 4 or reflected on their experiences before writing information such as their desire to enter graduate school or driving motivating to continue to pursue a graduate degree.

Another general patterns found in the SOPs was that the majority of the students used the epistemic ‘I’ which allowed the students to be the topic (subject) of the essay and allowed them to the reveal their intentions and motives in pursuing an advanced degree.

The most ubiquitous verb was the verb ‘want’ which was employed in many verbal phrases such as ‘I want to obtain’, ‘I want to develop a greater understanding’, ‘I want to succeed’, ‘I want people to remember me as a good man’ which provided students with a voice about what they expect and desire.

Other verbs employed extensively by students in their written SOPs were verbs that convey possibilities or feelings such as ‘believe’ and ‘feel’ across academic fields. The students’ SOP fields of inquiry were diverse and ranged from microbiology, pharmacology, psychiatric mental health nurse
practitioner, healthcare, sociology, linguist, finance, business administration, international business, marketing, economics, political science, social work, individualize job-coaching, producing and directing.
CHAPTER VI
RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE MISCUES EMPLOYED BY ESL COLLEGE STUDENTS

This chapter reports on the fourth research question of the study:

What types of miscues do ESL international college students employ in their writing assignments in English? To answer this question, four sub-questions were employed:

4a. How do the miscues of ESL international college students’ English writing assignments relate to the students’ L1 (e.g. morphology) and are these miscues language specific? Furthermore, do SLA theories account for L1 induced miscues (e.g. article, verbs and subject-verb agreement)?

4b. Is there a correlation between verb (e.g. verb forms and verb tenses), article and subject verb agreement miscues among 141 ESL students?

4c. Is there a correlation between different types of errors (e.g. verb, article and subject verb agreement) and gender?

4d. Is there a significant difference between groups based on twenty different L1s with respect to the verb, article and subject verb agreement miscues?

This part of research effort refers to 141 ESL students’ writing miscues by examining how they relate to second language theories and statistical differences between miscues in L2 that are based on their L1.

In order to address question ‘4a’ an analysis of miscues was conducted involving 141 ESL College students. All final writing exams were analyzed for article, verb (e.g. verb forms and verb tenses) and subject verb agreement miscues.
6.1. FINDINGS OF ESL COLLEGE STUDENTS’ MISCUES USING QUALITATIVE METHODS

The empirical data from the writing essays by 141 ESL students in the LING 305 W (Advanced Composition for International Students) suggests that there is evidence of L1 influence in the SLA process. A general pattern of miscues was found among ESL students suggesting that SLA is a gradual and incremental process. In particular five types of miscues findings are analyzed and/or discussed.

First, the miscues regarding language feature articles are discussed. Second, the miscues regarding verb forms (VFs) and verb tenses (VTs) miscues are examined. Third, language feature-subject/verb (SV) agreement is analyzed. Fourth, the role of L1 in SLA is discussed. Fifth, ESL students’ miscues and the role of LI are examined.

The usage of articles may be a daunting process even for native speakers. As a result, article miscues were omnipresent in ESL students’ writing essay. Even though the ESL students covered the gamut of L1 from Chinese, Japanese, Russian, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Korean, Arabic, etc., articles were employed incorrectly numerous times by all of ESL students. The verb defines an action or a state, that is, existence concepts which are perceived as different processes on the time line and are connected to an agent. From the morphological point of view the verb is one of the most important parts of speech (next to the noun) which is characterized through specific categories of time, mood, aspect and diathesis next to the person and number, which are proper to different word classes (e.g. ‘He has been waiting for a long time’. ‘He has been waiting’ is the present perfect progressive, third person singular, active diathesis). Syntactically, the verb has the purpose of the predicate of the preposition of the utterance in personal forms and in impersonal form it has other functions. As a result, the most
ubiquitous miscues were among verbs, VF and VT. In addition, SV agreement miscues were omnipresent in clauses for all of ESL students.

Additional types of miscues found in the ESL college students’ writings included pronoun, anaphoric device, adjective and adverb, double negative as well as preposition miscues (include on the text vs. include in the text, speak on the text vs. speak in the text.) In addition, word order and sentence structure (e.g. inclusion of a subject) miscues were found among ESL students’ writing. For the purpose of this study, these types of miscues are not addressed but future research could address the importance of these miscues in ESL students’ writing.

6.1.1. LANGUAGE FEATURE OF ARTICLES

The language feature of articles varies across languages. Table 6.1 shows the variations of usage of articles among different languages. The article miscues employed by the ESL students in their writing can include the transfer of the schema from L1 and also the use of the complex linguistic feature of articles in English.

Articles miscues were omnipresent throughout all of the students’ writings. The article miscues not only occurred in the initial position of a sentence but also in all other possible positions (e.g. middle utterance, word final) wherein a noun required an article for a specific referent. The article miscues were employed with proper and common nouns, with specific or nonspecific references (e.g. the), uncountable or countable nouns (e.g. no article or some, much, etc.) and plural or singular nouns (e.g., no article or some, many, etc. or a/an). Table 6.1 shows the most common miscues in L2 that are transferred from L1 (refers to the speaker native language). This Table is derived from Raimes (2011) analysis of language features articles.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Features</th>
<th>Native Languages L1</th>
<th>Sample Transfer Miscue in L2 English</th>
<th>Edited Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No articles</td>
<td>Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Thai</td>
<td>Cat is asleep. She took nap.</td>
<td>The cat is asleep. She took a nap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definite article used for generalization</td>
<td>French, Farsi, German, Spanish</td>
<td>The oil is more viscous than the water.</td>
<td>Oil is more viscous than water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definite articles with days, months, places, idioms</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>She lives in the Italy. She bought it as the Macys.</td>
<td>She lives in Italy. She bought it at Macys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definite article used with proper noun</td>
<td>French, German, Spanish</td>
<td>The professor Nelson teaches in San Diego. The Tuesday is the test day.</td>
<td>Professor Nelson teaches in San Diego. Tuesday is the test day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No indefinite article</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>She took one trip.</td>
<td>She took a trip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No indefinite article with professions</td>
<td>Arabic, French, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese</td>
<td>She is PhD student. She is doctor. Larry is pharmacist.</td>
<td>She is a PhD student. She is a doctor. Larry is a pharmacist.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from the ‘Editing Guide’ Raimes, 2011 p.492, Key for Writers.

In the written essays of the ESL students were analyzed the article miscues. To illustrate the article miscues 15 student examples are provided below. Other miscues are not mentioned in order to avoid confusion concerning what type of miscue is discussed. Incorrect forms were underlined within the examples and when an article was omitted in the writing (the edited version) it is provided in the parentheses.

(1) (Article ‘a’) Summary of detailed qualifications shows (Article ‘the’) discourse community that the writer’s requirement within applying the position of interacting to the specific group (ESL student 1, L1 Korean).

(2) Genre analysis is (Article ‘a’) writing summary of (Article ‘a’) story of publication that focuses writing about (Article ‘a’) particular story (ESL student 2, L1 Arab).

(3) In conclusion (No article ‘the’) the genre analysis gives you a better understanding of how to choose the correct genre when choosing a topic to write about (ESL student 7, L1 Lao).

(4) (No article ‘the’) The genre analysis is a form of writing that is distinguished by its particular form, content, technique, organization, language format and values. The purpose of (No article ‘the’) the genre analysis is to reach a specific audience for a
specific situation. In other words genre for me is the term for any category of writing. Genre Analysis in the writing process is elemental and important because this process gives your article or text a good shape, helps the reader to find (No article ‘the’) the things easily, grasps the reader's attention from the beginning and the reader is forced to read the whole article (ESL student 9, L1Spanish).

(5) Every article we read a genre analysis can always be done. Genre analysis is a way for us to analyze specific content such as language format, format features, organization, and more. My understanding of (No article ‘a’) a genre is that it is a class of writing that can be distinguished by its content, organization, language, format, and values (COLFV) to achieve the goals of reaching a certain group of audience and a purpose..... (Article ‘The’) Last part of the COLFV model known as values shows that the resume belongs to a community of people who wants a job that provides (Article ‘a’) service to the public such as the position of a security guard. (Article ‘The’) Author values having a job that can provide excellent service to others (ESL student 12, L1 Chinese).

(6) Therefore, (No article ‘the’) the genre analysis and (Article ‘the’) COLFV model may help you create an excellent, smooth, professorial and unique resume, a job cover letter, a lab report, a group proposal and the master or PHD degree letter. It may assist everyone to have (No article ‘a’) a better writing communication skill with different kind of people in the future (ESL student 15, L1 Chinese).

(7) Classification and listing are being used. He is listing what he did from 1991 to 2011 into three periods 1991-1995, 1995-1999, and 1999-2011 because each period he worked in (Article ‘a’) different position. He classified where he was trained and went for education under (Article ‘the’) Education section. He also classifies his experiences under (Article ‘the’) Experience section (ESL student 20, L1 Vietnamese).

(8) (Article ‘the’) Writer starts with the field and the identity of the person being profiled, such as his name, position and company name etc. He states that the reason why (article ‘the’) writer is writing the letter and (Article ‘the’) background of his experience and appreciation. (Article ‘the’) Writer always starts the subject “I” to connect to the audience. Also, it indicates that only this letter is (Article ‘a’) subject issue, not (Article ‘a’) group issue (ESL student 22, L1 Korean).

(9) (Article ‘The’) Language of a text includes (Article ‘the’) tone of (Article ‘the’) author for example it could be persuasive or formal and comprises (No article ‘the’) the word choice, modals and sentence structure. (Article ‘the’) author has a formal and persuasive tone. She uses words like resign, appreciate, enjoy, opportunities, thankful, happy. In my opinion these are all very strong and convincing. The structure of her sentences is simple and she uses “I” since she is only talking about herself and she is the main focus on this letter. ..However, during the class we had the opportunity to go over (Article ‘a’) few interview and did a genre analysis on them. That helped me to have (Article ‘a’) clue before I go on with my interview. I could successfully do my report and learned a lot from my supervisor (ESL student 25, L1 Farsi).
(10) Without a proper genre analysis, we may make inaccurate conclusion about a writing process. The first step of genre analysis is to analyze the content of the writing, which includes the assumption the writer made about the reader, information put into the writing, and information which was left out of the writing. In the resignation letter, for example, the reader was clearly Mr. McKenna, a production manager, the writer’s boss. The assumption the writer, Mr. Seymour, made about his own boss could be: boss knows him well, boss remembers the things happened between them during the 12 years’ work, boss understands that as an employee at will, the writer could leave the company any time he wish to.

(11) Genre Analysis is a valuable tool in preparing non-native speakers to gain a better understanding of the language and strengthen the writing skills in the genre of a textual analysis. Writing a genre analysis requires people to understand the genre to which your text belongs and to discuss to what extent it establishes or subverts the features of this genre.

(12) As stated in the book “The Call to Write” by John Trimbur (2011), the concept of a genre analysis would be to find out “Social and rhetorical actions that embody writers’ purposes and motivations, shaping and responding to situations that call on them to write”. My understanding of genre is the different types and styles of writing based on the multiple situations in an author’s life. A book explanation of how genre analysis fits into the writing process could be “A way of naming the choices writers make based on their knowledge of the strategies of writing available to them to define and deal with the rhetorical situation.” (p.27) For me, a genre analysis helps to decide who will the audience be and therefore, to identify how much knowledge the audience has about the topic.

(13) For instance, I did a group project on last week. My group chose the explanatory report and our topic was “Every Cigarette Can Make Damages.” My group members followed steps of COLF model to start writing our paper. We identified the audience who are general public. Our purpose was to say no to smoking. First, we provided general background for audience. Then, we gave examples that related to the negative effects of smoking: general health effects, secondhand smoke, addiction, environmental effects, and economic effects. Therefore, COLF model plays a significant role in genre analysis. In COLF model, content presents what information is included and excluded in a piece of writing.

(14) According to the lessons which I learned in our class, I’m going to writing an essay about my understanding of a genre analysis. Firstly, genre is type of writing such as writing an email, reports, essay, diary, to-do list, resume…and many more. Secondly, genre analysis is include of discourse community which is group of people who share common goals, culture and language, call to write, purpose and COLFV model. A genre analysis fits into the writing process based on the steps in COLF Model.
(15) Genre is a type of writing, and each genre has a purpose. Therefore, genre analysis could be said to be (Article ‘a’) backward process of writing a text; you analysis he content, organization, language, format and values to determine the purpose of the writer. This process allows us to see what we need in our writings in (Article ‘a’) certain genre. For example, at the beginning of each session we were given texts in certain genres, such as letters of appeal and commentary, from the instructor to analyze so that we could use our analysis in our on writings in the same genre. In this way, (No article ‘a’) a genre analysis fit to the writing process (ESL student 41, L1 Japanese).

6.1.2. LANGUAGE FEATURE OF VERBS FORMSL (VF) AND VERB TENSES (VT)

In the discussion of findings under language feature verb forms and verb tenses miscues in L2 from L1, Table 6.2 is provided to suggest that many miscues made in L2 English are transferred from L1. Some verbs forms derived from a verb (verbs) cannot serve as the main verb of an utterance (e.g. an ‘ing’ form, a past participle, an ending in an ‘ed’ for a regular verb or an infinitive). Since ESL students acquire so much information regarding VF and VT the possibility for miscues are enormous.

In addition, it can be the case that verb tenses by themselves are the result of miscues since the time concept can be perceived differently by ESL students (e.g. Simple future: I will arrive soon; future progressive: They will be playing football at noon tomorrow; future perfect: I will have finished my paper by Monday; future perfect progressive: by the year 2014, they will have been running the school for thirty-five years).

Furthermore, if the ESL student L1 does not have a distinction between active and passive voice then the frequencies of miscues increase enormously (e.g. active voice: He is writing the paper. vs. passive voice: The paper was written yesterday).

Considering the L1 acquisition of past tense markings, ESL college students initially fail to mark the past tense. ESL students’ first markings involve frequent irregular verbs such as ‘wrote’ and ‘written’; next appear regular markings (the addition of the default ending) in verbs such as
‘talked’. The evidence of the disappearance of irregular verbs from the interlanguage is apparent for the case in which the ending ‘ed’ is placed at the end of irregular verbs such as ‘writed’ and ‘spaked’. This is implemented by the extension of regular ending ‘ed’ with regular verbs such as ‘talk’, to irregular verbs (e.g. write and speak) which results in an incorrect form.

Only at a very advanced stage do the irregular verbs disappear and then are replaced by regularized forms suggesting that the ESL students’ grammar is restricting them to make everything regular even though such form as ‘writed’ or ‘goed’ are not part of the input from native speakers. At the final stage the irregular form is attained in the output of ESL students.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Features and Verb Forms</th>
<th>Native Languages L1</th>
<th>Sample Transfer Miscues in L2 English</th>
<th>Edited Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be can be omitted</td>
<td>Arabic, Chinese, Russian</td>
<td>Huckleberries Ø tasty.</td>
<td>Huckleberries <em>are</em> tasty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No progressive forms</td>
<td>French, German, Russian</td>
<td>He <em>eats</em> grilled sausage now.</td>
<td>He <em>is eating</em> grilled sausage now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No tense inflection</td>
<td>Chinese, Thai, Vietnamese</td>
<td>They <em>were arrived</em> when I called.</td>
<td>They <em>had arrived</em> when I called.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past perfect formed with be</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>He <em>is eating</em> shark since 1994.</td>
<td>He <em>has eating</em> shark since 1994.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No inflection for third person singular</td>
<td>Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Thai</td>
<td><em>She swim</em> ten laps every day.</td>
<td><em>She swims</em> ten laps every day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different tense boundaries from English</td>
<td>Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, French</td>
<td>Sally <em>lives</em> in the Salton Sea for three years.</td>
<td>Sally <em>has lived</em> in the Salton Sea for the last three years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different limits for passive voice</td>
<td>Japanese, Korean, Russian, Thai, Vietnamese</td>
<td>A reaction <em>was occurred</em>.</td>
<td>A reaction <em>has occurred</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No –ing gerund/infinitive distinction</td>
<td>Arabic, Chinese, French, Greek, Farsi, Spanish, Vietnamese</td>
<td>She discussed <em>to read</em> Voltaire with her friend.</td>
<td>She discussed <em>reading</em> Voltaire with her friend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infinitive not used to express purpose</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Lucy <em>stopped eating</em> out for saving money.</td>
<td>Lucy <em>stopped to eat</em> out to save money.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from the ‘Editing Guide’ Raimes, 2011 p.492, *Key for Writers*.

In addition to VT marking miscues the most ubiquitous miscues in ESL students’ writing were VF miscues. An utterance needs a complete verb consisting of one of the five VFs and any necessaries auxiliaries. The five forms of regular verbs follow a predictable pattern. The first form is the base form (e.g. ‘see’). The second form is the morpheme –‘s’ which is the third person singular form of the present tense (‘sees’). The third form is the ‘ing’ form (the present
participle) which needs auxiliary verbs to function as a complete verb and can appear in a verbal phrase and as a noun gerund (e.g. ‘seeing’, ‘painting’). The fourth form is the past tense form which functions as a complete verb without auxiliary verbs (e.g. ‘painted’). The fifth form is the past participle form which is sometimes defined as the ‘ed’ form since an auxiliary verb is required in order for it to function as a complete verb (‘has painted’, ‘was helped’) or it can appear in a phrase (‘the painted wall’). Moreover, the irregular verbs do not use the ‘ed’ form that the past tense and past participle forms use (e.g. ‘begin, began, begun’).

Thus, the verb tenses were among the most frequent miscues. It could be the case that verb tenses indicate time as perceived by the writer or speaker. Moreover, verb tenses are very convoluted. Consider the present time which includes simple present (e.g. He reads Shakespeare every morning), present progressive (e.g. They are working today), present perfect (e.g. I have never read Shakespeare) and present perfect progressive (e.g. I have been living in US since 1990). As a result, in order to implement the verb tenses ESL students have to have a deep understanding of the time concepts as well as the linguistic forms involved.

The data suggests that SLA is variable across ESL students besides their L1. The ESL students that have already acquired the time concept in L1 only need to transfer it to L2. The question is whether or not time is perceived in the same manner among different languages and what difference, if any, this will make to ESL students. The symbol Ø is used to identify an incorrect form. It is worth mentioning that students from the LING 305 W classes who were from Russian, Chinese and Arabic countries did not include the auxiliary form ‘be’. This form must be included in a verb phrase in English (e.g. I am studying this evening vs. Ø I studying this evening; I have been studying since last night vs. Ø I have studying since last night). The
findings from these students suggest that even for students who were in very advance class the omission of the auxiliary ‘be’ could be a direct transfer as well as automaticity from L1.

Many languages make no change in the VF to indicate number and person. In addition several spoken version of English such as African American Vernacular (AAV), Caribbean Creole and London Cockney do not observe the standard rule of agreement. (e.g. in AAV: Ø She have (has) a lot of knowledge in the field of molecular biology. Cockney Ø He don’t (doesn’t) ever wear that brown tie).

Using the ESL College students written essays, the following 15 examples (16 to 30) of VF and VT miscues were underlined and the edited version (the correct form) was provided in parenthesis. In addition, only the miscues involving VF and VT were underlined in the following examples in order to eschew confusion with other kinds of miscues.

(16) Fourth, word choice shows the emphasizing of the writer’s ability. There are many words that (VF ‘show’) showing the writer’s ability such as able to, efforts led, recognized, and improved. (ESL student 1, L1 Korean)

In example 16 the ESL student does not produce the third person form. As result the miscues could be related to the direct transfer in L2.

(17) Genre analysis needs to be stated about the content of statement and organization as well tune and publication of the material. Genre analysis should have purpose of writing which the writing process should (VF ‘follow guidelines’) be followed guidelines that focused each part of the writing. There is also the format for content, organization, language, format, and values (COLFV) model the follows five parts. For the reflection, I gained huge experience how to do genre analysis for a publication and story. Here, it is how it works to step by step for genre analysis for strategic explanations (ESL student 2, L1 Arab).

(18) Lastly, genre analysis (VF ‘includes’) included values of the writer. What the writer cares about and credibility. And the way he created the relationship about the story. In this case, Mr. Turners’ is seeking this particular job of request (ESL student 2, L1 Arab).

In examples 17 and 18 the Arabic ESL college student used different tense boundaries from English. As a result these miscues could be miscues transferred from L1.
When analyzing the content part of a genre using the COLFV analysis, we have to ask ourselves why certain information was included or excluded, if the writer is using insider or outsider knowledge, how the interest is raised, and finally what assumptions (VF does the writer make) does the writer makes about the audience. It’s is important to mention that this task isn’t always straightforward, sometimes looking at tiny details such as the writer’s credentials (background, beliefs, social allegiances), the publisher, and the call to write helps us get through the text more easily. For instance, when looking at the education received by the applicant, which would be part of his credentials, we immediately know he has insider knowledge since he majored in Administration of Justice and received specialized training in the U.S. Marine Corps (ESL learner 3, L1 Spanish).

The format also helps (VF guide) guiding the reader through the text, as it provides a logical path for the eye. Writers make use of paragraphs, heading, subheadings, bold, italics, margins, pictures, tables, spacing, etc. to facilitate the way the audience goes through their text and to enhance understandability (ESL student 5, L1 Spanish).

Know the genre (VF ‘improves’) improving the way you communicate. Over the semester I learnt the writing process that would help me improve the way I write. The process starts from (deciding) decide on the topic and audience, (selecting) select an appropriate genre for the purpose, (analyzing) analyze genre by using COLFV models, (developing) develop a COLFV model, (writing) write draft, (reviewing) review the draft, and evaluate the effectiveness based on the purpose of writing. By (following) follow these simple steps it will help me to stay on track of what I am trying to write to which specific readers I am trying to write to (ESL student 6, L1 Thai).

In the ESL student example (21) one finds numerous gerund miscues. Since gerunds are verbs that have been transformed into nouns, gerunds were not included in the verb form category. Thus, in examples 20 and 21 the ESL students used an ‘ing’ form of the verb when the simple present VT was required.

Genre analysis fits into this writing process because it requires deep examination of how the article was built up. It gives specific details that others maybe not realize that it’s there until they really try to understand the article by using the analysis method. In class we worked on quite a few articles that (VT required) requires us (VF to use) to using the COLFV model. It helped us understand what makes a good article and what a good article (VF consists) is consist of. We learned how to identify the format being used and the importance of it to catch reader’s attention. It was a good learning experience because in most English class we always learn how to write an essay (VF consists) that’s consist of the professor teaching grammar or sentence structure, but now besides knowing how to write an essay we now also know how to do some analyzing which can help improve our writing. A person named Ben Turner has a resume that can be (VF used) use to analyze by using the COLFV model (ESL student 12, L1 Chinese).
(23) Content is the relevant details of a particular text. In some of the articles we did the COLFV analysis in class; when we (VF analyzed) analyze the content usually we think in the author of the text. Some of the questions that we (VF asked) ask ourselves when we were analyzing content in the class were questions such as; what the author thinks that the audience already knows about the topic? How much interest the audience has in that topic? Two of the most important things about content; that our professor always made more emphasis on; were about the author’s disciplinary knowledge, and also the insider knowledge. Insider knowledge refers when the writer knows the person of the text. In the text that the professor (VF provided) provide too us, which is the resume of Ben Turner, we have a case of disciplinary knowledge, because the writer and the person to be (VF profiled) profile; which is Ben; are within the same disciplinary field (ESL learner 17, L1 Spanish).

In example 22, the ESL college student used the simple present VT (requires) when the simple past VT was prerequisite (required). The same pattern was noticed in the example 23 in which the ESL student extensively employed the simple present when the required form was the simple past (we analyze vs. we analyzed). The data suggest that regardless of the L1 of the ESL students the same kind of miscue was implemented. The data suggest that ESL students did not acquire the VT.

(24) Genre analyzing and using the COLFV model will assist me in my future educational and professional life because I think writing doesn’t just stop after I (VT graduate) graduated from college. I think to be able to analyze and understand what I read in my everyday life is extremely important. Part of going to school is to (VF educate) educated myself and allow myself to think critically and be aware of what is going on around me. I will be writing a lot of memo, emails, letters, etc. throughout my career and it is really important for me to learn how to do them it well. Words are powerful if I know how to use them effectively. Communication is crucial in my future career and it is really important for me to be able to learn how write well and also be able to analyze and think critically (ESL student 23, L1 Vietnamese).

Although in the example 24 the ESL college student did have tense inflection in L1, they made miscues just the same, which suggests that this may not be a transfer from the L1.

(25) The language used in the letter is determent with a friendly attitude. She makes it clear that she is leaving the company and that it is her final decision. The word choices she mad as plan for job coverage, appreciation, support, excellent work environment and
I would like to help are word choices that shows that she is leaving the company happy and that there is nothing that the company did wrong that resulted in her resignation. I did not find any particular Jargon in the letter. This is because it is not a specific work related letter but a letter of recognition. I believe she (VT used) was using a passive voice throughout the letter. She (VT didn’t name) was not naming any specific people she wanted to thank besides the reader himself. The letter was written in I form since it was about her. There are no fragments in the letter where all the sentences are complete (ESL student 24, L1 Swedish).

(26) The concept of genre analysis, in my understanding, is related to a certain type of writing. A genre always has a purpose and it is specifically used within the discourse community. The writer and the reader, whom share common goals, choose to communicate via a specific genre. Genre analysis fits into the writing process by creating guidelines for an effective delivery of the intended message to the reader. The experience I’ve gained in this course (VT has allowed) allowed me to further understand the importance of genre analysis. Although I was introduced to several different genres, my favorite one was the letter of appeal. That particular genre allowed me to explore my future discourse community in depth. In reality, genre analysis cannot be performed with the application of the COLFV model. I will demonstrate my understanding of the COLFV model by analyzing the genre of a resignation letter (ESL student 27, L1 Russian).

In example 25 the ESL college student employed the past progressive VT (was using) when the simple past VT was required (used). In addition, in example 26 the ESL student employed the simple past VT (allowed) when the present perfect VT was required (has allowed). It could be the case that the ESL students did not acquire all of the VTs and that nuanced time distinctions have not yet been perceived. Each speaker had a different L1.

(27) Then organization is next, what one needs to focus on in this section is the way the writer writes the letter, what information is in what paragraph and look for a pattern, if possible. If there is no pattern then just focus on the information given and explain what the author is doing in each paragraph. For example, a type of organization is cause and effect, compare and contrast, problem solution, etc. What the author could be doing in his paragraphs is illustrating, describing, explaining, etc. In the letter that I am analyzing the writer begins his second paragraph by describing how his work in that company was like, the achievements that he had and what the company provided for him. In his third paragraph, the writer is justifying why he (VT is leaving) leaves the company, he gives a reason of his resignation (ESL student 28, L1 Spanish).
In the example 27 the ESL student did not employ a VT that indicates the future. He uses the simple present VT, which indicates activity that is permanent or happens habitually or repeatedly. The ESL student used the simple present VT (he leaves) instead of a verb structure indicating the future such as ‘he is leaving’ or ‘he is going to leave’.

(28) The writer also states that she would like to help with the transition of her job and responsibilities to another employee. And at last, she expresses her appreciation to her current employer. From this letter, I have a clear idea about what should (VF be included) include in a resigning letter, not just a reason why I would like to quit, but also takeover and appreciation (ESL student 32, L1 Chinese).

(29) The language part also plays an important role in controlling how the paper will sound. First, the tone will set the language of the paper by the author’s attitude. Second, the word choices of the writer (VF will reveal) will reveal the writer’s orientation and also it will influence the reader’s perspective. For example, it may (VF be affected) be affect by the connotation, figurative language (such as metaphor, simile, or jargon), language of speech, region or at the workplace where jargon is use quite often. I believe that the genre analysis will help me by creating an essay for graduate school by knowing what the interviewer expect to see and this will also be good for creating a resume that (VF is tailored) is tailor to a certain type of job. Genre analysis and using COLFV model have taught me that I only need to include the necessary information that are relevant to the audience that will be reading my work (ESL student 39, L1 Vietnamese).

(30) In Mr. McKenna’s letter, in second paragraph describes the environment that (VF he had been working) he had working for Norfolk in the past 12 years. Finally, the last key concept is language which based on the language use, analysis and teaching (ESL student 40, L1 Vietnamese).

In examples 28 and 29 the ESL student did utilize a ‘be + verb’ form ‘be include’, ‘be affect’, ‘is tailor’; however, the ESL students did not employed the correct –ed form of the verb. This could be the result of a generalization of the simple present VT. In example 30 the ESL student did not utilize the past perfect progressive VF (he had been working). Instead the ESL student employed an interlanguage form (he had working). While it appears that the student was on the brink of picking up the correct form with the addition of ‘been’, the ESL student was not at that specific stage yet. It did appear that the student understands the time concept but was not yet able to put the correct form with this aspect of time in the student’s L2.
In addition to the previously mentioned VF and VT miscues SV (subject verb) agreement miscues were among the most prominent in the ESL students’ writings. SV agreement can be one of the last linguistic cognates acquired by ESL students. In addition, there are various problematic subjects with singular verbs. One kind of miscue expressed extensively by ESL students independent of L1 (e.g. Spanish, Russian, etc.) was SV agreement.

In Standard English a third person singular subject in the present tense takes a singular verb form (with s) and a plural subject takes a plural verb form (with no s). For example, consider ‘A baby cries’ versus ‘Babies cry’. Thus, when you use the present tense both the subject and verb must agree in person (first, second, third) and number (singular and plural).

Some of the most prominent miscues are concerned with SV agreement. One example is ‘each and every’ may seem to indicate more than one, but grammatically they are singular words (e.g. Each piece of the cake has different frosting. Every change in procedure causes problems.) Another example is the ‘ing’ form or infinitive form as subject. With a subject beginning with the ‘ing’ form (gerund) or with an infinitive a singular VF is used (e.g. Singing in front of a crowd causes anxiety). To keep our air clean takes careful planning. When the singular noun ends in ‘s’ (e.g. news, physics, economics, politics, mathematics, etc.), a singular verb is required (e.g. The news has been bad lately. Mathematics is a convoluted subject). Another common miscue occurs in phrases where the subject is perceived as single unit such as time, money, weight and a singular verb is required, (e.g. Twelve years have passed. Twelve years was a long time to spend at college). Also uncountable nouns (jewelry, advice, happiness, honesty, information, knowledge) can be problematic for ESL students. They do not have a plural form.
and are always followed by a singular verb (e.g. *That advice makes* me nervous. *The information provided* in a newspaper is not always accurate).

It is worth mentioning that there were many exceptions to the rules and more categories can be provided but for the purpose of this study these were among the most frequent miscues.

To illustrate ESL college students SV miscues, examples 31-43 are provided. Only the SV agreement miscues are underlined in the following examples in order to avoid confusion with other kinds of miscues. The edited version (the correct form) is provided in parenthesis.

(31) Another part of genre analysis is the language that plays important part. It focuses the tune of the writing, word chooses and statistics. Mr. Turner (SV agreement uses) use number, years, and percentages. For example, he states that he worked security specialist 1999-2011 (ESL student 2, L1 Arabic).

(32) (SV agreement stands) C stand for Content, the content is the information the writer planning to include in the writing, which (SV agreement reflects) reflect author’s assumption about the audience, disciplinary knowledge, and insider knowledge. For example the given reading shows how the writer (SV agreement assumes) assume that the reader would know what is NCO stand for. This specific resume was written to people who work with armed and security filed who would able to identify that NCO is Non-Commissioned Officer. L stands for Language. The Language such as tone, word choice, passive voice, and sentence structure help you reach the reader. In this case the writer (SV agreement writes) write in a serious tone to let the reader know that he is serious about getting the job. He used words such as efficiency, accuracy, and efforts to present himself (ESL student 6, L1 Thai).

(33) Genre analysis (SV agreement fits) fit into the writing process by presenting the type of genre you will be analysis as well as the information you know about that topic. Not only will you be presenting the topic to your audience but you will show what you know about this genre (ESL student 7, L1 Lao).

(34) He (SV agreement emphasizes) emphasize on safety so he definitely concerns about safety. There is no such metaphor used in the text. All sentences are fragment because it’s just listing of his past experience. He also uses passive voice to clarify this past experiences (ESL student 13, L1 Korean).

(35) The genre analysis and the writing process are hand in hand because when we want to start in analyze a text we need to follow a process in this case the writing process which (SV agreement consists) consist in decide what will be our topic and audience, once you have the topic and audience is important to decide what genre is appropriate for the
purpose, in this class I analyzed different types of genre for example informative articles, professional profile, letters of appeal and proposals (ESL student 19, L1 Spanish).

(36) Lastly, you have to able to identify what is the purpose of the writing? You have to be able to evaluate whether the writer (SV agreement accomplishes) accomplish his or her purposes and conclude whether or not the argument is convincing or not. I think Genre is a different type of writing people write to illustrate the purpose of their writing “the call to write” (ESL student 23, L1 Vietnamese).

(37) In the content of a text, some information (SV agreement is) are also purposely omitted; the author’s supervisor (SV agreement has) have been part of her professional growth, therefore it is not necessary to list them. In the future, the COLFV model will greatly assist me in analyzing reports, opinions and even project instruction to do my job. Not all writing (SV agreement calls) call for this model such as texts and IM messages, however in any profession, texts and writings have a purpose and intended audience (ESL student 26, L1 Ethiopian).

(38) Writing a good paper (SV agreement needs) need language skills but obviously it needs extent knowledge about topics, framework of writing, and a relationship between writers and audiences. Genre is a category which classifies different types of literature or writing. Usually each genre has different contents, organization, language, format and value (COLFV). Examples of writing genre are research papers, resumes, dairies, shopping lists, and newspapers, and each genre has different purposes and audiences. By doing a genre analysis, a writer can learn techniques which help to convey a writer’s purpose of writing to readers efficiently. For example, resume genre analysis teaches me that using shorter sentences, listings and brief summaries is better than having long paragraphs because a reader can more easily grasp information at a glance. Writing a profile article to an audience who (SV agreement is) are related to a topic can understand jargons, but if writing a letter of appeal for a general audience, using simple terms is better to gain readers’ understanding. Mismatching a genre and content makes writing less productive (ESL student 29, L1 Spanish).

(39) Genre analysis (SV agreement helps) help us categorize forms of writing and groups types of writing that have the same characteristics. It is a key part in the writing process because it gives you an overall look of your entire work. It helps you visualize and organize your content and it is helpful because you can use it as a guideline to follow while you write your paper so you don't diver in what you want to communicate. When we analyze genres we take close attention to the content, organization, language, format and the values in the document. Genre analysis (SV agreement helps) help us determine what kind of document we are presented with and lets us distinguish and classify them (ESL student 31, L1 Spanish).

The content consists of the information that is presented and hidden by the author. This means what information is included and excluded? What detail does the author omit and which ones does it clarify on. It reflects the author’s assumptions and interests on the topic. The content also informs us of how much reliable the author is, what are his
credentials and how many people get to speak in the document. Is the author a valid source or does he (SV agreement have) has to cite an authority in the subject (ESL student 31, L1Spanish).

(40) The writer (SV agreement uses) use insider knowledge with Mr. McKenna (“You’ve been a good boss and a good employer”). The writer (SV agreement works) work close with Mr. McKenna. The Author makes assumption that Mr. McKenna (SV agreement needs) need to have enough time, in order to find another person who can be the replace the writer. Problems and solution: the writer knows if he (SV agreement leaves) leave the job immediately it will cause problems for Mr. McKenna, therefore the Author (SV agreement offers) offer the solution by help with the transition of his job and responsibility to another employee (ESL student 34, L1 Arabic).

(41) There is spacing between the paragraphs, margins around the letter as well as no indents, picture, tables, or any charts in the text. There are 5 moves total in the letter. Move 1 is the general information to show what the author wants the employer to know her purpose. Move 2 includes the author’s appreciation when she/he works at the Norfolk International, Inc. Move 3 is that the author (SV agreement states) state the new position for her new job, which is the reason why he/she (SV agreement has) have to quit her current job. Move 4 is what the author says when he/she will start the new job and offers help. The last move will be her conclusion for the letter (ESL student 37, L1 Vietnamese).

(42) The concept of different type of genres is the purpose for writers to understand the situation in order for them to know how to write a certain piece of information. The writer (SV agreement uses) use past experience to help understand which type of genre will be best suited for the current situation. The genre analysis (SV agreement fits) fit into the writing process by understanding how to approach to write in a way that will convey the readers into understanding the writer’s ideas. My experience in understanding how genre works is that there is a certain format for all type of writing. For example, during project 3 I learned that persuasion in the readers’ interest was an important role in my letter. Also, the fact that I had an interest in the subject with my educational background; it gave me the creditability and acknowledgment from the readers that this is a serious issue (ESL student 39, L1 Vietnamese).

(43) Genre (SV agreement is) are a type of writing, and each genre has a purpose. Therefore, genre analysis could be said to be backward process of writing a text; you analysis the content, organization, language, format and values to determine the purpose of the writer. This process allows us to see what we need in our writings in certain genre. For example, at the beginning of each session we were given texts in certain genres, such as letters of appeal and commentary, from the instructor to analyze so that we could use our analysis in our on writings in the same genre. In this way, a genre analysis (SV agreement fits) fit into the writing process (ESL student 41, L1 Chinese).
SV agreement miscues can be seen with advanced students. Since these miscues do not affect the communication of time or of the singularity or plurality of the subject, they can often remain in the student’s expressive language for quite a while because the student’s communicative utility is not diminished with such miscues.

In this research effort a general pattern of miscues was established among ESL college student suggesting that SLA is a gradual and incremental process. The most ubiquitous miscues were with regard to the use of articles, verb t form (VF), verb tense (VT) and subject verb (SV) agreements. Moreover, some miscues employed by ESL student may be language specific, the result of a direct transfer of a specific linguistic form from L1 (e.g. the copular ‘be’ can be omitted in Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Russian). In addition the miscues regarding VT may be the result of both a transfer from L1 (since the time concept may be perceived differently by ESL students) as well as from not having acquired the correct linguistic form in L2. In addition, VT is very complex in English as result is acquired only in the last stage of acquisition. Thus, the findings of this study suggest that L1 plays a major role in SLA acquisition. Centeno-Cortès & Jimènez (2004, p.31) assert that ‘if the L1 is prohibited in the language classroom this might hinder language learning, as the L1 has been shown here to serve as a key cognitive and metacognitive tool for the students’.

6.2. THE ROLE OF L1 PERCIEVED THROUGH 9 LINGUISTIC THEORIES AND MISCUES LENSES

To revitalize the discussion of the nine theories of second language acquisition (SLA) that are presented under the review of the literature (Chapter 2) of this study, the nine second SLA theories are briefly re- examined to find out what roles they attribute to the L1. Among the
nine theories, two in particular, Krashen’s MT and Chomsky’s UG, view the L1 as potentially the first point of departure for L2 acquisition. Researchers supporting these two theories posit that L1 plays a major role in L2 acquisition and specifically L1 is vital in the early stages for L2 students.

Determining the veracity of these theories requires an examination of the role of L1 in SLA and evaluating whether universal grammar knowledge guides L2 acquisition in ways that are fundamentally similar to the way in which it is posited to guide L1 acquisition. Chomsky and Krashen both assert that L1 holds a privileged role in their respective two theories, not only as a theoretical foundation but also in terms of authentic research practice. In addition, Krashen’s MT theory also assigns L1 a privileged status in SLA in that L1 functions as ‘an affective filter’ during the moment-to-moment processing of L2 input.

The Associative-Cognitive Creed Theory (ACC) theory also posits that L1 has a privileged role in SLA. The L1 is triggering the L2 input: “L1- tuned learned attention limits the amount of intake from L2 input, thus restricting the end state of SLA” (Ellis, 2006, p.91).

Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory (SCL) theory, in contrast with the other eight theories discussed in Chapter 2, assigns the L1 a very unique and positive role. The L1 is a mediating tool that is used intensively by the student to achieve engagement and communication in L2. In essence, the use of L1 during L2 learning is seen not as a subconscious influence that cannot be evaded but rather as a strategy through which students can attain goals otherwise inaccessible to them in the L2. For example, to clarify how to undertake a difficult L2 task, the L1 is used as a mediation tool in understanding the difficult task in L2. From this perspective the L1 contributes to L2 learning.
Furthermore, the Processability Theory (PT) and Concept-Oriented Approach (CO) approaches attributes a beneficial role to the L1 for SLA, but the L1 is thought to exert a smaller influence in comparison to the robust functional and mediating universal forces presented in the previous theories.

In the Skill Acquisition Theory (SA) and Interaction Approach Theory (IA) a selective predictable influence of L1 is established, but the role of L1 is not crucial to any of the constructs in SLA. In regards to the Input Processing Theory (IP), this theory takes an ambivalent stance toward the L1 because there is no clear theoretical frame that elucidates whether the strategies that students employ to parse and comprehend the input ought to be guided by linguistic competence.

The analysis of the data based on the written essays of 141 ESL college students provides evidence of L1 influence in the SLA process. The perceived extent of the influence of L1 on L2 depends on how one believes that SLA occurs. As has been pointed out, different theories imbue diverse roles to the L1 in their explanations of SLA. The data from the current study suggest that the L1 plays an important role in SLA acquisition and the ESL students’ writing proficiency which varies among individuals. The miscues of L1 transfer in SLA acquisition can be the result of both a direct transfer from L1 as well as incomplete acquisition of different linguistic forms such as VF and VT. These findings are supported by the current research which indicates that the effect of L1 is not only selective but also varies amongst individual learners (DeKeyser 1997, Ellis, 2006; Gass & Mackey, 2000; White, 2007; White & Juffs, 1998).

In support of Krashen’s Monitor Theory (MT) as well as Chomsky’s Universal Grammar Theory (UG), Larsen-Freeman, D. (1975) found the acquisition of grammatical morphemes by
adult ESL students to be similar to the grammatical morphemes (-ing, be-auxiliary,) in L1 (see Literature Review). The data from this study supports the Larsen-Freeman (1975) findings that the ESL students who had L1 Arabic, Farsi, Japanese and Spanish implemented the same kind of miscues. The data suggest that there is a hierarchical manner of acquisition of different linguistic forms in SLA.

Moreover, Chomsky’s Universal Grammar Theory (UG) asserts that the L1 is the initial state for L2 acquisition but the effect of the L1 on the acquisition of L2 parameters can vary. Depending on the L1 and the L2 in question, the input may or may not motivate resetting to the L2 value (Carroll 1999, 2001; Gregg 1996). This has to do with the Full Transfer Full Access Hypothesis (FTFA) which claims that the initial state of L2 acquisition consists of the steady state grammar of L1 acquisition (Schwartz & Sprouse, 1996; White, 1987, 1989, 2003). In other words, L2ers initially adopt the L1 grammar as a means of characterizing the L2 data. These findings are completely supported by the current research in which the miscues in L2 are transferred from L1.

According to the Associative-Cognitive Creed Theory (ACC) there are some limits to the effects of a student’s L1 in SLA (see literature review). The data from this study supports the notion that if a feature in the L2 that is not present in the L1, then the individual’s learned attention will not be sensitive to noticing this new feature in the input. For example ESL students who had L1 Chinese, Japanese, and Russians in general did not employ articles in their final writing. These miscues were transferred from L1.

Sociocultural Theory (SCT) applies itself to both L1 acquisition and SLA and asserts that the L1 play a positive role. During social interaction and problem solving sessions the L1 is used to mediate cognitive behavior (Vygotsky, 1978). Even for advanced students the L2 is typically
insufficient for this task. In this way, students are able to use the L1 to fill in the gaps in
cognitive processing that the L2 is too underdeveloped to handle (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). The
SCT maintains that because using the L2 is cognitively demanding therefore the L1 is used
positively as a mediating tool to motivate self-regulation and to facilitate engagement in L2
learning. The data from this dissertation advocates previous finding that concepts such as time
(e.g. VF and VT) were transferred from L1 to L2 which was seen in the ESL students’ writings.

Processability Theory (PT) theory recognizes that the L1 does have an effect on SLA, but
L1 features can only be transferred when the student has reached the correct stage of
development. One of the main assumptions of PT is that L2 students can produce only those
linguistics forms for which they have acquired the necessary processing procedures. In this
circumstance the L1 features and structures can only be transferred when the student begins to
process L2 features and structures that are relevant to the L1. For example, students cannot
transfer knowledge or abilities regarding L1 subject-verb agreement until they reach the stage
where they can process this kind of grammatical information in the L2. This claim is referred to
as the “developmentally-moderated transfer hypothesis” as named by Pienemann (1984, 2007).
The data from this study supports these findings. The subject-verb agreement miscues were
employed extensively in ESL students’ writings which suggest that they were not at the stage
where this linguistic feature was completely acquired.

In the Concept-Oriented Approach (CO) Cooreman and Kilborn (1991) posit that
language should serve communication and form should serve function: “there is no formal
separation of the traditionally recognized subcomponents in language, i.e. morphosyntax,
semantics and pragmatics” (p.196). The L1 language acquisition process requires students to
acquire skills to communicate difficult concepts and to cognitively learn and internalize the very
same concepts. In the process of SLA the conceptual ground was already established using their L1, leaving the L2ers with the straightforward task of learning how to decipher them linguistically. In contrast to learning the L1, in the process of acquiring the L2 the student doesn’t have to obtain the basic concepts. The L2ers only has to obtain a specific way of expressing different concepts through language mapping. The data from this study suggest that the mapping of L2 is established using L1. The ESL students’ miscues in writing in L2 are sometimes a direct transfer from L1.

In Skill Acquisition (SA) theory, skill acquisition accounts for how people advance from initial learning to a high level of proficiency in different skills. SA asserts that all skills, not only language, are acquired in a particular fashion. The significant constructs of SA theory include three stages: declarative knowledge, proceduralization and automatization (Anderson 1982, 1983; Anderson, Bothell, Bryne, Douglass, Lebiere & Qin, 2004; Byrnes, 2005) which have also been defined as cognitive, associative and autonomous skills (Fitts & Posner 1967). The current study suggests that the miscues in L2 could be the automatization of the linguistic form from L1. If the ESL students did not have a linguistic form in L1 then they frequently did not employ that form in L2. Hence the data from this study suggested that L1 plays a role. On other hand SA theory contains detailed steps regarding the way in which a L2 can be acquired; there is no mention of the effects of the L1 within the framework. Thus, the current study did not address the learning aptitudes and motivation but this research indicates that L1 plays a role at least in miscues transfer in L2 acquisition.

In the Interaction Approach Theory (IA) feedback plays an important role. Feedback is defined as explicit and implicit (see literature review. Thus, IA asserts that the L1 does not play a
meaningful role in SLA. This assertion was not supported by this research study where it was found that L1 plays a major role in SLA.

Within Input Processing Theory (IP) there are several hypotheses about how second language (SL) input is processed. The First Noun Principle states that the L2 learners initially assign agent status to the first noun and object status to the second noun. An alternative explanation known as the L1 Transfer Principle states that the L1 parser is transferred to the L2 input processing procedure. The data from this study suggests that the SLA was shaped by L1. From this perspective the current research supports this theory but the role of L1 was not clear within the IP theory framework.

6.2.1. SUMMARY REGARDING MISCUES (ARTICLES, VERBS AND SUBJECT VERB AGREEMENT) USING QUALITATIVE METHODS

The data from this research effort suggest that the L1 plays an important role in SLA acquisition. Furthermore, the current data supports the notion that if a feature in L2 English is not present in the L1, the L2 learner will not employ this new feature in the input of L2 English in the early stage of acquisition. The current data revealed that ESL students who had L1 Chinese, Japanese, and Russians in general did not employ articles in their final writing. These miscues were transferred from L1.

Thus, the verb tenses were among the most frequent miscues. It could be the case that verb tenses indicate time as perceived by the writer or speaker. Moreover, verb tenses are very convoluted. As a result, in order to implement the verb tenses ESL students have to have a deep understanding of time concepts as well as the linguistic forms involved.

SV agreement can be one of the last linguistic cognates acquired by ESL students. In addition, there are various problematic subjects with singular verbs. One kind of miscue
expressed extensively by ESL students independent of L1 (e.g. Chinese, Russian, etc.) was SV agreement. This finding may suggest that even though ESL students were advanced they were not at the stage where this linguistic feature was completely acquired.

The data from this study suggest that the mapping of L2 is established using L1. The ESL students’ miscues in writing in L2 are sometimes a direct transfer from L1. During L1 acquisition students not only need to acquire the means to communicate different concepts, they must also cognitively learn the concepts themselves. In SLA the conceptual foundation has already been laid and L2ers must simply learn how to encode them linguistically. The data from this study suggest that some concepts were transferred from L1; however to recode them in L2 can be a long process especially if there were differences in linguistic forms between the two languages. The miscues of L1 that transfer in SLA acquisition can be the result of both a direct transfer from L1 as well as incomplete acquisition of different linguistic forms such as VF and VT.

This research study effort strongly advocates the finding that L1 should be used as a bridge for transferring schema from L1 to L2. When linguistic forms are different between L1 and L2 then the professor should evaluate the miscues patterns, find the ESL students’ L1 linguistic forms and then elevate the students’ awareness of these linguistic forms.

6.3. FINDINGS OF ESL COLLEGE STUDENT’S MISCUES USING QUANTITATIVE METHODS

In order to address the questions ‘4 b’ through ‘4d’ an analysis of miscues using SPSS (2014) was conducted involving 141 ESL College students. All final writing exams were
analyzed for article, verb (e.g. verb forms and verb tenses) and subject verb agreement miscues. The 141 ESL College students represent 20 different languages.

6.3.1. DEMOGRAPHICS AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The data set consists of 141 cases representing 141 ESL students’ and twenty different first languages (L1). Each case consists of five fields: gender, native language defined as the (L1) and three scores based on a written assignment. The three scores based on a written assignment consist of the number of verb miscues (verb form and verb tenses), article miscues and subject-verb agreement miscues. Some of the fields have no entry in Table 6.3. Scores with zero errors and scores that deviated more than 3σ from the mean were removed from the calculation of the mean and therefore were treated as missing scores. The numbers of scores considered in this research effort were summarized in Table 6.3.

Furthermore, in order to achieve greater statistical significance, the L1 categories were grouped by (presumed) language similarity.
Table 6.3. Data Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L1 Group</th>
<th>L1</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total Verb Errors</th>
<th>Total Article Errors</th>
<th>Subject-Verb Agreement Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-East</td>
<td>Amharic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-East</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slavic</td>
<td>Bosnian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE Asia</td>
<td>Cambodian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N Asia</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germanic</td>
<td>Danish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-East</td>
<td>Farsi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germanic</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-East</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N Asia</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N Asia</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE Asia</td>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slavic</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cushic</td>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germanic</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE Asia</td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE Asia</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>99</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Descriptive statistics for the three measurements are shown in Table 6.4 which reveal that the highest numbers of miscues among the three variables (e.g. article, verbs, and subject verb agreement) were the verb miscues.

Table 6.4. Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miscues Types</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verb Miscues</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article Miscues</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject-Verb Agreement Miscues</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N is the number or miscues employed by 141 ESL students.
6.3.2 CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS AMONG THREE VARIABLES (ARTICLES, VERBS AND SUBJECT VERB AGREEMENT)

The Pearson correlation coefficients for each pair of miscues are presented in Table 6.5.

An examination of this table shows that correlation between Verb miscues and Article miscues is significantly different from zero ($\alpha<0.01$) and the strength of the correlation is moderate. For the remaining pairs, the calculated coefficients are not significantly different from zero.

For each of the mean scores, an independent samples t-test shows that the difference is not significant for male and for female students. Therefore, further consideration of gender differences will not be addressed.

Table 6.5. Correlations for Verb, Article and Subject-Verb Agreement Miscues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Miscues</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Subject-Verb Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject-Verb Agreement</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3.3. ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE RESULT (ANOVA) FOR ESL STUDENTS AMONG DIFFERENT MISCUE VARIABLES (ARTICLES, VERBS AND SUBJECT VERB AGREEMENT)

Comparison between L1 groups
Verb miscues for each L1 group were used in an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the null hypothesis that all means are equal. The results of the ANOVA are shown in Table 6.

Since the calculated F statistic is less than the critical value, the null hypothesis must be accepted and the researcher concludes that there are no significant differences in the mean scores. The effect size is medium ($\eta^2 = 0.105$).

**Table 6.6. Analysis of Variance for Verb Miscues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>41.11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.85</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>347.65</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>388.76</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Article miscues for each L1 group were used in an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the null hypothesis that all means are equal. The results of the ANOVA are shown in Table 6.7.

Since the calculated F statistic is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis must be rejected and the researcher concludes that there are significant differences in the mean article error scores. The effect size is medium ($\eta^2 = 0.189$).

**Table 6.7. Analysis of Variance for Article Miscues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Sum of Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>132.38</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22.06</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>568.84</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>7.49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>701.23</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of variances is used to determine that the group variances are not equal, therefore the Dunnett T3 post-hoc test is used to determine that the means for the Germanic-North Asian groups differ at the $\alpha=0.05$ level of significance.

Subject-Verb agreement miscues for each L1 group are used in an ANOVA to test the null hypothesis that all means are equal. The results of the ANOVA are shown in Table 6.. Since the calculated F statistic is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis must be rejected and
the researcher concludes that there are significant differences in the mean article miscues scores. Effect size is medium ($\eta^2 = 0.189$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>65.76</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.96</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>282.69</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>348.45</td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A post-hoc analysis was used to determine which group means differ significantly. Levene’s test of homogeneity of variances was used to determine that the group variances are not equal. Therefore the Dunnett T3 post-hoc test was used to determine that the means for the Romance-Cushic and SE Asia-Cushic groups differ at $\alpha=0.05$ level of significance. Interestingly, Romance-SE Asia groups did not differ.

6.3.4 SUMMARY REGARDING MISCUES (ARTICLES, VERBS AND SUBJECT VERB AGREEMENT) USING QUANTITATIVE METHODS

In the preceding section, the researcher demonstrated that significant differences existed between the Germanic-North Asian groups in the case of article miscues and between Romance-Cushic and SE Asia-Cushic groups in the case of subject-verb agreement miscues. These data are illustrated in Figure 6.1 and Figure 6.2, respectively.

While it is true that there are significant differences between these means (in a strictly mathematical sense), these differences have limited practical significance because the amount of data is relatively small. In the case of Figure 6.1, the sample of German students consists of three scores (all relatively good) and the sample of North Asian students consists of 31 students. In the case of subject-verb agreement miscues, the standard deviation for Cushic students is zero (they all had the same score) and the number of scores is low, making statistics problematical. In the absence of Cushic students, there is no significant difference between groups.
Figure 6.1. Distribution of Article Miscues Used by 141 ESL College Students

Figure 6.2. Distribution of Subject-Verb Agreement Miscues Employed by 141 ESL College Students
CHAPTER VII

HEDGING IN 141 ACADEMIC WRITING DOCUMENTS FROM 141 ESL COLLEGE STUDENTS

Chapter seven reports on the fifth question of the study:

5. How does hedging (e.g. modals, non-factive and tentative linking verbs) reflect culture in L2 academic writing?

This chapter also addresses the pattern of distribution of the modals: ‘can’, ‘could’, ‘will’ and ‘would’ in the dispersion plots of the writings of the 60 L1 Spanish college students.

The chapter findings are divided into four parts addressing the research question. Section 1 reports the findings associated with an analysis of hedging based on eight different modal verbs (‘can’, ‘could’, ‘may’, ‘might’, ‘must’, ‘should’, ‘will’ and ‘would’) derived from 141 ESL college students’ writings from a general perspective. Section 2 reports on non-factive verbs (‘suggest’, ‘imply’, ‘claim’ and ‘propose’) and tentative linking verbs (‘appear’, ‘seem’ and ‘tend’). Section 3 reports the findings associated with selected modals used by ESL college students who’s L1s are German, Somali, Vietnamese, Swedish, Thai, and Lao. Section 4 reports on the usage of selected modals and verbs among L1 Spanish ESL College students who represented 60 students out of 141 students. In addition, the findings from four different dispersion plots are addressed.

7.1. AN ANALYSIS OF HEDGING IN 141 ESL WRITTEN DOCUMENTS

The effect of one’s first culture on all forms of communication, whether they be the use of time and space or the use of various vehicles of communication such as symbolic language or body language, are often revealed through oral or written expression. Thus, one may argue that diverse languages express different cultures, identities and the “soul” of its people. Nettle and
Romaine (2000) assert that languages are repositories of history by providing a personal link to the past of a culture. Crystal (2000) argues that each language has its own internal structure, phonological makeup, grammar and vocabulary that divulge something unique about its linguistic organization and structure.

For the purpose of this study, culture as a concept covers many areas in our life and has been defined by different scholars in different ways. Hall (1969) asserts that culture is the manner in which people live (e.g. spatial environment, manners patterns, attitudes, physical possessions etc.). Language is a central vehicle for how people express culture, both verbal and non-verbal. In the case of written language linguistic markers are used in diverse cultures to show certainty and doubt towards their statements. Thus, for this study, culture is viewed through linguistic markers, and specifically through the use of hedging.

Hedging devices have been expressed as one the most important features of academic writing. Hedging in academic writing enables writers to show their certainty, qualify an assertion, express doubt toward their statements and to show the amount of confidence that writers place on their claim and to start a dialog with the readers. Through hedges, writers leave some room for their readers to judge the truth behind the assertions made (Nasari, 2012; Rounds, 1982).

One of the aspects of language usage in ESL college students’ writing in L2 can be found in the way these students maintained their voice and culture. Furthermore, one additional difficulty for the ESL college students can be found in translating exactly their inner meaning of words and metaphors from L1 to L2. As a result, a speaker who knows more than one language acquires metalinguistic awareness and so is more introspective about language usage (Baker, 1996). The ESL college student negotiates, in many cases, between two different social culture
perspectives (C1 & C2) trying to understand both and providing a bridge between them. Baker (2011) asserts that this increases astuteness and self-awareness of different linguistic structures. Thus, ESL college students who are bicultural or multicultural tend to have broader worldviews, values and beliefs.

Furthermore, considering the American pedagogy and its practice it is suggested that ESL students, from Kindergarten through higher education, be encouraged to draw upon their own knowledge and culture in literacy learning. Without the ability to integrate their own world into the dialog they are often relegated to “silence their voices and relegate them to positions of powerlessness in American society” (Darder, 2011, p. 23). It could be the case that as Ochoa (2003) states that in a pluralistic society every child should be provided with multilingual competence, and that each developing language be provided equal status (L1, L2, L3, L+) with the driving pedagogical focus of an additive bilingual/biliteracy policy that enables multilingualism.

ESL college students writings (N=141 students) were examined from the 305W Advance Composition for International Students (ACIS) class at SDSU. The 141 students represent 20 languages and the ESL college students were both culturally and linguistically diverse.

Once again, in this study culture was examined through the use of hedging. One specific function of hedging may be to qualify an assertion. Hence, English modals and verb patterns can be used to express a range of propositional certainty. Consider the following examples:

1. It will rain today.
2. It might rain today.
3. It could rain today.
4. Weather patterns can affect ocean temperatures.
5. Weather patterns could affect ocean temperatures.
6. Weather patterns might affect ocean temperatures.
7. Weather patterns may affect ocean temperatures.
Furthermore, if the degree of and the use of hedging is a cultural phenomenon then different cultures may use hedging in different ways. The distribution of hedging occurrences may vary across cultures. It could be the case that some cultures may use hedging more and others less when presented with the same information. In addition to a culturally prescribed use of hedging, English modals have a variety of meanings. For example ‘can’ in English is related to probability, ability, permission, or impossibility (i.e. it can’t be raining in Death Valley!). The potential variety of meanings may be a challenge for ESL college students.

According to Rounds (1982) hedging is the most important linguistic feature in academic discourse. Thus, in this research effort, even though culture is perceived through the usage of hedging, the variations among different variables such as genre (e.g. ESL students’ writings summary of a commentary vs. statement of purpose in applying to graduate school), level of formality and linguistic complexity were considered. For Hyland (1998) hedging is considered to be the most significant “lexical phenomena” (p.104). Furthermore, Hyland maintains that grammatical underpinnings of hedging cannot be understood without also understanding the social contexts of the students who are choosing a particular syntax to express them.

Hedging allows the reader to make his or her own decision about the validity and strength of an assertion. For the purpose of this study the categories of hedging used by Holmes (1998), Hyland (1996a, 1996b, 1998) and Varttala (2001) were employed. The classification of hedging devices for this research effort was adopted after Varttala (2001) and consisted only of two main categories: modal auxiliaries and full verbs. Modals are special verbs that behave very irregularly in English and are used in conjunction with main verbs to express shades of time or mood.

The modal auxiliaries examined included: ‘can’, ‘could’, ‘may’, ‘might’, ‘must’, ‘should’, ‘will’ and ‘would’. In addition, the full verbs according to Varttala (2001) are composed
of different subcategories. Two subcategories are addressed: The first category was non-factive reporting verbs that in many cases describe what a phenomena, experiment, or data may imply. Four non-factive verbs were examined: ‘suggest’, ‘imply’, ‘claim’ and ‘propose’. The second category was tentative linking verbs that “express the tentativeness concerning … ideas put forth by the authors” (Varttala, 2011, p.123). There were three tentative linking verbs examined: ‘appear’, ‘seem’ and ‘tend’.

As described above the use of eight modals were evaluated: ‘can’, ‘could’, ‘may’, ‘might’, ‘must’, ‘should’, ‘will’ and ‘would’. Briefly, the modal auxiliary ‘could’ was used to express a more hypothetical or tentative alternative than ‘can’. Thus, in the same manner ‘might’ was ubiquitously employed as a hedging marker in which future alternatives were implied by ESL college students as opposed to employing ‘might’ to ascertain some level of uncertainty in ESL writings. ‘May’ was less tentative than ‘might’. ‘Must’ was employed to assert a scientific phenomenon that does not have an alternative explanation or a necessity. ‘Must’ was perceived as a categoric statement where no other alternatives can be considered. On the other hand ‘should’ and ‘would’ were employed in a similar manner in ESL students’ writings as a linguistic marker of future possibility, uncertainty or doubt, and where future time inevitably has a tentative meaning. ‘Will’ was employed as a linguistic marker of future time and very rarely as a sign of epistemic modality (e.g. predictability meaning).

Table 7.1 shows the usages of the eight modals used among 141 ESL college students’ writings. The data established that ‘will’ was the most frequently used modal and was employed a total of 510 times (N=510). ‘Would’ was used only 149 times (N=149). The proportion of usage between ‘can’ and ‘could’ was statistically significant since ‘can’ occurred 364 times (N=364), whereas ‘could’ occurred only 64 times (N=64).
Table 7.1. Distribution of Modals in 141 ESL College Students’ Writings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modal Categories</th>
<th>Frequencies of Occurrences’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Might</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The total word count was 88,032 words

In the following example (1) an ESL college student used ‘can’ as a rhetorical question whereas in example (2) an ESL student employed ‘can’ to advocate an assertion.

(1) The act of piracy was first an act of despair. Then, Hari describes how and why Somalis had to become pirates to protect their own properties and sea space. It is the Europeans that pillaged their fishes and used their land as garbage. This is why, the author tries to prove that the Somalis rebellion is right. His main point is considered in the end, how can we call the Somalis robber when all we did was treating their land that way? To conclude, Johann Hari finishes his text by making us wondering of the real identity of the robber (Student 7, L1 French).

(2) Hari describes them as people who are being mistreated and due to the injustices and abuse to their countries and seas, the pirates rebelled and they are just trying to take justice on their own. We can see how Hari looks at the Somalia Pirates side when he states in his article that “pirates have never been quite who we think we are” and many people might agree with his point of view (Student 20, L1 Spanish).

In contrast with the previous examples in examples (3) and (4) ‘could’ was employed to present a hypothetical assertion. The ESL college students employed ‘could’ as a depiction of hypothetical circumstance in their writings, while using a different genre such as the summary of the commentary or an essay about the genre analysis.

(3) The first pirates pursuit egalitarian the most. Even a captain who was elected by pirates and slaves were all treated equally. This could be a part of labor revolution. Nowadays, Somalia pirates become the major global topic. Every single time, one of world cargo ships are kidnapped or attacked by them. However, there are invisible truths (Student, 13, L1 Korean).
Genre analysis will help me to efficiently read texts and understand it fully to rapidly take a decision on what I read. When categorizing publications in to different genre it makes it easier for a reader to understand what the writer is trying to do, it could be to inform or persuade the readers which is two entirely different things. I found that using the COLFV model helped me to analyze texts more thoroughly. It would clarify who the writer is and who he is writing to, which is important to notes before starting to read a full text. COLFV also make one analyze what tone a writer is using, when a different tone can in some occasions change a meaning (Student, 123, L1 Swedish).

In examples (5) and (6) it is revealed how the ESL college students employed ‘may’ and ‘might’. The use of ‘may’ was employed with a higher frequency than ‘might’ and it could be the case that ESL students, besides thinking in their L1, perceive that the use of ‘may’ as more linguistically appropriate than ‘might’.

Past tense was used while describing the past experience, and while explaining the decision he has made. Since there is no body language and facial expression on the paper, the choice of language is a major way to express the emotion of writing. Correct choice of tone and voice can help reader understand the emotion of the writer, and sometimes may be able to influence the reader’s emotion, and make the writing more appealing or convincing. The use of tense can help guide the reader to set up a time line, which also helps the understanding of the writing (Student, 129, L1 Chinese).

In the text provided, we can identify key elements in the format. The reader uses 3 paragraphs with specific ideas on each. The paragraphs are long enough to provide the information the reader might need. The reader might infer without reading that the letter is precise because it does not have subheadings or bold writing. It has closing remark but it does not have a signature. It also uses just black ink which continues with the line of professionalism (Student, 88, L1 Brazil).

One interesting finding is that all ESL college students employed ‘must’ with the meaning of a requirement, necessity or obligation as a noun and not as a modal (example 7).

Values also play an important role in a text because there has to be some sort of connection between the writer and the audience. The sharing of understanding language, life experience, cultural values, disciplinary value are a must to include in order for the text to become successful in getting across the information from one mind to another (Student, 138, L1 Vietnamese).
The modal ‘should’ was employed as a hypothetical marker by the ESL college students who had the L1 Indo-European language (e.g. Spanish, Italian, Romanian etc.) wherein the readers are permitted to form their own opinions (example 8). On the other hand a few ESL college students who had L1 Vietnamese employed ‘should’ in an interesting linguistic construction in which recommendations were made (example 9).

(8) First of all, the purpose of the text should be analyzed even before the content begins. After that, there are several aspects that are discussed in the content of a genre. The audience should be addressed somewhere at the beginning of the text. For example, in a letter, the audience will be the person who will be receiving the letter (Student, 132, L1 Spanish).

(9) Genre is a type of writing that distinguishes from language and format. Most of people use genres every day: letters, emails, chat rooms, and commentaries. In my personal experience, I recommend that everyone should understand the concept of a genre analysis to have a deeper and better knowledge on differentiating the various kinds of writing and understanding the writer’s purpose in responding to the call to write. The study of how the writer establishes a rhetorical stance that combines the persuasive appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos is called a genre analysis that fits into the writing process by applying COLFV model (Content, Organization, Format, and Value of discourse community) (Student, 134, L1 Vietnamese).

Furthermore, all ESL college students employed the modal ‘will’ extensively whereas the frequency of occurrences of ‘would’ was for less. It could be the case that some linguistic structures required the usage of ‘will’ (examples 10, 12) and so employing alternatives was not possible. It is worth mentioning that ESL college students who had L1 Spanish, Italian, French, Portuguese employed ‘will’ in a linguistic structure in which ‘will’ was used to bridge the time line as a intertwine between past and future such as ‘I think it was and will’ (example 11).

(10) Moreover, organization will guide the reader to follow the main idea. In this area the writer will analyze, describe, summarize, compare and contrast and define, etc. to support his or her point. This will help the reader to expand his knowledge about the topic. For example, in a resume the writer will summarize his working experience and skills to influence the reader why he or she is a good candidate for the position (Student, 141, L1 Spanish).
(11) The COLFV model has helped me to think and understand the several aspects of a text. I have learned to analyze texts from different genres and to identify each part of it. I think that after this class I will be able to analyze in depth future texts that I will have to read later on in my life. Also, I think that after being practicing a lot with the COLFV model, I have more experience in it and have developed the skills to be able to write more efficiently in the future. I will definitely keep a copy of my COLFV model so that I can use it in my future writings; I think it was and will still be a useful model for future writings (Student, 132, L1 Spanish).

(12) The content of this personal experience is lacking credibility because the author is describing all the enthusiasm and the great ideas he can provide to the graduate program but the institute would be interested in seeing facts such as his professional experiences, Diplomas, previous work areas relevant to education (Student 81, L1 Spanish).

7.2. NON-FACTIVE AND TENTATIVE LINKING VERBS

In the case of the use of non-factive verbs found in the ESL college students writing (N=141) four were examined: ‘suggest’, ‘imply’, ‘claim’ and ‘propose’. Furthermore, the tentative linking verbs established in ESL college students’ writings were: ‘appear’, ‘seem’ and ‘tend’.

For each of the verbs all possible morpheme combinations were considered (e.g. –ed,-s, -ing, e.g. suggest, suggested, suggests, suggesting). The data demonstrates that the majority of ESL college students’, regardless of the L1, employed both categories of verbs. The range of L1s included Korean, Spanish, Chinese, Bosnian, Arabic, and Somali.

The findings for the non-factive verbs suggest that ESL college students in their writings did not utilize these verbs categories extensively. Thus, the verbs ‘suggest’ and ‘claim’ were employed more frequently by ESL college students than ‘imply’ and ‘propose’. It could be the case that ESL college students used ‘suggest’ and ‘claim’ when different assertions were made about the authors of different articles or when addressing what different articles claimed
Table 7.2. Frequency of Occurrence of Non-Factive and Linking Verbs in 141 ESL Students’ Writings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb Category Non-Factive and Linking</th>
<th>Frequency of Occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suggest</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imply</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claim</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propose</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appear</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seem</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tend</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The word counts for the entire data was 88,032 words representing 141 students.

(13) Hari **suggests** that the piracy taking place in the coast of Somalia is due in part to illegal fishing and dumping of toxic waste by foreign vessels. He also explains that not everything is what it seems. Hari that ordinary people turn into pirates in order to survive (Student 26, L1 Spanish).

(14) Finally, analyzing the values is a crucial point in genre analysis as it takes a closer look at the discourse community, trying to understand the qualities that are inherent to the texts produced within this is that discourse community. **This ultimately implies** searching for any values that the discourse community shares, such as the language, beliefs, shared life experience. In our case, the discourse community shares a common language - English, including the professional jargon used in the industry, as well as a similar goal of making their company Pinkerton Services a successful enterprise. These shared values make the resume a valuable piece of writing for the discourse community (Student 117, L1 Russian).

(15) He does not use the word I but **it is implied** that the subject is him so we can say it is active voice (Student 109, L1 Spanish).

(16) Genre is the term that can be used to describe any type or form of writing, including for researching purpose to informing the calls to actions. Each genre contains different purpose and information which is specific for that type of genre. Different genre also aims for different audience; and it depend on the type of writing that **the author tries to propose** (Student, 136, L1 Vietnamese).

(17) Therefore, Johann Hari presents reasons that make the reader doubtful about who is the robber. **First, he claims** that the Western world is the main cause of the contaminated ocean making people sick and malformed babies. Second, he points out that the European Government does not take action about this issue. Third, the author mentions that European ships are might be stealing all seafood in the coastal waters because the government doesn’t even care about (Student, 16, L1 Japanese).
With regard to the tentative linking verbs, ‘seem’ was employed with a higher frequency than ‘appear’ and ‘tend’. ‘Seem’ was encountered 15 times in ESL college student writings (N=15) whereas ‘appear’ occurred 12 times (N=12) and ‘tend’ was encountered only 8 times (N=8).

It is worth mentioning that the data suggest that ‘appear’ and ‘seem’ may be used interchangeable. Furthermore, the ESL college students’ opinions about a topic were revealed by using the word ‘appear’ (example 19). In general, in ESL students’ writings these two words ‘appear’ and ‘seem’ were employed to reflect what could be the case of an assertion of what is presented and published. In both cases these two words suggest what the ESL college students’ impressions are or what appears to be asserted in different texts. Even though these two words are interchanged the meanings of the utterances are the same (examples 18 through 21).

(18) In this text written by Ben Turner, appears to be a resume for a job as a security guard. This was easily identified because the writer clearly posted his purpose, which is “seeking a position as an armed security guard for Pinkerton Services” (Student 110, L1 Chinese).

(19) Writing to communicate is sometimes more difficult than what appears to be and we seem to take writing for granted whenever we want to say something in letters (Student 50, L1 Spanish).

(20) In the attached text, the author is personally involved since he is the one applying for the graduate level program. He seems to have some insider knowledge about the Montessori methods, even though he has only spent studying it in private study “and has never taught using the Montessori method.“ The content also reflects on the participants and the question of who gets to speak and who gets left out. Even though he does refer to Dr. Maria Montessori and K. Dohrmann’s investigations of last year, the author of the Statement of Purpose does not include quotes by secondary sources in the attached text. Secondary sources are particularly important for the author’s credibility (Student 84, L1 German).

(21) The clarification of content, the use of different types of organization, correct language selection, effective format, and the understanding of shared values
between the author and the audience seems very easy to understand and organize through the term “COLFV” (Student 47, L1 Korean).

ESL college students employed the word ‘tend’ much more to address an inclination of an author or to guide the reader to look in a certain direction (examples 22, 23).

(22) The main feature of the language the Mason uses in his letter is the verb choice and the sentence structure. **He tends to use** the active voice with short and concise sentences. Cover letters like other business letters should include concise and short sentences because hiring managers have only a few minutes to read them. Mason presents this feature really well in his letter by making it short and concise. In addition, because the letter is written for an employer Mason uses a formal language in the letter and he avoids using figurative language such as metaphor and smile (Student 49, L1 Spanish).

(23) Last is the discourse community value that the author shares with the audience in the letter. The **author tends to share his/her life experience**, disciplinary values, and understanding of language. Sharing life experience is when the author describes the feelings and the experiences that he/she has when she/he work at the Norfolk International, Inc. In addition, as the author writes this letter he/she also shares disciplinary values and understanding of language with the target audience as she/he defines the new working position at the new workplace (Student 136, L1 Vietnamese).

### 7.3. Selected Modals Used by ESL College Students Who’s L1s Were German, Somali, Vietnamese, Swedish, Thai and Lao

Using a small data set, this section explores the usages of ‘will’, ‘would’, and ‘can’, ‘could’ in ESL college students’ writings whose L1 language is German, Somali, Vietnamese, or Swedish. The reason for comparing the six languages was to see if there were any differences in the distribution of usage of the four modals (‘can’, ‘could’, ‘will’ and ‘would’) and to how they relate to the semantic behavior or cultural influence of these languages. The assumption being made is that the knowledge of students’ L1s may influence the ESL college students’ use a preferred cultural form over another.
The distribution shown in Table 7.3 pertains to the German, Somali, Vietnamese and Swedish languages (Thai and Lao languages were not considered given the limited data set) on the usage of modals ‘will’, ‘would’ and ‘can’ ‘could’ in ESL college students’ writings.

In the analysis of the data as presented in Table 7.4 a distribution of the modals by language is provided for discussion including the number of essays considered and the ratios of when the modals were used.

Table 7.3. Distribution of the Modals ‘Will, Would’, ‘Can, Could’, Usages among Selected L1 Languages by Average per Essay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number Essays</th>
<th>Will</th>
<th>Would</th>
<th>Can</th>
<th>Could</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Number of essays is equal to the number of students.*


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number Essays</th>
<th>Will/Would Ratio per essay</th>
<th>Can/Could Ratio per essay</th>
<th>Will/Can Ratio per essay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Number of essays is equal to the number of students.*

Overall, the data suggests the need for further exploration on the variation in the use of selected modals given the small data set of essays. Nonetheless, differences in ratios of the use of modals may be evidence of ESL college students’ unconscious use of the cultural application of hedging in their use of English. The decision to use ‘can’ rather than ‘could’ may indicate cultural semantic behavior rather than lexical or linguistic usage. Thus, the reason for comparing
the four languages was to see if there were any differences in the distribution of usage of the four modals and to see how they relate to the semantic behavior or cultural influence of the four languages. The assumption being made is that the knowledge of students’ L1s may influence the ESL college students’ use a preferred cultural form over another.

Modal choices may be examples of the extent that a culture uses hedging under certain situational circumstances. The use of hedging has been noted by Hyland (1996a, 1996b) when addressing social norms rather than using lexical choices. As Hyland (1996a, 1996b) has noted, the use of modals reflects a relationship between the writer and the reader in the context of the specific community within which they communicate. In any given community there are implicit and explicit values and norms that are embedded in communication. These values may be explored through how writers from different cultural communities make choices with the usage of modals.

Generally speaking the modal ‘could’ is a more-hedged propositional modal than ‘can’. This may reflect hedging in the semantic area of ability. In the ESL college student essays pertaining to Somali and Vietnamese writers they, used ‘can’ 15 and 16 times more than ‘could’ per essay respectively. This may reflect a relative difference in hedging between these two cultures. When comparing the use of ‘can’ and ‘could’, German and Swedish students tended to use ‘can’ 5 times more often than ‘could’ (per essay). These differences may have more to do with cultural influences conveying the meaning of these modals rather than the students replicating the similarities in their language structures.

The Somali students use of ‘will /would’ ratio was 19 while the German students’ ratio was 5.6. These ratios were similar to the use of ‘can/could’ ratios of 15 and 5, respectively. Thus,
for Somali students and German students the use of ‘will/would’ follows the same relative pattern as the ‘can/could’ pattern. Germans perhaps demonstrate a greater cultural predilection toward hedging than Somalis.

Other possible insights can be found in the use of ‘would’ that often qualifies a statement with its concomitant use of if in a sentence. In the small data set, Vietnamese students deviated from the pattern of ‘can/could’ with ‘will/would’. While very similar to the Somali ratios for ‘can/could’, the Vietnamese students’ use of ‘will/would’ is nearly the same ratio as the German students’ use of ‘will/would’. This may indicate a cultural similarity with Germans in regard to the semantic use of ‘would’ and its concomitant ‘if’. The Vietnamese writers’ relatively high ratios of ‘will’ over ‘can’ and ‘can’ over ‘could’ may be an indication of a low degree of hedging used in Vietnamese culture and writing within the semantic areas of prediction (will, can, could) and ability (can, could) (see Table 7.4).

For the fourth language examined in the use of modals, the Swedish students used of ‘will’ fewer times than ‘would’. The Swedish ESL college student writers, unlike the other ESL college student writers, used ‘will’ fewer times than ‘would’. If the student data was representative of their culture and students were making a semantic choice between ‘will’ and ‘would’ then the Swedish writers would be an outlier relative to ESL college student writers from other cultures in four different genres. All other cultures represented used ‘will’ more than ‘would’ in their essays. The relative avoidance of ‘will’ over ‘would’ may reflect a greater hedging in this semantic area thus possibly reflecting Swedish cultural norms.
7.4. USAGE OF MODALS AND VERBS AMONG 60 ESL STUDENTS WHOSE L1 WAS SPANISH

This section examines the findings of 60 ESL college students whose L1 language is Spanish. Table 7.5 provides a frequency distribution of eight modals used by the 60 ESL college students and points to the high frequency of the use of modals ‘can’ and ‘will’. The majority of the ESL college students spoke Spanish as their first language (60/141) and thus this was an important subset of data to explore.

Table 7.5. Distribution of Modals in 60 L1 Spanish ESL College Students’ Writings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modal Categories</th>
<th>Spanish Meaning</th>
<th>Frequencies of Occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can</td>
<td>Poder</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could</td>
<td>Puede ser</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>A la mejor</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Might</td>
<td>Tal vez</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must</td>
<td>Necesitar hacerlo</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should</td>
<td>Debe hacerlo</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will</td>
<td>Hacer</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would</td>
<td>A la Mejor</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The total word mean count for the data set was 37,467 words (60 L1 Spanish/total 141 students).

The use of the modals ‘can’ and ‘will’ account for 370 of the 543 occurrences of all of the modals in the writing of ESL college students whose L1 is Spanish or 68.1%. From the perspective of hedging, in Spanish the verb ‘can’ (poder) connotes a forceful and positive assertion “to do”, as well as the capacity of doing something.

As can be seen in Table 7.5, the distribution of modals by Spanish college students of English (N=60) demonstrates a similar pattern to the distribution of modals of most of the languages of the 141 ESL college students’ in the study. The more-hedging modals ‘could’,
‘may’, ‘might’, ‘must’, ‘should’ and ‘would’ were used with less frequency than ‘can’ and ‘will’.

When compared with totals for all 141 ESL students usage of modals (Table 7.1), this usage pattern holds true when considering only the 60 students of L1 Spanish. Within this pattern, ratios wherein the hedging modal is less prevalent (‘can’ vs. ‘could’, ‘may’ vs. ‘might’, and ‘will’ vs. ‘would’) are also very similar. The ratio for ‘can/could’ for all ESL students was 5.6 versus 4.7 for Spanish speakers only. The ratio for ‘may/might’ for all ESL students was 1.45 versus 2.25 for Spanish speakers only. In addition, the ratio for ‘will/would’ was even closer, with 3.4 for all students and 3.6 for Spanish speakers.

Given the four academic writing assignments by the L1 Spanish ESL college students, the finding suggests that by using ‘can’, the students took a position of expressing the ability and capacity to be able to take a philosophical social position on an issue or to express the capacity to do graduate work in a given academic field. Culturally, rather than expressing a more humble social position by using the verb ‘could’, the students chose to use ‘can’ to express an academic capacity.

In the case of the verb ‘will’ (hacer, hacerlo), from the perspective of hedging, the verb expresses an activity that will be carried out or connotes that an action or activity that will be done at a designated time. Likewise in Spanish, ‘hacer’ can indicate a commitment that an activity will be carried out. Perhaps an explanation for the lower numbers of hedging modals: ‘could’, ‘may’, ‘might’, ‘must’, ‘should’ and ‘would’ is a tendency to express optimism and certainty. As the data set presents, this can be observed in both Spanish speakers as well as in speakers of other L1 languages. However, with respect to ‘must/should’, there is a much greater ratio between these two modals in speakers of L1 languages other than Spanish. In this sense,
Spanish speakers appear to express greater certainty and perhaps less leniency than speakers of other L1 languages, which may be indicative of cultural norms playing a role in the choice of language.

In the case of using non-factive and linking verbs, Table 7.6 suggests that the 60 L1 Spanish ESL college students used the verbs: ‘suggest’, ‘imply’, ‘claim’, ‘propose’, ‘appear’, ‘seem’, ‘tend’ with very little occurrence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb Category</th>
<th>Spanish equivalent</th>
<th>Frequency of Occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suggest</td>
<td>Sugérir</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imply</td>
<td>Implicar</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claim</td>
<td>Reclamar</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propose</td>
<td>Proponer</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appear</td>
<td>Aparecer</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seem</td>
<td>Parecer</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tend</td>
<td>Tender</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The word counts for the data set was 37,467 words (60 L1 Spanish/total 141 students).

Once again, Spanish speakers appear to use non-factive verbs with limited occurrence, which may be indicative of cultural norms playing in role in the choice of language and the genre provided.

7.5. DISPERSION PLOTS FOR 60 L1 SPANISH SPEAKERS

The following four dispersion plots (concordance plot Figures 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4) were generated using the AntConc 3.4.1w (Microsoft Windows version) 2014 free software package (http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/antconc_index.html). The dispersion plots were based on 60 L1 Spanish students' writings (43% of the total writings) derived from 141 non-English L1 students' writings.

The L1 Spanish students ‘will’ dispersion plots represent 26 students' writings with 3 or more hits (instances of ‘will’) per essay. For all 60 L1 Spanish students there were 38 writings (63%) with at least 1 hit for a total of 227 hits (45% of the 510 hits from 91writings for all 141
non-English L1 students). For comparison there were 53 non-English/non-Spanish L1 writings (283 hits total, 510-227) that used ‘will’ at least once. From the representative dispersion plots ‘will’ was employed predominantly near the middle and the near the end of the writings for L1 Spanish students (see Figure 7.1).

The L1 Spanish students ‘would’ dispersion plots represent 9 students' writings with 3 or more hits per writing. For all 60 L1 Spanish students there were 25 writings with at least 1 hit for a total of 63 hits (42% of the 149 hits from 53 writings for all 141 non-English L1 students). For comparison there were 28 non-English/non-Spanish L1 writings (86 hits total) that used ‘would’ at least once. From the representative dispersion plots ‘would’ was employed predominantly near the beginning and the near the end of the writings for L1 Spanish students (see Figure 7.2).

The L1 Spanish students ‘can’ dispersion plots represent 22 students' writings with 3 or more hits per writing. For all 60 L1 Spanish students there were 37 writings (62%) with at least 1 hit for a total of 143 hits (39% of the 364 hits from 91 writings for all 141 non-English L1 students). For comparison there were 54 non-English/non-Spanish L1 writings (221 hits total) that used ‘can’ at least once. From the representative dispersion plots ‘can’ was employed relatively uniformly throughout the writings for L1 Spanish students (see Figure 7.3).

In addition, the L1 Spanish students ‘could’ dispersion plots represent 7 students' writings with 2 or more hits per writing. For all 60 L1 Spanish students there were 18 writings with at least 1 hit for a total of 31 hits (48% of the 64 hits from 41 writings for all 141 non-English L1 students). For comparison there were 23 non-English/non-Spanish L1 writings (33 hits total) that used ‘could’ at least once. From the representative dispersion plots ‘could’ was employed predominantly near the middle and the near the end of the writings for L1 Spanish students (see Figure 7.4).
Figure 7.1. L1 Spanish students ‘WILL’ dispersion plots represent 26 students' writings with 3 or more instances of ‘WILL’ (hits) per writing.
Figure 7.2. L1 Spanish students ‘WOULD’ dispersion plots represent 9 students' writings with 3 or more instances of ‘WOULD’ per writing.
Figure 7.3. L1 Spanish students ‘CAN’ dispersion plots represent 22 students' writings with 3 or more instances of ‘CAN’ per writing.
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

One of the aspects of language usage in ESL college students’ writing in L2 can be found in the way these students maintained their voice and culture. In the case of written language, linguistic markers are used in diverse cultures to show certainty and doubt towards a given statement. Thus, for this study, culture was viewed through linguistic markers, and specifically through the use of hedging (Hyland, 1998; Rounds, 1982; Varttala, 2001). Hedging was viewed through two main categories: modal auxiliaries and full verbs (non-factive reporting verbs and linking verbs). Modals are special verbs that behave very irregularly in English and are used in conjunction with main verbs to express shades of time or mood. The modal auxiliaries examined included: ‘can’, ‘could’, ‘may’, ‘might’, ‘must’, ‘should’, ‘will’ and ‘would’. The non-factive reporting verbs, in many cases, describe what a phenomena, experiment or data may imply and
four verbs were examined: ‘suggest’, ‘imply’, ‘claim’ and ‘propose’. The second category examined was the use of tentative linking verbs and three verbs were examined: ‘appear’, ‘seem’ and ‘tend’.

Thus, ESL college students writings (N=141 students) were examined from the 305 W, ACIS class taught at SDSU. It is worth mentioning that the 141 students represent 20 languages and were culturally and linguistically diverse. The findings from the ESL college students (N=141) writing data suggest that ESL students’ felt that they had to employ either ‘will’ or ‘can’ to indicate the ability to do something whereas ‘may’ or ‘could’ were employed more often to express permission to do something. Moreover, ‘can’ expresses much more certainty than other linguistic markers such as ‘could’, ‘might’ or ‘may’. One significant finding that can be extrapolated from this data is that ESL college students favored ‘will’ (N=510 occurrences) and ‘can’ (N=364 occurrences) more than other linguistic forms and hedging was a more-valued trait in their self-expressions.

In addition a comparison of the hedging employed by students who had German, Somali, Vietnamese, Swedish, Thai and Lao was conducted. In the ESL college students’ essays pertaining to Somali and Vietnamese writers, they employ ‘can’ 15 and 16 times more than ‘could’ per essay respectively which may reflect a relative difference in hedging in these two cultures. When comparing the use of ‘can’ and ‘could’, German and Swedish students tended to use ‘can’ 5 times more often than ‘could’ (per essay which may have to do with cultural influences conveying the meaning of these modals rather than the students replicating the similarities in their language structures. The Vietnamese writers’ relatively high ratios of ‘will’ over ‘can’ and ‘can’ over ‘could’ may be an indication of a low degree of hedging used in its culture and in the use of writing within the semantic areas of prediction (‘will’, ‘can’, ‘could’)
and ability (‘can’, ‘could’) (see Table 7.4.). The Swedish ESL college students’ writers, unlike the other ESL college student writers, used ‘will’ fewer times than ‘would’. If the student data was representative of their culture and students were making a semantic choice between ‘will’ and ‘would’ then the Swedish writers would be an outlier and this may reflect a greater use of hedging in this semantic area thus possibly reflecting Swedish cultural norms.

When compared with the totals for all 141 ESL college students, the above stated pattern holds true when considering only the 60 students of L1 Spanish. Within this pattern, ratios wherein the hedging modal is less prevalent (‘can’ vs. ‘could’, ‘may’ vs. ‘might’, and ‘will’ vs. ‘would’) was also very similar. The ratio for ‘can/could’ for all ESL college students was 5.6 versus 4.7 for Spanish speakers only. The ratio for ‘may/might’ for all ESL students was 1.45 versus 2.25 for Spanish speakers only. The ratio for ‘will/would’ was even closer, with 3.4 for all students and 3.6 for Spanish speakers.

Given the four academic genres written by the L1 Spanish ESL college students, the finding suggests that by using ‘can’, the students took a position of expressing the ability and capacity to be able to take a philosophical social position on an issue or to express the capacity to do graduate work in a given academic field. Culturally, rather than using a more humble social statement by employing the verb ‘could’, the students chose to use ‘can’ to express an academic capacity. In the case of the verb ‘will’ ($hacer$, $hacerlo$), from the perspective of hedging, the verb expresses an activity that will be carried out or connotes that an action or activity will be done at a designated time. From a cultural perspective ‘hacer’ can indicate a commitment that an activity will be carried out.

The dispersion plots among the hedging modals ‘will’, ‘would’, ‘can’ and ‘could’ revealed different patterns. L1 Spanish students ‘will’ dispersion plots represent 26 students'
writings with 3 or more hits suggested that ‘will’ was employed predominantly near the middle and the near the end of the writings for L1 Spanish students (see Figure 7.1). The L1 Spanish students ‘would’ dispersion plots represent 9 students' writings with 3 or more hits per writing in which ‘would’ was employed predominantly near the beginning and the near the end of the writings for L1 Spanish students (see 7.2).

The L1 Spanish students ‘can’ dispersion plots represent 22 students' writings with 3 or more hits per writing and ‘can’ was employed relatively uniformly throughout the writings for L1 Spanish students (see Figure 7.3). In addition, the L1 Spanish students ‘could’ dispersion plots represent 7 students' writings with 2 or more hits per writing and ‘could’ was employed predominantly near the middle and the near the end of the writings for L1 Spanish students (see Figure 7.4). The significance of these specific usage patterns for L1 Spanish will require larger data set in order to compare with other non-native L1 languages. In addition, a comparison with the students performing the same writing assignments in this matrix L1 would be interesting.

The findings of non-factive verbs suggest that ESL college students in their writings did not utilize these verbs categories extensively. In the case of non-factive verbs one unanticipated result was that the non-factive and linking verbs were not employed extensively by ESL students. Thus, the verb ‘suggest’ and ‘claim’ were employed more frequently by ESL college students than ‘imply’ and ‘propose’ which could be due to the fact that in academic writing by the scientific community ‘suggest’ and ‘claim’ may be more-favored than ‘imply’ and ‘propose’. The linking verbs ‘appear’ and ‘seem’ could be employed interchangeable by ESL college students since the meanings of the utterances would not change. Thus, the usage of this form may have more to do with the ESL college students’ L1s or their own cultural preferences. The
linking verb ‘tend’ and the non-factive verb ‘propose’ were used only 8 times which could be an indicator that ESL college students found these words to be less effective in conveying ideas.
CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

This final chapter presents the findings from the five research questions addressed in this research effort:

1. What role does the first language (L1) play in the success of ESL international college students acquiring writing literacy skills in their L2 English that meet the institutional composition requirements of the California State University (CSU) system?

2. What are the writing characteristics that were expected of ESL international college students as they acquire L2 English as described by the ACIS professors?

3. What kinds of metadiscourse (genre moves/steps, metadiscourse) are employed by ESL international college students in their final ACIS writing assignments based on two different kinds of genre: summary of a commentary and statement of purpose?

4. How do the miscues of ESL international college students’ English writing assignments relate to the students’ L1 (e.g. morphology) and are these miscues language specific? Furthermore do SLA theories account for L1 induced miscues (e.g. article, verbs and subject-verb agreement)?

5. How does hedging (e.g. modals, non-factive and tentative linking verbs) reflect culture in L2 academic writing?

This chapter includes a discussion of the role of L1 through an analysis of the literature on nine second language acquisition theories.

A summary of the key findings are included. First, reflections derived from written interviews with six linguistic professors are provided. The second part deals with the findings
from metadiscourse analysis taken from a summary of a commentary and statement of purpose (SOP) written by 62 ESL college students. The third part relates to the miscues employed in 141 written documents by 141 ESL college students. The fourth part addresses the hedging employed by same ESL students in their written documents. Furthermore, the pedagogical implications of the findings for the five themes are discussed.

8.1 ROLE THAT FIRST LANGUAGE (L1) PLAYS IN ACQUIRING WRITING LITERACY IN L2 ENGLISH

This chapter begins with a comprehensive review of the research literature to identify language acquisition theories that give L1 a prominent role in enabling or supporting the development of second language acquisition (SLA). The field of SLA explains the role of L1 in terms of input and output. SLA as a field began in the late 1960s. There was limited activity in the 1970s followed by phenomenal development in research and theory during the 1980s and 1990s. The field of SLA is an interdisciplinary field in both its origin and development.

The review yielded nine major SLA theories in the fields of linguistic and education that revealed different perspectives on the importance of L1 in learning a second language. While there are indeed several theories that recognize the L1 as an important influence, other theories lend varying degrees of significance to the effects of the L1 background. In some cases the role of L1 may be deemphasized (lending more gravity to universal effects of language processing) or ignored completely in terms of explaining the major constructs of the SLA theory. Two different perspectives were found in the nine major theories of SLA. The first perspective asserts that L1 plays a vital role in SLA while the second attribute no s significant importance to the role of L1.
Six theories were found to assign a vital role to the L1 in SLA: Krashen’s Monitor Theory (MT) (1985), Chomsky’s Universal Grammar Theory (UG) (1981); the Associative-Cognitive Creed Theory (ACC) of Ellis, 2006; Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory (SCT) (1978); Processability Theory (PT) of Pienemann (2007), and Concept Oriented Approach (CO) of Cooreman and Kilborn (1991). Three theories were found to attribute no significant importance to the role of the L1 (e.g. the Skill Acquisition Theory (SA) DeKeyser (1997), the Interaction Approach Theory (IA) of Gass & Mackey, (2000) and the model of Input Processing (IP) of VanPatten (2007).

Among prominent theories that assign a vital role to the L1 in SLA is the Sociocultural Theory (SCT) that asserts that language is a cultural artifact that helps us to regulate our mental activity. SCT posits that cognitive abilities form as a result of social interaction. Humans are viewed as unique because they can use language as a type of tool that can help regulate behavior and other cognitive functions. One important function of social interaction is that it allows the L2er to engage in imitation, thereby enabling the learner to internalize language knowledge. Furthermore, SCT applies itself to both L1 acquisition and SLA and asserts that the L1 plays a positive role. During social interaction and problem solving sessions the L1 is used to mediate cognitive behavior. Even for advanced learners the L2 is typically insufficient for this task. In this way, learners are able to use the L1 to fill in the gaps in cognitive processing that the L2 is too underdeveloped to handle (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, 2007). The SCT maintains that because using the L2 is cognitively demanding therefore the L1 is used positively as a mediating tool to motivate self-regulation and to facilitate engagement in L2 learning.
Conversely, the three theories SA, IA, IP minimize the importance of the role of the L1 in L2 learning. The three theories attribute a predictable influence to the L1, and yet the theories do not assign a critical role to L1 in supporting L2 SLA.

Skill Acquisition Theory (SA) theory accounts for how people advance from initial learning to a high level of proficiency in different skills. SA asserts that all skills, not only language, are acquired in a particular fashion that includes three stages: declarative knowledge, proceduralization and automatization. While SA theory contains detailed steps regarding the way in which an L2 can be acquired, there is no mention of the effects of the first language within its framework.

The Interaction Approach (IA) focuses on the connection between language learning and meaningful interactions between other learners. The IA is similar to SA in that the L1 does not play a significant role in the SLA paradigm. The emphasis of the IA is on the relationship between language learning and significant interactions amongst learners. Language acquisition is initiated when there is a pressure to communicate.

The Input Processing (IP) theory focuses on the reasons why learners do or do not make what are termed “form meaning connections” (FMCs). FMCs are created based on input and they occur when the learner takes something noticed in the input and is then able to assign a concrete meaning to it. This act of creating FMCs is referred to as processing. The role of the L1 is not clear within the IP theory framework.

Overall, the findings of the literature review suggests that the nine theories reviewed provide a unique view of the nature of L2 knowledge being influence by a combination of linguistic features such as the role of L1 as well as the level of exposure to input and output which often follows predictable stages in the acquisition of the L2.
8.2. LINGUISTIC PROFESSORS’ REFLECTIONS ON WRITING

CHARACTERISTICS OF ESL COLLEGE STUDENTS

The first and second questions of the research study were answered using the reflections of six linguistic professors who teach writing to ESL international college students through the Advance Composition for International Students (ACIS). The interviews with the six linguistic professors, who possess expertise in academic writing and have taught ESL international college students, yielded five themes covering: (1) the writing characteristics of an ESL students, (2) the importance of analyzing linguistic theories from the real-life environment of ESL classes, (3) the types of miscues the ESL students utilize in their writings, (4) the general metadiscourse or genre analysis used in teaching ESL writing and (5) culture and cross-cultural issues that hinder or promote teaching in the ESL classes as well as the challenges professors encountered in teaching college-level ESL students.

8.2.1. WRITING CHARACTERISTICS OF ESL STUDENTS

A proposition indicated by the six linguistic professors is that there is more to learn about the different effective methods that affect ESL college students writing instruction that benefit different levels of writing competence. Different linguistic tools (e.g. grammar logs) may be implemented in the future in order to benefit the most advanced ESL students. Furthermore, one-to-one teacher-student conferences may benefit the ESL students in their academic pursuit to acquire a high level of academic English. Professor 2 makes the following point.

I feel there is still a lot to be learned about the most effective methods of ESL writing instruction. I feel that the conclusions of further in-depth analyses of specific errors made by students dependent on their L1 and level would be very valuable to ESL writing teachers of all levels. When it comes to intermediate and advanced level English learners, students often tend to become over-confident in their skills. This can cause them to overlook errors and dismiss grammatical information presented in class. In order to avoid this, use of tools such as “grammar logs,” where the instructor highlights a few grammatical sentences in students’ papers and has them identify, revise, and explain the
error, can be extremely useful. Detailed written feedback and required teacher-student conferences can also be pivotal in ameliorating a student’s writing (Professor 2).

Another important proposition derived from the study is that SLA, while having strong conceptual connections, may be different than L1 acquisition. Thus, concepts of time and space, if similar to L1, may be transferred to L2 English. However, if these linguistic concepts are different in L2 then the ESL students must be aware of these linguistic differences in order to be able to acquire the new written language forms. Moreover, ESL students should enjoy the process of learning as well as finding satisfaction in reaching the final L2 language stages of acquisition. Professor 4 made the following observations:

Language learning is a slow and deliberate process. Cognitive load and authenticity are at the center of many successful instructional techniques. Furthermore, second language learning is a little different than first language learning, so they should not be treated exactly the same. Explicit awareness has to be raised to give learners a better chance of self-correcting and reaching native-like accuracy. Overall, learners must be patient and look for small markers of progress rather than only finding pride in the final stages of acquisition (Professor 4).

8.2.2. ANALYZING LINGUISTIC THEORIES FROM THE REAL-LIFE ENVIRONMENT OF ESL CLASSES

An additional significant proposition derived from the study was that all of the six linguistic professors acknowledged that there are nine widely accepted theories regarding SLA that inform their teaching and practice. Furthermore, their classroom instruction is influenced by both teaching experience and research-driven theories. Five out of six linguistic professors mentioned that the Vygotsky Sociocultural Theory defines how they approach teaching. The Associate Cognitive CREED theory was mentioned by three linguistic professors and the Chomsky Universal Grammar theory by two linguistic professors. It is worth noting that when the six linguistic professors mentioned a theory they elaborated on their answers. The following theories were also mentioned: VanPatten Input Theory, the Processability Theory, Krashen Input
Hypothesis, Pinker, Dekeyser Skill Acquisition Theory and Motivation in Learning Theory.

Three professors articulate the importance of analyzing SLA theories in real life environment:

I think that of all of the theories we covered in SLA all of them make sense and all of them are applicable to teaching ESL. It is just that it is good that we have them as different theories. I think that all of them can be applied to understanding L2 acquisition not only L1 (Professor 1).

Aspects of VanPatten’s model of Input Processing, the Associative Cognitive CREED, and (Vygotsky) Sociocultural theory all contribute to my understanding of language acquisition and influence my instructional approach (Professor 2).

Two other theories that guide my teaching practices are motivation in learning and sociocultural theory. Dörnyei’s (2012) theories on the role in motivation guide my approach to teaching second language learners, especially in writing which can be one of the hardest second language skills to acquire. Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory defines how I approach teaching. According to Vygotsky (1978), ‘human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them’ (as cited in Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p. 211). Similarly, I believe that adult language learning must be social in nature and requires scaffolding from instructors, peers, and other tools in order for students to be able to self-regulate their language usage (Professor 6).

8.2.3. TYPES OF MISCUES THE ESL COLLEGE STUDENTS EMPLOYED IN THEIR WRITINGS

Another proposition derived from the six professors’ written interviews is that a general assessment of writing miscues is related to the ESL student’s level of second language acquisition. Furthermore, it was suggested that ESL students’ miscues in L2 English that are associated with their primary language may lead to error patterns during their initial stage of acquiring English. The interviews suggested that the errors that may appear to be miscues may actually be the result of a cultural expression or self-expression by the writer. Professor 5 comments on this insight:

It would be important to distinguish between self-expression, cultural expression and a miscue. Sometimes what might appear as a miscue is actually a fully understandable form
of communication and the ‘miscue’ may be the ‘flavor’ (cultural expression and/or selfexpression) of the writer. I have seen many writing and grammar teachers disallow many forms of vocabulary and grammar because they do not fit into their very narrow set of acceptability. Current theories in world English’s posit a greater variety of options than ‘inner circle’ cultures often prescribe English, U.S., Australia, (Professor 5).

It is worth mentioning that one of the arguments constructed was that in the world there are “twice as many non-native speakers of English” than “native speakers of English”. Professor 5 elaborates further.

As mentioned previously, writing teachers need to discover what the future audiences of their student writers will be. It has been said that there are twice as many non-native speakers of English in the world than native speakers of English. If the audience of the writer is non-native speakers like themselves, and especially if these audiences reside outside of inner circle’ countries, then a narrowly prescribed English structure in not only inaccurate with regard to ‘acceptable international English’ but could be viewed as discriminatory in the sense that it is fully functional and appropriate for the international audience (Professor 5).

Indeed, the professors agreed that miscues may indicate the ESL college students’ stage of SLA and their L1.

8.2.4. THE GENERAL METADISOURSE OR GENRE ANALYSIS USED IN TEACHING ESL WRITING

A proposition derived from the six professors on genre analysis is that by exposing the students to the same genre in different ways, the ESL college students can understand the organizational structure of their writing. All of the six linguistic professors implemented a genre approach in their teaching. Some professors implemented it in a very technical way (e.g. moves and steps) whereas other professors employed a more-holistic approach. Professor 4 discussed the purpose of the different stages of an essay:

In terms of moves or steps, I do not go into too much depth with this in my instruction. I do try to raise awareness of the purpose of different aspects of a writing assignment. For example, we will talk about the way that you will talk about the opposing point of view in an argumentative essay to create the desired impression on the reader. Whether you are
establishing credibility as an unbiased presenter, refuting an opposing argument, or strongly presenting your call to action, there are different approaches within the essay that a writer must take. Most of this I do by first discussing the purpose of the different stages of the essay, then providing target language that can help with this purpose (Professor 4).

The linguistic professors assert that there are different approaches that the writer can take while ‘providing a target language can help with this purpose’. Professor 4 describes the metadiscourse process provided to ESL college students in order for them to acquire the knowledge and skills in writing:

Students are taught very generic and standard metadiscourse organizational terminology when they begin implementing these tools in their writing. For example, many of my students will structure their lists of arguments as a first, second, third, finally kind of structure. Rarely do students venture outside the comfort zone of the highly scripted and basic metadiscourse markers (Professor 4).

Professor 6 discusses the approach taken based on an organizational structure of 4 moves:

For genre analysis, I specifically chose profiles from *Time Magazine* that followed a similar organization structure of 4 moves. The profiles’ first move provided some background information about the person or their area of influence. Then, the second move was a sentence that said why this person was influential, which was the thesis statement of the profile. The third move gave some examples of how they have influenced the world. This was the longest part of the profile. Finally, the fourth move provided a conclusion sentence to wrap up the profile. In my class, we identified which sentences followed these moves and used a graphic organizer to map it out. Then, the students made an outline of their own profiles according to these moves. The students also wrote a narrative about a particular value, and again we analyzed the moves in a 3 sample texts. I strongly believe that when students have a good model and understand its organizational structure, it helps them a great deal in organizing their writing (Professor 6).

Another compelling finding was that all of the six linguistic professors stressed that they enjoy teaching ESL writing classes while at the same time acknowledging that there were significant challenges because ESL college students have diverse linguistic backgrounds and variability in their academic fields. Thus, the six linguistic professors stated that writing could be
a very assiduous task for ESL college student. In addition, there is always the expectation that ESL college students need to write coherently in academic genre.

8.2.5. CULTURE AND CULTURAL ISSUES THAT HINDER OR PROMOTE TEACHING IN THE ESL COLLEGE CLASSES

An additional important proposition was that all of the six interviewees emphasized that in order to be successful college professors they needed to be culturally-sensitive which required acknowledging, respecting and encouraging students to use their cultural knowledge of their native language in writings and classroom interactions.

The six linguistic professors emphasized that respecting the students current cultural perspectives enhanced learning which otherwise might be lost. Furthermore, in order to have ESL students engaged in a meaningful way in the classroom learning process, the linguistic professors had to address the individual ESL college student’s culture in order to help them attain a higher level of acquisition in L2 English. Professor 5 elaborates:

I think that respecting students innate ability to catch on to second language acquisition and respecting the students current cultural perspectives will enhance learning opportunities that might otherwise be lost. Teacher-fronted classes might have their place in some subject areas, yet in language education, this would actually hold back the rate of acquisition. Engaging students in meaningful and linguistically understandable activities is the challenge for every language teacher (Professor 5).

Professor 1 further discusses the variability of student cultural, language, and academic backgrounds and exposing students to different texts.

First of all I work with students from different linguistic backgrounds and cultures as well as different disciplinary background. You get students majoring in sociology, engineering and conflict resolution and pick up their own disciplinary knowledge and personalities. Plus they have different cultures and languages. You don’t get that when you teach different classes. Teaching ESL writing forces you to deal with so many interesting texts it becomes your goal to have something interesting for everybody. I see a direct progress in the way the students express themselves in a second language and after I am half done with the course I can see the result. The challenge is that at US universities this class is a requirement. The majority of the students have to be here because is a requirement and
they are students… it is normal they want a grade…, get done with the requirement and move on. I dislike, that attitude about teaching ESL writing. It is one of the challenges to get them interested in the subject matter that I teach (Professor 1).

Another persuasive outcome from the interview was that all of the linguistic professors work to understand their ESL college students’ challenges and as result try to encourage and motivate their students with their own personal stories. Professor 6 shares an insight:

In addition, I tell my students my story. As a child, my first language wasn’t English since my parents only spoke Greek (although by the first or second grade English became my predominant L1). Because of that fact, English wasn’t my strongest subject throughout my schooling even into high school. However, in college I ended up majoring in literature and linguistics and I became an excellent writer of English. I tell this story to my students so that they understand that through hard work and perseverance, it is possible to become a good writer in a second language (Professor 6).

To enhance comprehension and meaning in their classes several of the linguistic professors introduce visual, tactile and aural approaches to guide the ESL college students in their second language acquisition. The explanation offered was that the ESL college students may learn more effectively by having different mediums of instruction. Professor 2 states:

The visual approach seems to be very effective for all students of all cultures. It allows students to extract the information at their own pace and allows them to look up any words they are not familiar with. With PowerPoint presentations, I often post the slides on Blackboard so students can just focus on listening while I lecture if that mode works best for them. They can focus on the information rather than trying to quickly copy everything down, knowing they have access to the slides to reference at a later time (Professor 2).

8.3. METADISCOURSE ANALYSIS MOVES AND STEPS IN SUMMARY OF A COMMENTARY AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE (SOP)

The third question of the research study was answered through the analysis of two writing assignments representing two types of genre. According to Vygotsky (1978) providing genre-based pedagogy in an academic context develops the language awareness of ESL students and persuades them to notice different kinds of genres. One focus of this research effort was to
provide a synthesis of genre approaches (identifying the moves and steps) in the writings of ESL college students using two specific kinds of genre: summary of a commentary: “You are Being Lied to About Pirates” by Hari (2009) and statement of purpose (SOP): Applying to Graduate School.

The analysis of the 43 student samples (summary of a commentary) revealed 5 distinct moves used by all college students. The frequencies of distribution of the data suggest that Move 3 and Move 5 were more scattered. Furthermore, different students may have different views of what is required in a summary of a commentary (Table 5.1).

The data from the SOP analysis based on 19 ESL college students suggest that Moves 1-5 may be important moves in the SOP since all ESL college students employed these moves. One general pattern found in the SOPs was that the majority of the students used the epistemic ‘I’ which allowed the students to be the topic (subject) of the essay and allowed them to reveal their intentions and motives in pursuing an advanced degree. In addition, the most ubiquitous verb was the verb ‘want’ followed by verbs that convey possibilities or feelings such as ‘believe’ and ‘feel’. Move 6 (Concluding Restatement) was found in the writings of only 3 of 19 students’ writings which makes this move more of an elective based on ESL college students’ fields of inquiry (Table 5.2).

The metadiscourse analysis based on the summary of a commentary and SOP suggested that students employed identical moves but variations occurred among steps (Table 5.1 and 5.2). This provides an insight into the desired rhetorical structure in these two types of genre. This finding supports St Johns’ conclusion that there is a definite requirement to comprehend:
“the generic features of different events such as meetings, to identify common features of effective communication, to understand the role of cultural influences and to understand the way in which language and business strategies interact” (St Johns, 1996, p.15).

The implications of this SOP writing patterns is discussed by Cheng (2008) who points to the importance of how the writer, the reader and the purpose interact. Providing genre-based pedagogy in an academic context develops the language awareness of ESL college students and persuades them to notice different genre. Therefore, the students can write more accurately and effectively in different genre. Furthermore, Paltridge and Starfield (2007, p.97), in their volume “Thesis and Dissertation Writing in a Second Language”, state that moves and steps should not be seen as “rigid and inflexible” but instead as a tool for understanding how to persuade and present disagreements that are required in some master theses and dissertations. Moves and steps can be modified, reduced or expanded based upon the needs of the writer.

Pedagogically, the general structure of summary of a commentary and SOP assignments, within moves and steps, may have a general pattern but the communicative intent can be less powerful if the moves and steps were rigidly implemented. Thus, for both the ESL college student and the professors the moves and steps need to be utilized to support the intent of the selected writing assignments based on the student’s academic field. The SOP analysis found in Chapter 5 of this study is particularly valuable because it sheds light on the general structure of two types of written genre. In addition, it adds to the growing body of data on what moves and steps are required in such assignments as the SOP and provides additional structural information that can be used by ESL college students to improve their writing competency.

The results of the current study point to potentially more fruitful explorations in the area of genre writing assignments by providing a complex rhetorical structure. Additional studies could be conducted that would include more students’ genre writings and thereby provide a
more-comprehensive analysis of students’ writing narratives. Furthermore, as a result of this research effort, accurate and specific examples may be developed for ESL college students who need to write a summary of a commentary and SOP when applying to graduate school in different academic fields.

8.4. Miscues Employed by 141 ESL College Students in English

The fourth question of the research study was answered using empirical data from the writing essays of 141 ESL college students suggested that there is evidence of L1 influencing the SLA process. Furthermore, four different types of miscues with regard to language features were evaluated in this research effort: articles, verb forms (VFs), verb tenses (VTs) and subject/verb (SV) agreement.

The attainment of native-like usage of articles is often a daunting process for ESL learners. Article miscues were evident across all ESL learners’ essays. The ESL learners in this study covered the gamut of twenty L1 languages including Chinese, Japanese, Russian, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Korean, and Arabic. Articles were employed inaccurately numerous times by all of the ESL college students. It is worth mentioning that for those ESL college students whose L1 does not use articles (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Thai) and the frequency of incorrect usage increased significantly (see Table 6.1).

The verb tenses (VTs) were among the most frequent miscues. Mastering VT usage in L2 can be a demanding process. English VTs can be seen as puzzle pieces that fit together to reveal a demarcation of time unique to English (e.g. simple present, present progressive, present perfect and present perfect progressive). The ESL college students have acquired the ability to map time in their L1 and their challenge is now to do the same using a different model of “time mapping” (L2). To the extent that L1 affects L2 the outcome of L2, student essays will be a
representation of at least two issues: how well the student understands the L2 model and the cultural transmission of L1 ideas into the L2 product. Time may be perceived and expressed differently amongst different languages and these differences may be evident in the language forms used in students’ L2 essays.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that for ESL college students whose L1 contains significant VF and VT variations compared to English (e.g. no ‘ing’/’to’ gerund/infinitive distinction in Arabic, Chinese, French, Greek, Farsi, Spanish and Vietnamese), the frequency of usage of the incorrect form increased (see Table 6.2). On the other hand, even if ESL college students had a VT form in their L1, sometimes in their writings the incorrect form was implemented. It could be the case that L2 time provided by the English VT was perceived as different than the L1 time provided by the students own L1 VT and so the student chose an alternative L2 VT that turned out to be inaccurate.

SV agreement miscues were found in all ESL college students’ writings irrespective of their L1. Since these miscues do not affect the communication of time or the singularity or plurality of the subject, they can often remain in the student’s expressive language for quite a while because the college students’ communicative utility is not diminished with such miscues. SV agreement can be one of the last linguistic cognates acquired by ESL college students.

In this research effort a general pattern of miscues was established. The data suggested that some miscues employed by ESL students plural may be language specific, the result of a direct transfer of a specific linguistic form from L1 (e.g. omitting copular ‘be’ in Arabic, Chinese, Greek and Russian). In addition, the miscues regarding VFs and VTs may be the result
of both a transfer from L1 (since the time concept may be perceived differently by ESL college students) as well as from not having acquired the accurate linguistic form in L2.

8.4.1. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS ON MISCUES

The data set consisted of the 141 cases representing 141 ESL college students’ writings with twenty different first languages (L1s) that were statistically analyzed for salient patterns using commercial SPSS software package (Hinton, 2014). Each case was composed of five fields: gender, L1 and three scores based on a written assignment consisting of the number of articles miscues, verb miscues (VFs and VTs) and subject-verb (SV) agreement miscues.

The highest numbers of miscues among the three variables (e.g. article, verbs and SV agreement) were the verb miscues (see Table 6.5). The Pearson correlation revealed that the correlation between verb miscues and article miscues is significantly different from zero ($\alpha<0.01$) and the strength of the correlation was moderate. For the remaining pairs, the calculated coefficients were not significantly different from zero.

For each of the mean scores, an independent samples t-test showed that the difference was not significant between male and female students. Therefore, further consideration of gender differences was not addressed in this study.

To improve the statistical significance of the analysis, the twenty individual L1s were grouped into eight language categories based upon the researcher’s presumption of language similarity (see Table 6.3). An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was done for each of the error types to test the null hypothesis that the means scores of the eight language categories are all the same (e.g., $\mu_{\text{Romance}}=\mu_{\text{N Asian}}=...=\mu_{\text{SE Asia}}$). ANOVA is an omnibus test for rejection of the null hypothesis and does not provide any insight into which of the category means might be different from the others.
Verb miscues for each of L1 group were examined using ANOVA to test the null hypothesis that all means are equal. Since the calculated F statistic is less than the critical value then the null hypothesis must be accepted and the researcher concluded that there are no significant differences in the mean scores. The effect size is medium ($\eta^2 = 0.105$) (see Table 6.6).

Article miscues for each L1 group were evaluated with ANOVA and it was found that there are significant differences in the mean article error scores. The effect size was medium ($\eta^2 = 0.189$) (see Table 6.7). Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of variances was used to determine that the group variances are not equal and therefore the Dunnett T3 post-hoc test was used to determine that the mean scores for the Germanic-North Asian groups differ at the $\alpha=0.05$ level of significance.

SV agreement miscues for each L1 group were examined with ANOVA and it was concluded that there are significant differences in the mean article miscues scores. Effect size is medium ($\eta^2 = 0.189$) (see Table 6.8). Levene’s test of homogeneity of variances was used to determine that the group variances are not equal. Therefore the Dunnett T3 post-hoc test was used to determine that the mean scores for the Romance-Cushic and SE Asia-Cushic groups differ at $\alpha=0.05$ level of significance. Interestingly, the Romance-SE Asia groups mean scores did not differ significantly.

8.5. HEDGING AS A CULTURAL INFLUENCE IN ESL WRITINGS

The fifth question of the research study was answered through empirical data derived from the writings of 141 ESL college students.

Hedging is a basic feature in academic writing that enables the writer to show their certainty, qualify an assertion and doubt towards their statements, to show the amount of
confidence the writers place on their claim and to start a dialog with the readers. Through hedging, writers leave some room for their readers to judge the truth behind the assertions made (Nasari, 2012; Rounds, 1982). In this research effort culture was perceived through the use of hedging (e.g. modals, non-factive and linking verbs). Hence, English modals and verb patterns can be used to express a range of propositional certainty.

One conclusion extrapolated from this data was that ESL college students favored ‘will’, ‘can’ and ‘would’ more than other linguistic forms and hedging was a more-valued trait in their self-expressions. The linguistic markers ‘may’, ‘might’, ‘must’ and ‘should’ vary in the frequency of usage between 82 and 44 (see Table 7.1). One unanticipated result was that the non-factive verbs (‘suggest’, ‘imply’, ‘claim’ and ‘propose’) and tentative linking verbs (‘appear’, ‘seem’ and ‘tend’) were not employed extensively by ESL college students. Thus, the verbs ‘suggest’ and ‘claim’ were employed more frequently by ESL college students than ‘imply’ and ‘propose’ which could be due to the fact that academic writing may favor one linguistic form over another based on the scientific community. The linking verbs ‘appear’ and ‘seem’ could be employed interchangeably by ESL college students since the meanings of the utterances would not change. Thus, the usage of these forms may have more to do with the ESL college students’ L1s or their own cultural preferences.

One striking finding was that Somali and Vietnamese students used ‘can’ fifteen and sixteen times more than ‘could’ per essay, respectively, which may have more to do with cultural influences regarding conveying the meaning of these modals rather than the students replicating the similarities in their language structures. Another compelling finding was that the Swedish writers, unlike the other ESL writers, used ‘will’ fewer times than ‘would’ which may reflect a
greater degree of hedging in this semantic area and thus possibly reflecting Swedish cultural norms (see Tables 7.3 and 7.4).

An additional conspicuous finding revealed that the ESL college students, excluding the Spanish speakers, used ‘should’ twice as many times as ‘must’ whereas Spanish speakers tended to use ‘must’ and ‘should’ with almost equal frequency (see Tables 7.5 and 7.6). As a result, the data suggests that Spanish speakers appear to express greater certainty and perhaps less leniency than speakers of other L1 languages which may be indicative of cultural norms playing a role in the choice of language.

To further analyze the data, dispersion plots were created based on 60 L1 Spanish students' writings taken from 141 non-English L1 students' writings. From the representative dispersion plots ‘will’ was employed predominantly near the middle and the near the end of the writings, ‘would’ near the beginning and the near the end of the writings, ‘can’ was employed relatively uniformly throughout the writings and ‘could’ was employed predominantly near the middle and the near the end of the writings.

8.6. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Reflecting on the findings of the study, thirteen pedagogical suggestions are proffered for the teaching of writing to ESL college students.

8.6.1 TEACHING ESL TO COLLEGE STUDENTS IS A COMPLEX PROCESS

It is imperative to appreciate that teaching ESL cannot be reduced to a simple checklist of the grammatical features of English language. One may argue that even for a native speaker of English it is a daunting process to write coherently, cohesively and persuasively in their academic field of inquiry. Furthermore, different fields of inquiry may require different linguistic markers (e.g. we/passive voice in hard sciences vs. epistemic I/active voice in soft sciences). It
could be the case that for the native English speaker implementing meaningful and accurate forms is a more innate process than for adult ESL learners making acquisition of correct linguistic forms and meanings more problematic.

**8.6.2 UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT SLA THEORIES AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE 9 SLA THEORIES**

The nine SLA theories discussed in this study provide diverse pedagogical approaches for learning an L2. Among the most widely-supported theories is Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory (SCL) which proposes that social interaction drives cognition and, consequently, language acquisition. Language acquisition is seen to be modulated by the cultural and social matrix that an individual is developing internally. Cultural concepts include an understanding of physical and social environments. In SCL, the L1 is seen as having a positive influence on L2 development. Learners are seen as utilizing L1 to understand cognitive processing when their L2 is insufficient to handle the conceptual framework that is being demanded by L2. In this sense L1 is acting as a scaffold for L2 development (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

**8.6.3 INSTRUCTORS MAINTAIN AN ADDITIVE LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE IN THE TEACHING OF SLA BY ENCOURAGING STUDENTS TO WRITE ON THEIR CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES AND IDEAS**

Centeno-Cortès and Jimènez (2004, p.31) assert that “if the L1 is prohibited in the language classroom this might hinder language learning, as the L1 has been shown here to serve as a key cognitive and metacognitive tool for the students.” The linguistics professors involved in the study maintain a proactive posture towards incorporating the L1 schemas (language and culture) of the international students.
While working with ESL college students with different academic majors on how to communicate effectively in writing the approach is to: encourage students to write on their cultural perspectives or ideas; provide for cultural accommodations as an essential awareness in working with culturally diverse cultures; provide ESL participants the opportunity to expand ways of expressing themselves; understand that students’ writing assignments will be affected by their own writing styles rooted in their own cultures. Thus, an additional pedagogical implication from this research is that ESL students’ cultures should be brought into their writing and the role of L1 in SLA should be thought of as a tool for learning. The writing level that professors should aim for is one in which their students “deepened understanding of how writer, reader, and purpose interact in a piece of text that results in the use of certain generic features” (Cheng, 2008, p.65) so as to become better writers of English academic text.

**8.6.4 EMBRACING A COMPLEX LINGUISTIC FRAMEWORK THAT ALLOWS ESL COLLEGE STUDENTS TO BE AWARE OF SIMILARITIES AND DISCREPANCIES IN LINGUISTIC FORMS**

The SV agreement may be one of the last linguistic cognates acquired by ESL college students and therefore both the professors and the ESL college students needed to be aware of the linguistic exertion to acquire this form. An important outcome is that it is vital for professors to embrace a complex linguistics framework that allows ESL college students to be aware of their similarities and discrepancies in linguistic forms (e.g. morphological, semantically, syntactically, pragmatically) between their L1 and English.
8.6.5 L1 SHOULD BE USED AS A BRIDGE FOR TRANSFERING SCHEMA FROM THE L1 TO L2

Furthermore, the ESL college students in this study employ the L2 based on their own schema cultures and purposes to communicate to the world. This research study effort strongly advocates the finding that the L1 should be used as a bridge for transferring schema from the L1 to L2. When linguistic forms are different between L1 and L2 then the professor should evaluate the miscues patterns, find the ESL college students’ L1 linguistic forms and then elevate the students’ awareness of these linguistic forms.

8.6.6 MAKING STUDENTS AWARE THAT MODAL, NON-FACTIVE AND LINKING VERBS ARE EMPLOYED IN ACADEMIC WRITING MAY BE A VALUABLE TOOL FOR THEM

The data suggest that ESL college students favored hedging as a more-valued trait in self-expression. Making the ESL college students aware that these verbs are employed in academic writing may provide insight for them.

8.6.7 TEACHING ESL INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE STUDENTS WRITING INVOLVES AWARENESS OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMY AND INTRECULTURAL COMMUNICATION STYLES

The interconnectedness of the students’ L1s and their cultures is an asset that international and non-international students in 4-year university, upon completing their undergraduate or graduate degree, need to develop given that they will be tasked with writing for an international audience rather than the more narrow linguistic world of an American audience.
8.6.8 COMPREHENSION OF GENRE AND GENRE FEATURE KNOWLEDGE HELPS L2 STUDENTS TO NOTICE THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE TEXT AND TO DEVELOP AWARENESS ABOUT COMMUNICATIVE PURPOSE

Exposing L2 students to the target genre in their field of expertise and drawing their attention to the rhetorical move structures makes the L2 students aware of the overall organizational structure. The six linguistic professors contend that the ability to identify and describe the moves and their linguistic features can also be transferred to processing various other texts. This assertion is supported by Askehave and Swales (2001) who suggested that a communicative purpose is vital in the identification of genre. Moreover, attaining the ability to comprehend different moves and their rhetorical structures developed the ESL students’ knowledge about the communicative purpose.

8.6.9 AS L2 STUDENTS BECOME AWARE OF READER EXPECTATION OF A TEXT THEY BECOME CONSCIOUS USERS OF LANGUAGE

Activating reader anticipation with respect to important content and the textual features that direct the reader to purposeful communication can be achieved when the L2 student’s consciousness is raised concerning the generic features. Bhatia (1993) suggested that grammatical accuracy without genre-specific linguistic features fails to contribute to the success of the communicative purpose of the genre. This research suggests that raising consciousness to the generic features in ESL writing classes can be achieved by implementing linguistic awareness through different tasks.
8.6.10 AS L2 STUDENTS DEVELOP AN UNDERSTANDING OF GENRE, A HOLISTIC VIEW OF THE TEXT; THEY IMPROVE THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD LANGUAGE LEARNING AS WELL AS BEING ABLE TO TRANSFER THEIR GENRE AWARENESS TO OTHER SITUATIONS

Students in the ACIS course improved their attitude toward language learning by extolling the merits of the genre-based approach. The current research may provide awareness of how rhetorical organizations are implemented in writing assignments such as summary of a commentary and SOP and how this knowledge influences student attitude toward learning.

Hyon (2001) asserts that the teaching of genre-based reading is transferable to writing capabilities since it provides students with a framework for their own writing. Moreover, genre-based pedagogy improved the student’s skills in language learning by offering opportunities to exploit the language in authentic writing situations and that may improve students’ success in other studies as well (Flowerdew, 2000; Henry & Roseberry, 1999). According to Hyland, the foremost cause for the improvement in L2 students’ attitudes could be ascribed to the usefulness of genre-based pedagogy which makes “genres of power visible and attainable and thus enhancing learners’ career opportunities and providing access to a greater range of life choices” (Hyland, 2004, p.24).

8.6.11 INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE-LEVEL ESL STUDENTS HAVE TO BE INSTRUCTED IN HOW TO RELATE THE PURPOSE OF WRITING TO THE SUBJECT MATTER WHILE THINKING OF THE WRITER-AUDIENCE CONNECTION AND THE ORGANIZATION OR STYLE OF THE TEXT

Macken-Horaik (2002) asserts that according to the “genre approach” writing occurs in a social context and when given a selected situation such pieces of writing have to achieve a
specific purpose. Thus, it is important for international college-level ESL students to be instructed in how to relate the purpose of writing to the subject matter while thinking of the writer-audience connection and the organization or style of the text. The present study, examined two types of “genre approach” that permit the L2 students to distinguish how texts are written in different ways according to their function, audience and meaning. Swales and Feak (1994) also linked different move structures to different communicative purposes.

8.7. RECOMMENDATIONS

There are several recommendations for future studies to further explore the findings of this study on teaching writing to ESL college students.

8.7.1 LARGER SAMPLE SIZE OF LIKE POPULATIONS

Although the data set analyzed in this study (141 ESL writing assignments’ containing 88,032 words from 3 consecutive years) was comparable to other previous published studies, nonetheless larger sample sizes are required to reduce statistical uncertainties. It would be desirable to sample like-populations not only based on their academic level of English but also their field of inquiry.

8.7.2 ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE THAT L1 CULTURE PLAYS IN THE SLA PROCESS NEEDS TO BE MORE DEEPLY EXAMINED

According to the data set of the study, it is important to examine selected variables of L1 and culture, in selected languages, that are required to be implemented in the ESL international students’ writings in order for them to be informed of how they can efficiently acquire academic genre in their L1, L2 or L3.
8.7.3 ANALYZING THE PROGRAMMATIC UTILITY OF THE NINE SECOND LANGUAGE THEORIES

Using the frameworks developed by the existing study there is a need to examine through applied programs how each theory drives pedagogical foundations the required resources needed to effectively implement the theory and what indicators are necessary to provide evidence of effective outcomes.

8.7.4 DEEPENING THE PROFESSORS’ UNDERSTANDING OF THE CULTURES OF LINGUISTRICALLY-DIVERSE ESL STUDENTS

Undertake research to identify what elements of culture and personality of the ESL college students can reduce SLA learning anxiety will create trust between student and professor.

8.7.5 EXAMINING INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE STUDENTS’ MOTIVATION FACTORS

Undertake research focusing on what motivational factors can hinder or promote the ESL college student in acquiring SLA writing proficiency.

8.7.6 EXAMINING THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF L1 AND L2 IN DEVELOPING WRITING COMPETENCY

Undertake research to examine what are the levels of writing proficiency in L1 and L2 that can enable college students to communicate with international audiences beyond the narrow linguistic world of the American reader.

8.7.7 DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN SELF-EXPRESSION, CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS AND A MISCUE IN SLA

There is a need for researching intercultural linguistic competence as the increase in bilingual/ multilingual competence increases with the changing world demographics. There are
twice as many non-native speakers of English in the world as L1 English speakers. Teachers need to discover what future audiences of their students will be composed of.

8.7.8 EXAMINING THE CONDITIONS AS TO WHY ESL PROFESSORS ARE STILL SEEKING A COHERENT, COMPREHENSIBLE THEORY OF WRITING

Cumming (1998) and Matsuda (1999) contend that ESL professors are still seeking a coherent, comprehensive theory of the teaching of writing. Understanding the complexity of acquiring SLA and learning and acquiring writing skills at a professional proficiency level is an important area of research given the global dynamics of commerce and sociocultural interaction.

8.7.9 EXAMINING THE USE OF LINGUISTIC ANTHROPOLOGY TO EXPLORE THE WRITING OF INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE STUDENTS AND HOW LANGUAGE SHAPES COMMUNICATION AND FORMS SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

The fields of linguistics and anthropology come in contact with one another only infrequently still, there is a need to provide opportunities for students to examine linguistic, anthropological, and educational concepts that have relevance to their daily lives. There are many connections between ESL class materials and the outside world. It is important for college students to recognize how every learning setting is a culture, with its own community norms, social hierarchies, and personal narratives/stories. How can instructors of ESL provide students with the tools to become participants in, and observers of, language learning cultures is a research question to explore. Linguistic and anthropology can serve to examine language and discourse as central to the construction of language learning cultures and cultural identity.
8.7.10 EVALUATING ESL COLLEGE LANGUAGE TEACHING PRACTICES THAT BENEFIT FROM LINGUISTIC WRITING SKILLS

International ESL college students often ask how much practice is necessary before a language skill is fully acquired. Among the questions is the role of input-and output-based practice in language learning. Current thinking within SLA is that both types of practice are important, and that each plays a distinct but complementary role in language acquisition. However, this view is often not reflected fully in the language classroom. Current linguistic language classes provide students with significant output-based practice but only limited input-based practice. The outcome is that L2 learners can be fluent users of English but their oral and written skills remain underdeveloped.

8.8. FINAL REFLECTIONS

In the European community, the researcher grew-up hearing the proverb, which says: “As many languages you speak as many lives you have.” Of interest is the UNESCO statement that emphasizes teaching children in their L1, which is found in a declaration on language in 1953,

It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue. Psychologically, it is the system of meaningful signs that in his mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which he belongs. Educationally he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium (UNESCO, 1953, p.11).

So one needs to ask: Why is a nation that is highly developed economically, such as the United States, so opposed to developing multilingual competence? This has led President Barack Obama (2013) to make statements on the subject in one of his speeches regarding the need for our educational system to improve and support the teaching of other languages:

Now, I agree that immigrants should learn English. I agree with that. But understand this. Instead of worrying about whether immigrants can learn English — they’ll learn English
— you need to make sure your child can speak Spanish. You should be thinking about, how can your child become bilingual? We should have every child speaking more than one language. You know, it’s embarrassing when Europeans come over here, they all speak English, they speak French, they speak German. And then we go over to Europe, and all we can say is, “Merci beaucoup.” Right? You know, no, I’m serious about this. We should understand that our young people, if you have a foreign language that is a powerful tool to get a job. You are so much more employable. You can be part of international business. So we should be emphasizing foreign languages in our schools from an early age, because children will actually learn a foreign language easier when they’re 5, or 6, or 7 than when they’re 46, like me (Obama, July 8, 2013).

From a pedagogical perspective, one native English professor who has taught the SDSU ACIS composition class explains the richness of having cultural competence skills to view and express one’s voice in varied linguistic codes.

Unlike many monolingual writers the students from this class are able to know different cultures in depth and to switch at will among varied linguistic and rhetorical codes. Rather than having only one language, one culture, and one culturally bound type of writing, they have a broader perspective; more to think about, more to write about, more resources to draw on as they write and far more comparisons to make among languages, writing and culture. They bring their culture with them into writing and as they do so, they help and reshape the culture of America (Professor, 6).

Valuing the effects of a first language on language usage in a L2 can be appreciated in the variations of the use of utterances as well as morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic meanings when compared to native speaker usage. These variations can be entitled miscues although they may, in fact, not impede expressions and may even enhance utterances through inclusion of cultural nuances.

Furthermore, the skill of writing in a second language, no matter the language abilities of the writer, is often a mosaic of both first and second languages. While the second language in this study is English, first language expressions and meanings are imbedded in the students’ writings that reveal the many cultural expressions of the writer.
Since the goal of communication is the development of meaning between the communicators, it is the value of the exchange that matters rather than the structure of the language that carried the meaning. For ESL college students, rigid conformity to the form of a second language is not the measure of a writer’s effectiveness. The goal of a writer is to have the skills to provide competent expression of meaning.

When the second language is a lingua franca, as English currently is, adherence to one particular language form is neither necessary nor desired. Varieties of the lingua franca are a reflection of the cultures of its users. Mutual comprehensibility is the goal of language development, not the never-ending refinement of language forms to match the mother tongue of native speakers.

Judgment persists regarding the usage of the language form with respect to second language international college students. Obsessively focusing on dotting the ‘i’s’ and crossing the ‘t’s’, in the final analysis, inhibits the full expression of the culture of the writer. The writer’s culture naturally comes through in a variety of “miscues” which, when not interfering with meaning, can often enrich rather than detract from the communicative experience.

Since we are increasingly moving into a greater, more diversified, multicultural world, the resultant, non-monolithic use of the lingua franca, due to the influence of L1, brings a richer and fuller communicative and cultural experience to linguistic expression. The inherent diversity in English expression includes a strong cultural component to the form of the communication. This study calls for native speakers working with non-native speakers to respect and appreciate the cultural contributions that non-native speakers bring to the form of their second language communications.
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APPENDIX 1

WRITTEN INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the writing characteristics that you look for in emerging writers of a second language (English)?

2. Given the many theories of SLA, what theory or theories guide your understanding of language acquisition?

3. Are there any theories that in your mind ascribe a negative mediation function to the ESL learner first language?

4. What type of miscues do ESL learners employ in their writing assignment in English?

5. What are the typical metadiscourse (rhetorical approach) that you find in ESL learners writing assignments? Do you employ genre analysis (moves, steps) in your teaching of ESL writing? If so, can you describe your approach?

6. Given the diversity of ESL students in your writing course, how do you incorporate multicultural perspectives in your teaching? How do you acknowledge their culture perspective?

7. What are some of the challenges that you face in teaching an ESL writing course?

8. Are there any opinions or comments you would like to share in the teaching of ESL writing?

Professor ALL: What thinking or internal dialogues take place as you prepare to teach culturally diverse students? In engaging them in class? Probing their development? Respecting their cultural ways of thinking and interacting?
A Summary of “You are Being Lied to About Pirates”

Many people easily conclude the result of issued problem with stereotypes; however, there are always opposite side of facts that common people can hardly hear. Johann Hari’s “You are being lied to about pirates” is consists of several circumstances that why pirates choose the way they live. Briefly, Hari introduces the history of pirate, and he explains that the reason to become a pirate is the same as the past and the present. It happened from people who resisted the way their employees, the merchant service or Royal Navy, continued. They demanded some changes to their employees such as well-fare or a better labor environment, but they were still treated unfairly. Therefore, their lives became more harsh and cruel.

The first pirates pursuit egalitarian the most. Even a captain who was elected by pirates and slaves were all treated equally. This could be a part of labor revolution. Nowadays, Somalia pirates become the major global topic. Every single time, one of world cargo ships are kidnapped or attacked by them. However, there are invisible truths. While Somalia was in starvation, major global companies made a deal with Somalia government that they dump nuclear waste and provide food for starving people.

After it happened, Somali people suffered from radiation illness. They lost their families and friends, and lots of people who were engaged in fisher market lost place to work. Later on, it becomes global issue, but those companies still evade paying the compensation. This is how the
pirates have emerged. Yes, this cannot be acceptable reason to be a pirate, but those pirates have their own story either.

S24, Brazilian, Male

Summary

In the “You are being lied to about Pirates,” Johann Hari states that still in 2009 pirates exist, called the Somalian pirates, who were declared enemies by the government of several countries, from US to China. However, scandals have always existed and the reason for this fight might not have justice. Merchants or navy sailors became pirates due to how they were treated; terrible conditions affecting the way they lived and ended up dead, and for this reason they were the first to rebel. Pirates began a new ship administration and also demonstrate that life on the ship didn’t need to be as devastating as it was on their days.

One pirate, who was hanged, called William Scott became a pirate to survive. However in 1991 Somalia collapsed; people have been on starvation since then and now Western forces took the advantage of Somalia’s problematic by dumping nuclear waste in their seas. Many people started to have nausea, malformed babies and this also lead to death. As to another consequence from the nuclear waste, fish started to die on the Somalian Coast adding this problem to the overexploitation they did to their own fish. These reasons created pirates; people who didn’t want to die of starvation and started to steal from European waters. The Independent Somalian news found that 70 per cent of Somalians supported the piracy because the Somalian pirates didn’t feel themselves as robbers but as defenders of their life and also their peoples.

Author Johann Hari uses different strategies such as narration of stories about pirates, description of the pirates life, gives explanation and effect of why Somalian people became
pirates and the consequences of their actions, he also gives evidence such as the evidence from
the newspaper giving some statistics and makes comparison to give the conclusion of his article.

S44, Spanish, Female

The Role of the COLFV Model in Professional Writing

The COLFV model is a tool that when used appropriately makes a text effective. It comprises the following components: content, organization, language, format, and value. All of these components allow the writer to reach effectively to his/her audience. The cover letter written by Jesse Mason is a clear example of how to use successfully the COLFV model. His intended audience is the personnel director of the “Anderson Construction Company” and the purpose of the letter is to convince the personnel director that he is the indicated person to hold the Civil Engineer position. So, the goal of this analysis is to show how the understanding of genre analysis, as demonstrated by the COLFV model, can be utilized in any setting (educational and professional).

The acronym COLFV as mentioned earlier stands for content, organization, language, format and values. When talking about the content of a text, the writer has to pay attention to the following aspects. First, the writer needs to assume that the audience has some knowledge and interest in the topic and second, he/she needs to decide what type of knowledge he possesses in the topic being discussed. In the cover letter, the author assumes that his audience is interested and has knowledge in the topic being discussed. We can see an example of this when Mason writes, “I read in the March 24th Washington Post classified section of you need for a Civil Engineer or Building Construction graduate for one of your Washington, DC, are sites”. In addition, when Mason writes, “I will complete requirements for my B.S. in Building
Construction in May” and “Every summer for the last five years I have worked at various levels in the construction industry” we can see that he possesses insider and disciplinary knowledge.

In order to be effective, a text can make use of several types of organization. Among the most common types used for writers are explanation, exemplification, list, narrative, discussion, etc. The letter makes use of several types of organization. For example, when Mason writes, “I will be returning to the Washington area after graduation in May and believe that I have the necessary credentials for the project”, he is making use of explanation. Second, discussion is present in the text when Mason writes, “The Anderson Construction Company projects are familiar to me, and my aspiration is to work for a company that has your excellent reputation”.

The language that the writer utilizes in his writing provides the reader with an easy reading and easy comprehension of ideas. Mason’s language is mainly formal and in some cases he makes use of jargon. For example, when he writes, “I would welcome the opportunity to interview with you” he is talking in a formal language. In addition, when he says that “I have worked as a general laborer, and moved up to skilled carpentry work, and last summer served as assistant construction manager” he is using jargon, because he is talking in technical terminology.

The letter’s format is effective. It follows a cover letter format. On the top of the page there is a heading in which all the contact information of Jesse Mason is. After the contact information of Mason, we can see that he placed the contact information of the personnel director. He started the letter with a formal salutation. The body of the letter consists of four paragraphs in which each of them highlights one important aspect of Mason’s experience. He
ends the letter with a sentence saying thank you for the time and at the end of the page he wrote his name.

Mason’s intended audience and him have to share some common values in order to have a mutual understanding. In this case, the common value is that both of them form part of the same professional field. In addition, Mason reflects in his writing his desire to work in the “Anderson Construction Company” and he claims that he is the right person to be hired. We can see this when he writes, “I am confident that my degree, along with my years of construction industry experience, make me an excellent candidate for your job”.

In general, this cover letter is effective because it makes use of all the components of the COLFV model in a proper manner. In addition, the language that the author utilized to express his ideas was well chosen because it shows that he has knowledge about what is being discussed but at the same time it does not makes him look arrogant. The format of a cover letter was correctly followed and the types of organization were appropriately chosen.

But, how all these aspects of the COLFV model relate to the real world in the field of psychology? Psychology is a field in which writing plays an important role because it is the only way in which findings of a research can be communicated to other professionals in the field. The predominant type of writing that is used in Psychology is scientific writing (journal articles and book chapters) but in some cases there is also the necessity to make use of casual writing when lectures notes or e-mails are being written. What inspires a Psychologist to write is the desire to understand a question it can be very specific or general. So taking all these in consideration, we can see that the purpose of writing in Psychology is to answer the question that is from the interest or want to study.
Respectively to the educational life, writing is very important because it allows us to express what we think about certain issues. In addition, talking specifically about the field of Psychology writing is very important because it permits students to establish relationships with the faculty. Furthermore, it is a helpful tool when trying to apply for a job position, research assistant opening, scholarship, and to some programs like McNair Scholar in which they require applicants to write a short biography and a statement of purpose. But most importantly, at the time for applying to graduate school the role that writing plays is huge.

Knowing how to analyze a specific genre will be very helpful in my future educational and professional life. In the educational aspect, understanding how to analyze a genre through the use of the COLFV model will always be with me. This is, because analyzing a text through this process makes a lot easier to understand what the author of the article is claiming, who the intended audience is, and what is support given to the claim. In addition, when writing essays or research papers it is very helpful because it puts all the parts of the paper is perspective and at the end you finish with a well written article. Regarding to the professional field, Psychology is a field in which many journal articles are written in order to communicate the findings of the research that is being conducted to other psychologists in the same area. So, applying this to my ultimate educational goal which is to obtain a PhD in Clinical Psychology, understanding genre analysis will help me to write effective journal articles. Second, a lot of reading is required in psychology so knowing how to analyze a text will be very helpful because it will allow me to easy identify what the purpose, audience, and support of the claim is.

In conclusion, writing is a part of everyone daily life. Making use of tools like the COLFV analysis will make this process easier because it helps you to put things on perspective.
The COLFV model is an effective model for analyzing different categories of writing. By using this model we analyze the genres based on their content, organization, language, format, and the values they entail. Analyzing a piece of writing with this model requires us to apply our critical reading skills to break down the text in order to articulate how the author wrote the text. To do this, we will analyze the strategies the author used to achieve his or her goal or the purpose of that writing. Since writers of different disciplines often use different writing strategies in order to achieve their goals, it is imperative to learn how to analyze different types of writing. The purpose of this essay is to understand of genre analysis and indicating that how my understanding of genre analysis through the use of the COLFV model will assist me in my future educational and professional life. I will do this by analyzing Jesse Mason’s cover letter based on the COLFV model, and stating how using COLFV model will assist me in my future educational and professional life.

This cover letter is written by Jesse Mason, a college graduate with a B.S. in building construction. The purpose of this letter is to convince the intended audience, who is Ms. Wilson, Personnel Director of Anderson Construction Company, that his education and work experience qualifies him for the building construction graduate position they are seeking to fill in Washington DC.

The main feature of the letter’s content is the appropriate topic and relevant details it includes. Mason uses relevant details about his work and educational experience in construction building to convince Ms. Wilson that he has the necessary skills for the position. For example, he first talks about his experience as a general laborer who was able to move up to the assistant
construction manager position in which he assisted in managing “a two million dollars residential construction project.” He then emphasizes on his qualifications for this position by providing relevant details about his B.S. degree in construction and the reputable university, Virginia Tech, from which he had obtained his degree. In additions, he assumes that Ms. Wilson is familiar with the programs Virginia Tech offers. He provides relevant details about the date and time he is available for an interview as well.

Mason uses different methods of organization to present a logical argument of why he is an excellent candidate for this position. He begins his letter by explaining how he found out about the job posting. He provides the name of the newspaper in which the job ad was posted. He then uses the list type of organization by listing his work and educational experiences that are relevant to this position he is applying for. Using this type of organization makes his cover letter more appealing to Ms. Wilson because he indicates that he has the necessary credentials for the position.

The main feature of the language the Mason uses in his letter is the verb choice and the sentence structure. He tends to use the active voice with short and concise sentences. Cover letters like other business letters should include concise and short sentences because hiring managers have only a few minutes to read them. Mason presents this feature really well in his letter by making it short and concise. In addition, because the letter is written for an employer Mason uses a formal language in the letter and he avoids using figurative language such as metaphor and smile.

Mason uses a typical business letter format for his letter. He starts his letter by a formal greeting, “Dear Ms. Wilson:” that follows the body paragraphs. He uses single space between
each paragraph, and he ends his letter with the typical formal particular phrase in all business letters, “Sincerely.” Another feature of the format is the use of the special phrase “Thanks for your time and consideration” that shows the author has the appropriate manner in addition to the necessary credentials for the position.

Mason’s letter includes shared disciplinary values. He talks about his experience at various levels in construction industry, and how he was able to move to upper level position through hard work. This indicates that the targeted audience should be familiar with the growth opportunities in construction industry.

In conclusion, the COLFV model is a very effective model for analyzing different types of writing. Not even it lets us to apply our critical reading skills to break down a text, it allows us to articulate how we and other authors write. By using this model I will be able to generate different engineering reports that are targeted to the specific audience, and I will be able to determine the purpose of those reports more clearly. I will also be able to write effective cover letter to hunt my future job. Using the COLFV model has helped me learn how to organize my writings in a logical way, and it has enhanced my knowledge in critical thinking. I now have a better understanding of how to write to make my ideas and arguments more appealing to the audiences, and this will be greatly beneficial to me in my future educational and professional life.

S 64, Spanish, Male

International Experience
My name is XXXX and I, currently in the process of attaining a bachelor’s degree in business administration management specialized in Entrepreneurship. The post graduate program I am interested in is the International Dual Degree program at University of San Diego that will allow me to receive an IMBA (International Master’s of Business Administration) from USD along with a MS (Master’s of Science degree) in marketing from the university Tecnologico de Monterrey (TEC) in Mexico. Although I have always studied in the U.S., I believe an international MBA will better prepare me for the future career goals I have in mind.

Ever since I started grade school, I have been crossing the border every day to attend school. Since I have dual citizenship, my parents always believed that having an education in the U.S. would greatly benefit me as opposed to having an education in Mexico. But in this decision there was a hidden benefit that came from the everyday experience of crossing the border from one country to the next. Being a student living in Mexico for most of my life and completing my studies in the U.S. has greatly opened my panorama when dealing with international business. Imagine crossing the border from a third world country into the United States every day and seeing all the different business ventures in the U.S. that are not available across the border and vice versa. Seeing this every day, I believe gives me an advantage in identifying different business opportunities that could be very profitable. Therefore, having a master’s degree both in the U.S. and Mexico and being professionally prepared in both languages would greatly help me in doing business on both sides of the border. This I believe will help me in my short and long term career goals.

One of my career goals is to expand my family’s business, which is currently located in the city of Tijuana, Mexico, and I would like to expand it opening up different branches of it both in other cities in Mexico and also cities in the U.S. This is the main reason why I chose to
major in business management specialized in entrepreneurship, since my short term goal is to expand the family business by opening up new branches. During my studies for my BS in business management, I took various marketing classes and figured out that marketing was one of the most important aspects of opening up new business and decided I should further instruct myself in this aspect of business administration. Therefore from this international dual degree program, I expect to receive an excellent post graduate education along with an MBA from USD and also a MS in marketing from both USD and the Mexican university Tecnologico de Monterrey will greatly aid me in these future career goals.

I believe I am a suitable candidate for this program because I am already an international citizen with enough knowledge in both Mexican and American societies to conduct proper business yet, I believe I still lack the further education that USD and its exchange institution in neighboring Mexico will provide to me. I believe that I am a unique student since I experience a daily change in the country I am in and am able to identify these business opportunities that other without this experience wouldn’t have.

In conclusion, this post graduate program will allow me to experience an education in business in both countries and will give me a broader scope as to the different entrepreneurial opportunities I decide to pursue in the future.

S 74, French, Female

McGill University- MBA program Admission

Since the age of 12, I knew I wanted to earn a Master’s in Business Administration (MBA) at McGill University in Montreal, where my father earned his Masters and Doctorate degree. For years, he has shared with me his amazing experience as a student at McGill. He talked about the highly motivated professors and how they were made classes interesting to him.
As a senior at San Diego State University in Business Management, it is finally my turn to apply for the MBA program offered at McGill University. I am highly motivated of being part of the program, as I believe it will allow me to reach my goal of being a store manager for the fast growing company Lululemon athletica.

Prior to my experience at San Diego State University in business management, I have studied sciences for two years at a College in Quebec. Following my experience in Sciences, it became clear to me that the Business world was much more interesting to me as it involved personal relationships and asked for creativity. Effectively dealing with human beings is one of my main assets. For the past two summers, I have been working in a triathlon camp where I was in charge of the activities and logistics of twelve children for two weeks. I believe this position of leadership and the type of responsibility involved has provided me with adequate training that may help me get ready to be a true manager and consequently has been a beneficial experience.

Ranked as number 1 in Canada and as one of the world’s most recognized MBA programs, I am positive that McGill University would help me achieve my goal of becoming a Store manager for such an inspiring company as Lululemon. My current GPA level allows me to reach the high academic standards required by the program. I am also motivated to know that McGill has such prominent professors.

Throughout my entire life, I have led the life of an athlete. I have been part of four National teams and during my entire sport’s career; my education progress has never suffered. These accumulated years of combining education and training has allowed me to develop a strong sense of management. Even though I have had bad races along the way, I have never to this day thought about giving up. I am one hundred percent committed to what I set my mind on.
and I truly believe that this combination of characteristics will allow me to be a successful manager.

With the hopes of becoming a successful manager for Lululemon athletica, I am counting on the MBA program to provide me with the sufficient education and training that will allow me to make a difference within the fast-growing company. I am definitely looking forward to take charge of planning events that will promote the company’s name and mission. I am also looking forward to market our products. I am confident that earning my degree at McGill University will strongly benefit my career.

S 94, Somali, Female

COLVF ANALYSIS

The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate the student understands of the COLVF analysis. The COLVF analysis is very important way of dissecting any type of genre to better understand it. COLVF stands for content, organization, language, values, and format. In this paper I will talk more in-depth about each part of the COLVF stands for and examples from the letter.

Genre is a category of writing that is distinguished by its content, organization, language, format, and values to achieve the goal of reaching a specific audience for a specific purpose. There are many types of genres that exist and each is used for different purpose. For example in the letter text, this is type genre of letter request that demonstrated the writer’s need and purpose to enter into a graduate level program in Montessori Education within the Montessori Institute. Throughout this letter, the writer presents his past educational and work experience to illustrate that he or she is candidate for this position. The audience for this text is the administrators who
handle addition criteria for the Montessori Institute and the writer is trying to appeal to them so he can get into the school.

The content of a text reflects assumptions that the author makes about the audience’s knowledge of interest in the topic as well as the author’s disciplinary and insider knowledge. For example, in this letter, the author’s assumption is about his/her audience is that they will admit her to the graduate school because the writer showed examples of why she/he thinks she is a candidate for this position. The writer takes important mission point of the Montessori Institute and shows how she/he will fulfill these points if she was to become a teacher. In addition, the writer has some disciplinary knowledge about the field of teaching because she has involved teaching in the past and found his/her passion in teaching preschool. In this text, the writer is the only who one who gets to speak because she talks about her personal experiences and education and doesn’t bring in any outside sources.

The organization of a text reflects who the writer organizes his or her writing and the elements used to support the points the author makes. Each different genre uses specific type of organization that is suitable for its purpose. There are many types of organizations that can be used in particular text. In this text, the writer uses narration to describe how her work and educational experiences helped her to decide to go into teaching graduate school. The writer also uses definition in which she defines what the teaching method of Montessori Institute stands for and how it stands out of all the other teaching systems and captures her heart. Moreover, the writer uses compare and contrast form or organization by discussion how her earlier methods of teaching that she used are different from the Montessori Method of teaching and that she is more satisfied with the latter one. Furthermore, the writer gives in the text examples of the variety
ways that she will be able to teach the students such as with first-hand experiences, photos, objects etc.

The language analysis of a genre mainly reflects of mainly of the different language parts the writer uses such as tone, word choice, and the sentence structure. The writer of the text uses a formal tone that demonstrates his deep passion for the graduate school position. The writer also uses word choices that illustrate his experience and his or her optimists and enthusiasm about becoming graduate preschool teacher. He or she uses words that are sophisticated and are more specific to the teaching field. The writer mainly uses active voice such as “I” words to demonstrate his/her points. There are not any observable modals that are used in the text and the sentences structure the writer use consist of simple and complex structure.

The format of a genre mainly shows how the text is formatted and it is displayed. Components in the format section include headings, font, moves the writer makes, pictures, and charts. The text, there is one main title that is not underline or bolded and there is no subheadings throughout the text. In the text, the author makes a move when he/she first talks about in the first paragraph his experience and how this didn’t satisfied him/her and then talks about the Montessori teaching method and how he/she is able to related to this more and wants to be part of it. Also, in the text, there is only one type of font throughout and no underling, pictures, or charts.

The values of a genre consist of, shared understanding of language, life experience cultural values, and disciplinary values. Each writer of a particular genre will have some of these shared values with his chosen audience and this aids him/her to develop better connection with his audience and mostly to get his/her purpose across to them. In this text, the writer assumes
that his audience shares with him several values such as that his audience will value the writer’s point of view of the Montessori education and how he/she demonstrated that he does wants to represent and pass on the values of this particular teaching system. In addition, the writer illustrated how the Montessori teaching system is multi-cultural teaching system and that the writer has tremendous amount of cultural experience and plans to implement through his/her teaching in the future.

In conclusion, the COLFV analysis is very important technique of writing that can be used in many different fields of writing. Personally, I think the COLFV analysis technique will be helpful to me as I finish school and inter in the work field of nursing in the future. During my interview with a nurse who was already working in the nursing field, she emphasized to me how writing plays big role in her every day work. In the nursing field, writing mostly comes in the form of patient charting, developing nursing care plans and interventions, and communication with other members in the healthcare personnel about patient care. Therefore, I do strongly think this COLVF analysis will help me in the future as I write in my nursing field and when I have to do research about patient diagnosis and interventions.

S 117 Russian, Female

This semester in Linguistics 305W class we have come to think about writing from a completely new perspective as we have been paying close attention to genre. Genre is a category of writing distinguished by content, organization, language, format, and values (COLFV) in order to achieve the goal of reaching a specific audience for a specific purpose. In other words, any piece of writing is ultimately defined by its genre, transformed from a set of sentences into a work that can serve its goal and impact the audience in a certain way. Genre analysis has allowed
us to understand each piece of writing at a deeper level, as we have been bringing up every important aspect and defining how it helped the writer on the way to influencing his or her audience.

To illustrate the valuable experience that we have gained in this class, a resume by Ben Turner has been chosen for a genre analysis. In order to highlight all the main points, the genre analysis is going to study content, organization, language, format, and values more scrupulously.

Analyzing the content implies looking at the information that has been included, as well as the information that has been excluded. This entails understanding the author’s intended audience, the knowledge that the author implies his readers possess, as well as the author’s disciplinary and insider knowledge that make his writing credible. In our example, the audience is probably the HR department at Pinkerton Services, that Ben Turner (the author), implies would be interested in reading his resume because they have a vacant position at the company. The author makes use of his insider knowledge, because it is particularly important in showcasing his own level of competency. He does not refer to any other sources, since they are not going to be interesting to the audience. Ben Turner also assumes that his professional experience and the names of the companies that he has worked at are familiar to his audience, and therefore, prefers not include this information in his writing.

Analyzing organization is usually indicated by searching for specific techniques such definition, illustration, description, and evaluation that the author uses to organize his material effectively. In our case, Ben Turner chooses to classify all the information into several groups such as “Experience” and “Education” in order to ease the process of searching for specific things. He also illustrates his previous experience and lists his main responsibilities, which again
allows for a quicker navigation through his resume - an important quality for this genre, since the audience will have to go through a great number of resumes in a short period of time.

Understanding the language choices the author has made in his writing is the next important step in genre analysis. It involves analyzing the author’s tone, word choice, and sentence structure. Ben Turner’s resume has a very serious and informative tone. It does not come across as conversational, because the author is trying to make his resume as straightforward and concise as possible. For the very same reason, the author avoids using any figurative language or rhetoric questions, because they would be considered redundant in a resume. Instead, Ben Turner makes highly professional and extremely vocabulary choices, leaning towards words and word combinations like “superior performance”, “ability to communicate”, and “diverse environments” to make his writing clear and coherent. He does not use any pronouns, making a point of avoiding the “I” pronoun as it would otherwise appear very often. He prefers to skip it due to the fact that the resume is dedicated solely to his persona and therefore it is unnecessary to constantly repeat the obvious. Ben Turner does include professional jargon in his writing, since some of the words might not be understood by a general audience. Word combinations like “fast-track procurement”, “reducing pilferage”, and “supply turnaround” are used only because the audience will be able to understand them. Also, the author uses sentences that seem to lack the subject. They can be seen as the long list of sentence fragments that all pertain to the main subject of the writing: “Ben Turner” as it is stated at the top of the page. It is likely justified by the common rule applied in this genre that allows to make resumes much more simple and understandable by reducing the number of subjects in the text.

The next step in the genre analysis is analyzing the format. It includes looking at heading, subheadings, pictures, graphs, and other things that contribute to the overall appearance of the
writing. It also takes a look at the formal discourse features or “moves” within different sections of a longer text. In our example, Ben Turner makes a heavy use of different formatting features that help him make his resume even more readable. The author separates his resume into four moves: Objective, Summary of Qualifications, Experience, and Education. The Experience section, being the longest one, is separated into three subsections, each dedicated to a separate job experience. Then to make the moves more visible and to improve the visual component of his resume, he uses subheadings for the four moves, each of them followed by a list of bullet points. He also highlights the names of his previous professional positions in bold in order to make them stand out even more. Ben Turner does not include any pictures, tables or charts as they would probably not be able to provide any useful information.

Finally, analyzing the values is a crucial point in genre analysis as it takes a closer look at the discourse community, trying to understand the qualities that are inherent to the texts produced within this discourse community. This ultimately implies searching for any values that the discourse community shares, such as the language, beliefs, shared life experience. In our case, the discourse community shares a common language - English, including the professional jargon used in the industry, as well as a similar goal of making their company Pinkerton Services a successful enterprise. These shared values make the resume a valuable piece of writing for the discourse community.

Learning how to analyze genre in such detail has been a new experience for me. Prior to this course LING305W I would find myself concerning mostly with the content only, trying to prove my point, not paying attention to the fact that other aspects play a big role in making one’s writing attempt a successful one. In my field of studies, computer science, any writing that has to be done (such as technical writing) has to be especially clear and straightforward, serving its
purpose as well as it can. Therefore, I am convinced that in my future studies at San Diego State University, as well as my professional experience, I will be able to utilize genre analysis to make my writing more coherent, persuasive, and reasonable.

S 140, Japanese, Female

Genre is a type of writing, and each genre has a purpose. Therefore, genre analysis could be said to be a backward process of writing a text; you analyze the content, organization, language, format and values to determine the purpose of the writer. This process allows us to see what we need in our writings in certain genre. For example, at the beginning of each session we were given texts in certain genres, such as letters of appeal and commentary, from the instructor to analyze so that we could use our analysis in our own writings in the same genre. In this way, a genre analysis fits into the writing process. I will use the text by Lesley Seymour, whose genre is a resignation letter, as an example to demonstrate my understanding of analyzing the content, organization, language, format and values.

The content of this letter reflects the writer’s assumption about the reader, the production manager David McKenna. The writer Seymour assumes that the sole reader is McKenna, as clearly stated at the top of the letter “Dear Mr. McKenna.” Seymour’s disciplinary knowledge is not reflected on this text, but his insider knowledge is. For example, Seymour talks about the work environment at Norfolk International, Inc. in the second paragraph and also about his boss David McKenna saying he has been a “good boss and a good employer.” This insider knowledge is probably used in the letter to show that the writer is still part of the company even though he is resigning, which helps the writer to maintain a good relationship with his boss. The only participant in this letter is the writer.
In my opinion, this letter can be categorized into three types of organization: description, justification and narrative. Seymour’s work experience is described in the second paragraph as an opportunity that he had. He justifies his decision of the resignation, too: “This is a new job opportunity for me, a job opportunity that will not be available here for quite some time.” Finally, the second, third and fourth paragraphs are narrative because this shows how he progressed his ranks over the twelve years he worked at Norfolk International, Inc., why he decided to resign, and how he is going to help the process of resignation.

Talking about the language, the tone of this letter is subjective, personal and appreciative because of the word choice. The words that make the letter personal are: appreciate, enjoy, excellent, opportunity, pursue, hate, hope, would like to, sincere wish, just let me know, thankful, etc. There is the use of “I” and the sentences are written in active voice. The simple sentence structure reflects the purpose of the writing: the only concrete fact is that Seymour is resigning, and other things are mentioned in the letter just to show how he appreciates the past experience at the company.

This text has a typical letter format; it has date on the top, the receiver’s name and position, the company name and its address aligned to the left. The letter is written in paragraph style as normal letters, and there is no heading, subheadings, pictures, tables, charts nor lists. However, there are moves. The first move is “Dear Mr. McKenna,” which establishes the relationship with the reader. The second move is the first paragraph, which states the fact that he is resigning, and the third move, or the second paragraph, shows his appreciation for the work environment at the company he has worked for to maintain the relationship with the reader despite of the fact. The fourth move is the third paragraph, where the reason for the resignation is being explained, and the fifth move is the fourth paragraph, in which the writer shows that he is
willing to help the transition. The final move is the fifth paragraph, and the function this move is to close the letter with showing his bond with the company.

Finally, I will talk about values. There is shared understanding of language which is English, and we can see the shared life experience in the second paragraph too: the experience of working for the Norfolk International, Inc.

All in all, a genre analysis and using the COLFV model will definitely help me in the future because they are very helpful in guiding how to develop my writings. I have encountered so many occasions where I had to write something but do not know how, but I learned to analyze a text before writing something in the same genre so that I am confident in what and how I am writing.