Conceptualising International Postgraduate Students' Authorial Voice in Academic Writing: A Case Study in Australian Higher Education

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Keywords

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Abstract

This research conceptualises authorial voice in academic writing of international postgraduate students as multilingual-multicultural writers in Australia. Of interest was the students' cultural and rhetorical negotiation and adaptation to postgraduate education requirements in their written assignments in which voice is required. Specifically, the study investigates (i) the rhetorical conventions of academic writing at postgraduate level in Australia, (ii) how international postgraduate students engage in cultural and contextual negotiation of their voice in postgraduate writing, (iii) how the lecturer, as the reader, recognises the students' voice and evaluates the quality of that voice as a key component of addressing the assessment task, and (iv) how students reflect on their experiences in becoming writers in a new academic context. The importance of voice lies in its rhetorical power to make arguments, to position writers in relation to the field, and to manage appropriate disciplinary genres – all of which are features of postgraduate writing. Despite the cruciality of authorial voice to mark writers' presence in texts, there has not been a definitive conceptualisation of voice regarding its meaning, articulation, and evaluation. Existing research has explored authorial voice drawing on various standpoints, blurring the meaning of this concept and its manifestation in writing. Therefore, this study has aimed to conceptualise voice in academic writing from an amalgamation of different dimensions to provide a comprehensive understanding of the concept.

In this study, voice is conceptualised using an innovative synthesis of Rhetorical Theory of Persuasion, also known as Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion (Braet, 1992; Herrick, 2016), Inter-cultural Rhetoric theory (Connor, 2008) and the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). These theories and model together provide a comprehensive view of voice in texts in relation to contexts, the writing process, the actors involved, and the language used to demonstrate voice in texts. These features are necessary to understand how voice is constructed, presented, and recognised in texts, and the multiple layers of influences on the construction and evaluation of voice in academic writing. This qualitative case study consists of two phases as a response to the influences of the global Covid-19 pandemic. Phase One involves two international students in a course of the Master of Educational Principles program and their lecturer. In this phase, the data generation includes the collection and analysis of the course materials, the students' assignments and the lecturer's feedback, as well as interviews with the participants about texts (Lillis, 2008). The second phase of the study involves a focus group discussion with six international postgraduate students who are in the final year in the Master of Educational Principles program. The discussion focuses on the students' writing experiences to generate the characteristics of academic writing at postgraduate level in Australia, their articulation of voice in texts, and their rhetorical negotiation in different writing contexts.

The contributions of the study are seen as new theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical understandings of advanced second language writing as well as of the processes of learning how to use and articulate writer voice. Theoretically, the study conceptualises authorial voice in writing in relation to language performance, sociocultural-historical-political influences, mediation, rhetorical negotiation, and adaptation. Particularly, voice is explored in close relation to the rhetorical conventions of immediate writing contexts. The study also clarifies the relation between texts and contexts and the act of rhetorical negotiation and adaptation, which despite having been long claimed in the literature, has been inadequately investigated. In addition, the study sheds light on the trajectories of international postgraduate students in becoming successful and recognised academic writers in Australia and on their developed multicompetences in academic writing. Methodologically, the study postulates writing as a process of acquiring and developing culturally-contextualised social practices, and involves an exploration of voice from a triangulation of text analysis and text-based interviews, with consideration of contexts and writing processes as well as of the actors that are involved in both producing and assessing writing. The study also modifies the self-positioning model with an addition of textual organisation to demonstrate voice and a reconsideration of the meanings underpinning the linguistic features of voice as presented in this model. In addition, the study develops a multidimensional framework for researching voice in writing. Pedagogically, the study suggests pedagogical approaches for explicit teaching and modelling of rhetorical conventions and expectations in different writing contexts to students through the use of different mediation tools; and argues the need for institutional support for the success of international postgraduate students in Australia, as well as for the recognition of the pedagogical power of understanding academic writing as a performance in a culturally-situated context, and of the fact that international students are already multilingual-multicultural writers.

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List of Abbreviations

APA	American Psychological Association
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EP	English Pathway
FEP	Faculty of Educational Principles
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
L1	First language
L2	Second or additional language
MEP	Master of Educational Principles
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
TCU	The Coastal University
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TOEFL iBT	Test of English as a Foreign Language Internet-based Test

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Chapter One. Starting the Research Journey

My interest in exploring voice in academic writing had started long before undertaking this doctoral research project. Thus, it is relevant to recall the foundation of such personal interest and its development over time following my learning and teaching experiences and my engagement with relevant literature of the field. Moreover, it is essential to clarify why this research topic is still relevant and worthwhile. In this first chapter of the thesis, I therefore present an overview of the study, including a foreword on my personal motivation for the study. The foreword is followed by a discussion of the context of Australian higher education as a multicultural educational environment. Drawing from this context, I will present the challenges that international students encounter in completing their written assignments during their academic studies, most of which require a positioning and voice in relation to the topic at hand. Acknowledging the concerns raised in other research studies on writer voice, I will identify ongoing problems and explain how I address these concerns in my research design. I will conclude the chapter with recognition of the theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical contributions my study can make to the field of international student writing.

FOREWORD

The motivation to undertake this research project is attributed to my experience during my Master of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program in Australia from 2011 to 2013. On many occasions during that period, I was told by my course lecturers and supervisors to use the first-person pronoun “I” in my assignments and thesis, which surprised me because in Vietnam, I had been told by my teachers not to do so. With much confusion and hesitation, I asked my lecturers why I should use “I” in academic writing. Normally, I would not question the suggestions of my supervisors. In the educational tradition of Vietnam, following what teachers advise is encouraged, so questioning the logic of my supervisors’ ideas had never been part of my student experience.

However, the suggestion of using first person pronoun caught my attention and made me curious enough to request a clarification. My question was not intended as confrontation, rather curiosity and the need to seek confirmation. They did not give an answer immediately but kept referring to points in my writing, such as claims about a research gap or a critique of the literature. They asked who was making the claim and then proceeded with a convincing argument that I was making the claim and should therefore claim authority for the statements. Despite being convinced by their arguments, I nonetheless continued to hesitate because my educational experience in Vietnam had been so influential that I did not confidently use the first person pronoun to represent myself. Instead, “the writer” or “the researcher” was considered more pertinent to avoid direct criticism. At a minimum, the collective “We” might be a better choice so that I would be less exposed and vulnerable because of the assumption of other voices in the collective “We”. I was concerned what the consequences would be if my readers rejected the use of personal pronouns in academic writing. However, my lecturers were very clear in their words of, “Do not be afraid!”.

After careful thinking and wrestling within myself, I became convinced to use the first person pronoun in my work to take ownership of what I had written, and to be confident in my position in arguments and discussions. Later, when I reread my work where “I” was used, I could hear my voice and feel the confidence in myself as a writer who was communicating with the readers. I also found some research articles related to my research topic and noticed the existence of “I” for single-authored papers and “We” for co-authored ones. It was noted that using “We” in these written works did not mean the avoidance of arguments and positions but an acknowledgement of co-authorship. Thereafter, I was more comfortable with the use of “I” and other self-mentions (Hyland, 2001, 2005; Tang & John, 1999). I eventually realised the point of becoming and being confident with and responsible for my work because of using “I”, which has become habituated in my work. In other words, the risk and fear of using “I” in academic writing has transformed into a preference.

The literature that I had reviewed offered me more insights into this issue of self-representation in academic discourse although there is an extensive list of concepts that seem to be conflated and used interchangeably. These include, for example, *stance, position, voice, self-presentation* among many others (Bowden, 1995; Chang, 2016; Elbow, 2007; Hyland, 2002, 2005; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Jiang, 2015; Park, 2013; Scollon, 1991; Wingate, 2012; Zhao & Llosa, 2008). Founded in my own experiences of moving toward being confident to use the personal pronoun, I became interested in exploring the meanings of these concepts and how they might be applied in academic discourse. As such, the goal of completing this research project has been to inform educators and writers on the practice of self-expression in different academic contexts and to address the issue for educators and writers in Australian and overseas universities. Writers will be able to properly express their positions as expected by the readers in their discourse community and to increase the legitimacy of their work within that community.

My doctoral study, which I present in this thesis, involves an investigation into a particularly essential but contested concept in academic writing - the umbrella term of *voice*, that has been defined in myriad and at times contradictory ways. The research I report here has been an investigation of the propositions and identities reflected in academic writing, especially in texts written by international student writers who encounter the need to represent themselves authorially in their Australian postgraduate studies.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In this section, I provide details of Australia as a suitable destination for international students, transforming it into a multicultural education environment. This section also introduces one of the challenges that these students encounter in terms of producing good academic writing for assessment in which voice is required.

Australia as a multicultural education environment

One of the first recorded instances of study abroad was when intellectual minds gathered at the well-known place of knowledge, Athens, back in 500 – 300 BC (Fry, 1984). Since then, studying abroad has continued to increase in worldwide popularity to this present day. Although students are moving around the world seeking the benefits that study abroad offers, Fry (1984), working at the onset of mass globalised international education, argued that the greater tendency directionally was from developing to developed countries. This phenomenon has been evident to this date. To illustrate, the top five nations that host the largest number of international students all belong to the developed world; these are USA, UK, Australia, France, and Germany, respectively. They are popular because they are understood to provide students with opportunities for political, cultural, linguistic, disciplinary, and career-related development (OECD, 2014). Higher education in these countries has become a trade and continues to be marketed (Kettle, 2017; Kettle & Luke, 2013). For example, countries such as the US, Australia, and New Zealand realise the remarkable contributions of international students to economic development and cultural diversity (Kettle, 2017). Therefore, these host countries have been looking for effective approaches to recruit more international students, which turns education into a significant revenue source (Ferguson & Sherrell, 2019; Kettle, 2017; Marginson, 2015).

Being recognised as the third most attractive destination for international students, Australia continues to increase the number of these students at its higher education institutions (Department of Education and Training, 2018; OECD, 2014). Notably, the number of international students is predicted to surpass that of domestic students in some postgraduate majors such as Business (Babones, 2019). It is recognised in Australian Government economic data that international students contribute to the economy and the diversity of the nation. The ongoing enrolment of international students in Australian higher education courses means that the Government has to be mindful of the need to ensure that students are supported pastorally and academically during their enrolment in courses in Australia (Babones, 2019; Department of Social Services, 2018).

In policy at least, the Australian government celebrates the country's multicultural environment and cultural diversity (Department of Social Services, 2018). Multiculturalism in Australia is used as a means of promising a so-called open door for prospective international students in terms of academic, professional, and personal prospects in relation to studying in Australia (Department of Social Services, 2018). In the document issued by the Department of Social Services (2018, p. 7), statements point to Australia being a "united, strong, successful" environment where building a future society is to advance the respect and commitment to the shared values of the society. In the case of education, respect and equity given to learners of diverse language and cultural backgrounds are promoted as being crucial to the future of Australia (Department of Social Services, 2018).

International students in Australia

Entering higher education is accompanied by hopes and thoughts of future prospects, notably in work and professional contexts. However, associated with these potential prospects are the higher intellectual demands of developing an understanding of discipline-based characteristics that the students at this educational level need to get acquainted with. For international students enrolling in a new cultural environment, the academic journey may involve significant challenges (Kettle & Luke, 2013). In what follows, I review research on the challenging circumstances of international students in Australia, especially in terms of how they adapt to the new academic environment and its unfamiliar assessment and writing demands.

International students in English-speaking countries often face language challenges (Fotovatian, 2010; Hamid et al., 2019; Hickling-Hudson, 2003; Yanagi & Baker, 2015). Hence, an adequate English proficiency is required for migrants "from one national border to another regardless of the intended length and purpose of the border-crossing" to enter and survive in the country (Hamid et al., 2019, p. 226). In other words, they have to prove their "linguistic health" and "linguistic immunity" to the gatekeepers (Hamid et al., 2019, p. 226). While much research has pointed out the language-related challenges, Phan (2001) highlights another problem that even competent English language users face, which is dealing with the rhetorical characteristics of writing in a different context. In her study of Vietnamese postgraduate students in Australia, Phan (2001) focused on the academic writing of Vietnamese and Chinese international students in Australia at postgraduate level. She found that although they were proficient in English through their previous studies and work, what challenged them were the rhetorical conventions that were expected in their disciplinary studies such as referencing practices and providing effective argumentation; this was despite having successfully completed the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) requirements for entry into their university courses. Knowing the rhetorical conventions for certain genres and discipline-specific texts is crucial; as literacy scholars, Lea and Street (1998, 2006) note that familiarity with disciplinary genres with their distinctive characteristics and demands is never easy for students who are emerging writers in the field and are at the onset of immersing themselves in their discourse communities.

Language and rhetoric need to be considered in relation to context because they are influenced by sociocultural dimensions of everyday life; and acquiring the use of language and rhetorical conventions that are expected in a disciplinary community is not easy. Lea and Street (1998, 2006) have argued against the Study Skills model of support, in which students are taught static writing skills and language features that are thought of as being unproblematically transferable to different contexts. The concept of academic literacy has indeed moved beyond understandings of literacy as just a set of skills to advocating understandings of literacy as being informed by sociocultural values that govern what is perceived to be acceptable in a discourse community such as what can be discussed, what is accepted as knowledge or evidence, how knowledge should be presented, and to whom the knowledge can be presented (Kaplan, 1995). These values are formed as an outcome of the cultural negotiation for convergence in a community. The issue for international students is the need to negotiate between their home culture, the new local culture, and other contextual factors involved in acculturation to the new academic culture (Abasi & Akbari, 2014; Sidiropoulos et al., 2013). Language can at times create a hierarchy within which so-called *non-native* speakers of English might be marginalised and seen as having less power (Hamid, 2014; Strauss, 2011, 2017).

In this study, I acknowledge the contestability of the terms *native* and *non-native* speakers, which may be associated with the power that English may accord to its speakers (Holliday, 2015). In the well-known Concentric Circle model, Kachru (1985) labels Inner-Circle to emphasise the countries with English as the first language while the Outer and Expanding Circles refer to nations with English as a second and foreign language respectively. However, classifying a person as a native or non-native speaker of English is not easy and cannot be simply based on the country of origin. In her study, Kettle (2007) documented her realisation that one participant from Singapore spoke English as the first language both at home and at school, which challenges the association between countries of origin and the status of the English language. Recognising the contestability given to the terminology of *native* and *non-native* speakers, I follow Kettle (2007) who uses 'ESL users' or 'L2 users' to indicate "the secondary status of English" (p. 8).

Although the issues of language and discourse competence in the case of international students will be noted and presented in more detail in Chapter Two, the association between international students who do not have English as the first language and unsuccessful completion of courses in English-speaking countries has been rejected (Chalmers & Volet, 1997; Kettle, 2005; Kettle & Ryan, 2018). In fact, what should be further explored is how the students can recognise the distinctive academic and cultural characteristics in the new context and undertake the processes of adaptation and acculturation. In Australian higher education and also other higher educational contexts worldwide, students' academic achievements are commonly assessed through their written assessments (Kaplan, 1995; Kettle, 2017; Kettle & Ryan, 2018; Lea & Street, 1998; Paltridge, 2004; Phan, 2001; Tran, 2013; Wingate, 2012; Zhao & Llosa, 2008). Hence, it is useful to recognise what academic writing in higher education requires and how students are recognising these demands and meeting them.

Academic writing and voice

Written assignments remain popular in education as a means of students constructing and demonstrating knowledge for assessment purposes (Flowerdew & Wang, 2015; Kettle, 2017; Kettle & Ryan, 2018; Paltridge, 2004; Zhao & Llosa, 2008). It has also been found that successful student writers should be aware of relevant conventions to meet "rhetorical, organisational, ideational and lexicogrammatical demands of written assessment tasks" (Kettle & Ryan, 2018, p. 177). Due to the importance and wide utilisation of academic writing as the primary form of assessment in education, researchers are concerned about what makes successful writing. What constitutes successful academic writing has been realised and variously labelled by researchers as *authorial stance, authorial presence, identity, authorial voice, critical positioning, evaluation,* and *reasonin*g, all of which are discussed with reference to *voice* (Bowden, 1995; Elbow, 2007; Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003; Hyland, 2002, 2005; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Matsuda, 2001; Morton & Storch, 2019). To illustrate, Bowden (1995) affirms that voice "remains extraordinarily popular among American composition teachers and has a strong presence in contemporary classrooms and discussions of writing" (p. 173). Elbow (2007) and Matalene (1985) regard voice as the power of the writer and emphasise the expected individuality and self-expression for good writing, especially in Western culture. However, the terms *Western* and its counterpart *Asian* or *Eastern* have also been contested as they form a monolithic construct or a generalisation of culture (Kubota, 1997; Matsuda, 2001; Tran, 2013).

Voice is an important concept when investigating writing in higher education contexts. It is continuously discussed in relation to writing pedagogy, but there has not been a definitive conceptualisation of voice due to the wide range of terms associated and assimilated within it, as previously mentioned. This void in current literature consequently requires further attention for implications for teaching and assessment as well as for research. Some researchers describe voice using a linguistic lens based on lexical features (Hewings & Coffin, 2007; Hyland, 2002, 2005, 2008b; Tang & John, 1999) and syntactic features (Charles, 2006; Hewings & Coffin, 2007; Jiang, 2015). Voice is unquestionably performed through language, but linking certain linguistic items with the concept of voice is insufficient for interpreting what the writer actually means (Stapleton, 2002). Sperling and Appleman (2011) therefore state that "voice is language performance – always social, mediated by experience, and culturally embedded" (p. 71), thus emphasising both the language and the writer’s socio-culturally constructed identity. If language is understood to be the performer of voice, the writer’s socio-culturally constructed identity and positioning should be seen as the foundation and driver of that voice (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Matsuda, 2001; Park, 2013; Shen, 1989; Sperling & Appleman, 2011).

In addition to the confusing conceptualisations of voice itself, the writer’s process of constructing it is also complicated and challenging, both for students and for even more experienced researchers. For students, these challenges are claimed to be attributed to the cultural backgrounds that shape their ways of thinking and writing, which may not align with the expectations of how writing should be in a different context. In addition, researchers do not always appropriately investigate how and why voice is formed in particular ways during the process of writing, under innumerable layers of influences, due to their focus on writing as product. Phan (2001) researched the experience of Vietnamese postgraduate students in Australia and found that the students were shocked by numerous difficulties in writing which were related to voice and assertiveness. On commencement of their studies, the students experienced various contradictions and conflicts between their *existing* self and their *expected* self as a writer (Phan, 2001). A point made from comparative cultural studies is that students coming from cultures in which politeness, hierarchical relationships, and homogeneity are valued are afraid of being personal or critical as they see this as constituting impoliteness and running the risk of being criticised (Phan, 2001; Wearring et al., 2015). Hence, understanding the writing process and students’ perspectives on writing is necessary in order to understand such challenges.

When discussing voice in writing, researchers are concerned not only about how voice is constructed but also how voice is presented in accordance with the rhetorical conventions of a language and of the relevant disciplinary community. Successful academic writing, as explained by Kettle and Ryan (2018), involves rhetorical, metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective strategies; how writers write affects the meaning of the messages and the relationship with the readers (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010; Connor, 2002; Kaplan, 1966; Matalene, 1985). Consequently, writers need to consider how to have a voice that represents themselves and how to align that voice with the relevant writing conventions expected by readers (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010; Hyland, 2002, 2005; Ivanič, 1998; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Writing with voice is a rhetorical challenge; one in which writers need to be aware of the rhetorical characteristics required in a specific discourse community; and the conventions required in a discourse community are linked to cultural practices which are reproduced and reinforced in schooling and undergraduate education. For postgraduate writers studying in a new cultural and linguistic context, who are in effect novices in a disciplinary community, writing for assessment is complex and potentially challenging without specific modelling and support (Kettle, 2007, 2017; Kettle & Ryan, 2018; Phan, 2001).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite much research on the issue of voice in academic writing, there are some limitations associated with the current literature in regard to inadequate attention to some important issues. Firstly, in relation to conceptualisation, Tardy (2016, p. 350) argues that voice is "a somewhat slippery and often ill-defined concept". As previously mentioned, researchers have been employing too many concepts that are seen as interchangeable. This use of such a broad range of terms leads to the lack of a definitive conceptualisation of voice in the literature.

Another problem relating to research on writers' voice is the lack of investigation of how voice is formed in a multilingual-multicultural context, which complicates the process of cultural negotiation of voice in academic writing (Hyland, 2002a, 2002c; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Morton & Storch, 2019; Snaza & Lensmire, 2006). In particular, little attention has been paid to contexts comprising students of diverse socio-political, ethnolinguistic backgrounds to better understand how their prior educational and professional experiences, including linguistic and textual traditions, might influence the way they write in new academic contexts with different rhetorical expectations.

In particular, there is limited research on voice in academic writing which refers to *both* students' (as writers) and lecturers' (as readers) perspectives on voice and its quality (Morton & Storch, 2019; Stapleton, 2002). Writers and readers each have their own cultural beliefs, so there are possible variations in writing and interpreting writing (Connor, 2008; Hamid, 2007; Morton & Storch, 2019). Further research is therefore needed to investigate both how international postgraduate students form and project voice in their written assignments and how that voice is evaluated by their lecturers as the primary readers of their writing.

RESEARCH AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research has investigated how international students in Australia culturally and rhetorically adapt to postgraduate education requirements in their written assignments in which a strong sense of voice is required. Inspired and informed by Rhetorical theories such as Intercultural Rhetoric (Connor, 2008) and Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion (Braet, 1992; Herrick, 2016) that accord significance to the role of context and culture in writing and subsequently in constructing and evaluating voice, the study investigates:

(i) rhetorical conventions of academic writing at postgraduate level in Australia
(ii) how international students engage in cultural and contextual negotiation of their voice in postgraduate writing
(iii) how the lecturer as reader recognises the students' voice and decides on the quality of that voice as a key component of evaluation of the assignments and of how the students have addressed the assessment tasks, and
(iv) how students reflect on their experiences in becoming writers in a new academic context.

I raise the overarching question: "How is voice in academic writing constructed, performed, evaluated, and reconceptualised by international postgraduate students in Australian higher education?" which can be elaborated as the following sub-questions:

1. What are the rhetorical conventions of academic writing in a postgraduate course in Australia?
2. How do the international postgraduate students present their voice in academic writing at the initial and subsequent stages in the course?
    - What guides or influences the international postgraduate students' presentation of voice?
    - How does the lecturer evaluate the international postgraduate students' voice?
3. What are international postgraduate students' perspectives on the rhetoric of postgraduate academic written discourse in Australia?

RESEARCH DESIGN

As indicated above, this study investigates international postgraduate students' understanding and performance of voice in written assignments and how that voice is understood and evaluated by the reader. This research is a case study, selected for “an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness” of voice in postgraduate writing “in a ‘real life’ context” (Simons, 2009, p. 21). The study consists of two phases. The first phase focuses on one postgraduate course in an Australian university in order to explore the rhetorical conventions of academic writing, the students’ written performance of voice, and the lecturer’s evaluation of their writing and voice. The second phase involves analysis of a focus group discussion with international postgraduate students about the characteristics of postgraduate academic writing, their articulation of voice, and their writing experiences in different writing contexts. This second phase was required as a response to dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic, which I explain further in Chapter Four.

In the first phase, I involved two international postgraduate students enrolled in a course of a postgraduate program at an Australian university, and also the lecturer in the course. I collected student writing samples, including drafts and the graded final versions, along with relevant course documents, and I conducted interviews with the students and lecturer. Given the importance of considering texts in contexts (Connor, 2008), the exploration of the course materials offered an understanding of the rhetorical conventions – or ideologies – associated with the course and with which the students needed to comply. Examining the written assignments of these international students who were writing in an additional language in a new cultural and contextual situation afforded insights to the complexity of how voice is formed and demonstrated, with reference to the experience and process of acculturation. Furthermore, conducting an interview with the lecturer and considering the lecturer’s feedback provided insights to their role as gatekeeping reader to the students’ performances of academic writing and developing authorial voice. To analyse the written assignments, I employed the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) to identify the types of voice and the linguistic items that students used to demonstrate their voice; analysis of how the quality of voice was evaluated by the lecturer was guided by the Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion (Braet, 1992; Herrick, 2016) and also by the relevant course materials. Interviews were conducted to obtain the participants’ perspectives on the formation, performance, and assessment of voice (Lillis, 2008).

The second phase of the study involved a focus group discussion with six international postgraduate students who were in the final year of their postgraduate programs, including the two students who had participated in Phase One. The focus group discussion was designed to bring the concepts developed and identified in Phase One into a broader and richer focus, to elaborate on the information identified in Phase One (Hennink, 2014; Morgan, 1997; Wilkinson, 1998). The discussion focused on the students' perspectives on academic writing at postgraduate level in Australia, their development and articulation of authorial voice, and their experience of rhetorical negotiation and adaptation in different writing contexts.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of my research can be seen to be related to theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical dimensions. Given the range of understandings by researchers, educators, and learners about what voice 'means' and what it entails, this current study sets out to provide a more definitive conceptualisation and clarification of voice in academic writing based on the existing literature and my own research findings. Methodologically, a framework is provided that can contribute to future research attention to the issue of voice in academic writing by describing the process of constructing voice, the linguistic features that represent voice, and the criteria used to assess it. Pedagogically, the study will help to identify factors involved in understanding, performing, and recognising voice - especially in the case of multicultural and multilingual students, so that appropriate pedagogical support can be provided for postgraduate students for their successful performance of academic writing and voice. Particularly, reference made between students' understanding and performance of voice and lecturer's interpretation and evaluation of that voice will help to provide a wider view of how students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds shape their understanding and performance of voice as well as how the lecturer's background and expectations influence their assessment of the written assignments. Such understanding and insight will contribute to pedagogy in relation to both the teaching and evaluation of voice. The research findings from this study in relation to theory, methodology, and pedagogy can be further applied to other educational contexts, as the issue of voice in postgraduate writing is not only relevant to Australian higher education, nor only to those students categorised as international students.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis consists of nine chapters. Chapter One introduces the study, its context, the identified gaps in current literature, the design, including the research questions, and the potential contributions of the study to the field. Chapter Two reviews current literature on academic writing and voice, as perceived through different theoretical lenses; it also identifies gaps in current literature which will benefit from further investigation. Chapter Three presents the conceptual framework guided by Intercultural Rhetoric theory (Connor, 2008), the Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion (Braet, 1992; Herrick, 2016) for evaluating writing and voice, and the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) for realising voice. Chapter Four outlines the research design and discusses the benefits of the selected research methods. Chapter Five examines the rhetorical conventions of postgraduate academic writing in a course at an Australian university. Chapter Six analyses and reports on the students' performances in their first assignment at the initial writing stage in the course, and also on the lecturer's evaluation of their performances in relation to the rhetorical conventions identified in Chapter Five. Chapter Seven explores the students' reconstruction and enactment of their experience and the understanding of the rhetorical conventions of postgraduate academic writing required in the course, and reports on their rhetorical negotiation for successful academic writing in their second assignment at the subsequent writing stage. Chapter Eight reports on the focus group discussion, foregrounding the students' perspectives on the characteristics of postgraduate academic writing in the Australian education context, their articulation of authorial voice, and their rhetorical negotiation of writing requirements in different contexts. The final chapter, Chapter Nine, presents an overall discussion of the findings, of the contributions of the study, and of directions for future research; I also make final remarks on what I perceive as the value of this study.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an overview of this thesis, starting with my personal motivation to conduct this study. This is followed by a description of Australia as a multicultural education environment for international students, and of the essence and the challenges associated with voice in academic writing that international students usually encounter. The problem in terms of how insufficiently voice has been researched in current literature has been identified, and how this study will address this problem has been explained. Potential theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical contributions of this study have also been outlined. In the following chapter, I provide a more in-depth review of academic writing and the essential component of voice, focusing on international students in English-speaking universities.

Chapter Two. The Field of Academic Writing

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I discuss writing as a social practice and the essential component of voice in academic writing. There have been various schools of thought about the complexity of writing, and the section that follows revisits the concept of writing in terms of its politics and purposes. The debates around how writing might be understood as a product or as a process will also be foregrounded in this section. I then narrow the focus onto academic writing in higher education, outlining the need for and the common requirements of academic writing, particularly at postgraduate level. This project argues for the importance of understanding the concept of voice; I therefore explore how it has been conceptualised from different theoretical perspectives. I then identify gaps in the current literature on voice in academic writing that provided the impetus for this current study to investigate the subject of voice more comprehensively.

THE FOUR-P PERSPECTIVE OF WRITING: POLITICS, PURPOSE, PRODUCT, AND PROCESS

Writing is identified as a prestigious means of communication in various settings that are commonly "associated with learning, religion, government, and trade" (Halliday, 1985, p. 4). Clark and Ivanič (1997) further elaborate the essence of writing, stating that written communication is usually undertaken with careful planning in terms of selecting language and presentation style, which contributes to effective and reliable communication. Writing serves not only the purpose of communication through the making of meaning via written discourse, it is also used to disseminate writers' beliefs and sociocultural values (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Fairclough, 2001; Park, 2013).

Investigation into the practice of writing has been organised around the four-P perspective, consisting of *politics*, *purpose*, *product,* and *process* (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Crawford et al., 2013; Fairclough, 1989, 2001; Ivanič, 2004). Each of these elements will be explored to provide insight to the complexity of writing. Among the four Ps, *politics* stands out because "the political issues are integral to all other aspects of writing and learning to write" for "writing as a political act: the way in which power relations in society affect people's opportunities for writing and feelings about writing" (Clark & Ivanič, 1997, p. 7).

The political characteristics of writing shape the practice of writing. For that reason, the following section begins with a discussion of how writing is socio-politically governed and shaped, before moving to discuss the purposes and perspectives associated with writing as both a product and a process.

The politics of writing

The first of the four-P perspective of writing involves *politics*. Politics is typically discussed in association with power, including “the power to make decisions, to control resources, to control other people’s behaviour and often to control their values” (Jones & Wareing, 1999, p. 29). Political power circulates and operates in all aspects of life. It can be exercised in simple ways in daily scenarios such as deciding whether to buy a product, which contributes to the productivity of a brand, or in more complex and important decisions such as in policy making which can affect how a social system operates.

Power is shaped and represented via ideologies or accepted social and cultural norms, through which social behaviours are developed, informed by the beliefs of dominant groups in society (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Fairclough, 1989). Social diversity, where different social groups co-exist, also causes power dominance when beliefs of a particular group become acknowledged and turn into social norms. As power and ideologies must be exercised to keep the social system in order and for dominant groups to maintain their power, there is a need to find ways to disseminate power, ideologies, and norms to the community.

Power and ideologies are constituted, enacted and communicated through language, for example “through speeches, debates, through the rules of who may speak and how debates are to be conducted” (Wareing, 1999, p. 10). As Fairclough argues, “[i]deologies are closely linked to language, because using language is the commonest form of social behaviour, and the form of social behaviour where we rely most on 'common-sense' assumptions” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 2). Language is closely related, therefore, to power; and its written form is the vehicle that supports the distribution and reflection of dominant social values (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Hyland, 2002c; Matsuda, 2001; Park, 2013).

Writing becomes legitimated as the vehicle for the communication and distribution of power because it demonstrates both the influences *of* writers and influences *on* writers (Clark & Ivanič, 1997); and the close relationship between power and ideologies means that writing cannot be detached from its social context. Context – situational, social, or cultural –

influences *what* is written and *how* it is written: “the social context of any specific act of writing constructs both the way in which the writing is carried out and the written language of the text itself” (Clark & Ivanič, 1997, p. 17). Questions of who can write, what they can write, how they should write, to whom they are writing, are all considerations when deciding if a written text is fulfilling its communicative purposes and is acceptable (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Kaplan, 1995, 2000). Fairclough’s (1989) concept of writing as social practice in a social context challenges any simplistic view of writing as a straightforward semiotic product. Complex influences, effects, and socio-political conditions are involved both in the act and process of writing and the interpreting of writing. The relation referred to above that exists between language, power, ideology, and writing as a tool involved in the enactment of this relationship - distributing power and ideologies to individuals and communities - is a governing factor in all cases of writing, affecting how it is practiced and how written meaning is made (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Fairclough, 1989, 2001; Wareing, 1999). How people use language in written discourse is therefore always examined in relation to social context.

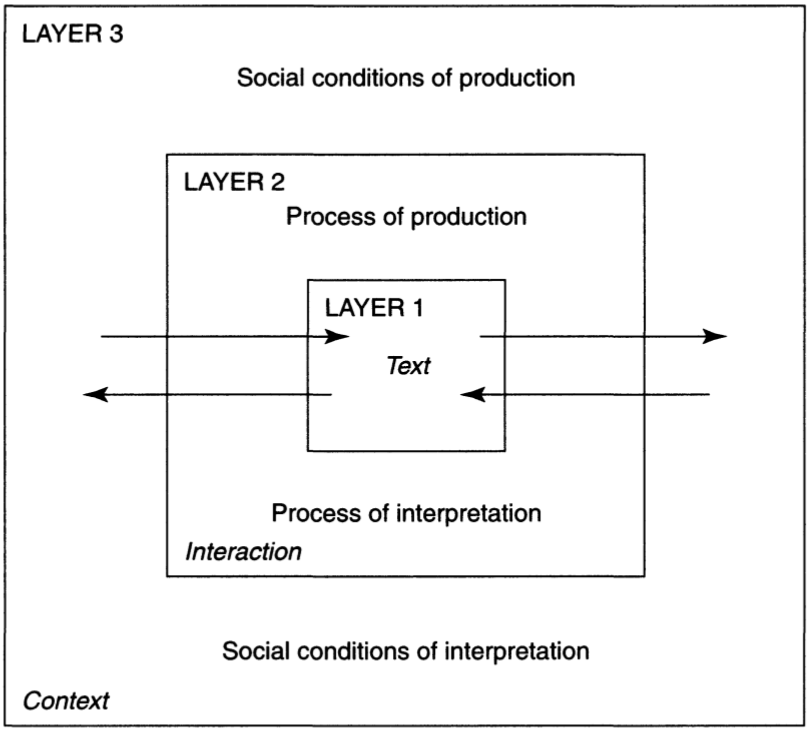

LAYER 3
Social conditions of production
LAYER 2
Process of production
LAYER 1
Text
Process of interpretation
Interaction
Social conditions of interpretation
Context

Figure 2.1. Discourse as text, interaction and context (Clark & Ivanič, 1997, p. 11), adapted from Fairclough (1989).

Writing as a means of communication within a community is therefore a primary source of ideological dissemination and practice. In every context - even that of a small community such as a classroom - the act of writing is heavily influenced and framed by specific expectations about how writing should be taught, practiced, and interpreted by readers. In the classroom context, specific power relations are exercised through the fact that the student-writers need to write as required in the writing tasks assigned by the course instructors who are exercising their "personal power" (Crawford et al., 2013; Hyland, 2013; Wareing, 1999). Taking a broader view, political power which comes from learning how to write appropriately and effectively allows writers to influence others and even the larger social system. This is clearly the case, for example, for effective writers who are politicians, journalists, academics, or lawyers. These writers use their words - in spoken and written forms - to influence their intended audience and also the wider community. Their positions allow them to have an impact in relation to many social issues, such as work, education, healthcare, and many others (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Wareing, 1999). Effective communication in written form enables the exertion of power, through the recognition and operationalising of writing as a legitimate and effective form of communication with a capacity to reach extended audiences.

In brief, the act of writing conveys not only the meaning of messages through linguistic choices, it also carries the ideologies - the values and beliefs - of the writers and of associated writing contexts. Power relations are an intrinsic element of society; writing is a key mode of accessing, exercising and challenging power. It disseminates the values and beliefs of those with dominant roles in society and may in turn contribute to – or work against – that dominance and the associated assumed social norms.

Purposes of writing

The second of the four Ps relates to the *purposes* of writing, understood as "the fundamental driving forces behind all social activity"; therefore, investigating the purposes of writing means answering the question of "why writers choose or are told to write rather than use other communicative means of doing something" (Clark & Ivanič, 1997, p. 108). Learning to write and being able to write effectively are meaningful because of the prestigious functions that writing can afford a writer. The *function* of writing is distinguished from the *purpose* of writing, as the former emphasises what writing involves and the latter refers to the reasons why people write (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). Writing is goal-oriented, and those who write do so for particular reasons, with certain goals in mind.

> It seems that there are three interrelated explanations for their desire to learn to write: firstly, writing has an intrinsic value for exploration of ideas and

> record-making; secondly, society demands that certain functions should be fulfilled by writing, though other means are in principle possible; and thirdly, being able to write is seen as a sign of being ‘educated’. (Clark & Ivanič, 1997, p. 39)

The first point in this explanation - that of writing to explore ideas - refers to both the construction and reconstruction of ideas. Writing is a meaning-*making* act, which means that people write not only to indicate their existing thoughts or beliefs but also to reconstruct those beliefs or to shape new ones (Flowerdew & Wang, 2015; Park, 2013; Phan, 2001; Strauss, 2017; Viete & Phan, 2007). For example, in two studies undertaken in relation to international student writing by Park (2013) and Viete and Phan (2007), Asian student writers were seen to write to demonstrate not only their understandings of a subject but also their identities as writers of Asian cultural backgrounds. It was through writing that they were able to negotiate and reconstruct their identities as writers in English in the context of English-speaking universities that held specific expectations about the nature and presentation of academic writing. Evidence from these studies identified the students’ recognition of the styles required in an English-speaking academic context, without which their academic success would be in jeopardy.

Another purpose of writing is to meet certain social demands. Writing is a social practice and an influential tool for making social meaning, exercising power and reflecting ideologies (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). Invariably, a writer writes not only to present and represent themselves, but also to influence or convince others. To capture the interrelation of writing and social purpose, Clark and Ivanič (1997) postulate the concepts of macro- and micro-purposes, differentiating between the scope of the two. At the micro level, writing serves as a response to an immediate rhetorical situation (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Halliday, 1999). For example, students write academic essays for assessment, a staff member writes a report to the supervisor, or a customer writes a letter of complaint to a company. In these cases, the purpose of writing is to “get something done, express a feeling” in a given situation (Clark & Ivanič, 1997, p. 109). As writing is a social practice, however, the micro purposes of writing cannot be completely separated from the macro purposes.

The broader macro purposes of academic writing reflect the ideologies and characteristics of an academic society or community that are formed and realised to a large extent through writing (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). People in this context write to disseminate information and views, at the same time exercising power and asserting dominance by influencing social policies and the construction of knowledge. An example of this can be written policy documents in education and law that keep the disciplines in order and regulate their activities (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Wareing, 1999). To further evidence the relationship between these two levels of writing purposes, I refer to a call for submissions by an academic journal (Gea-Valor et al., 2014; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007; Strauss, 2011, 2017), where the writer (e.g., the editor/editors of the journal) is exercising intent at both micro- and macro-levels. At the micro level, they are disseminating information about the aims and scope of the upcoming issue of the journal; at the macro level, they are enacting their power - as Editor(s) - by establishing the requirements for potential contributing authors wanting to submit their papers for consideration. The potential authors who respond to this call also reflect the two levels of purpose for writing: they write for the micro-purpose of publishing their work, and they conform with the specified requirements, as stipulated at the macro level.

Thirdly, when writers successfully conform with writing norms at both macro and micro levels, the act of writing itself is associated with ‘being educated’: the ability to write academically and to communicate appropriately is an indicator of knowledge and expertise (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). An illustration of the academic merits implied in successful academic writing is the status associated with research publications. Academic writing for publication purposes operates worldwide (Cargill et al., 1966; Pho & Tran, 2016; Strauss, 2017). The academic community and universities regard academic publications as an indication of academic and writing ability; as such, increasing attention is now being paid to developing both the quality and quantity of academic publications in countries such as Vietnam (Pho & Tran, 2016) and China (Huang, 2017; Li, 2006). In China, for example, doctoral students are either encouraged or required to publish in high-impact journals as one of the requirements for the completion of their programs. This means that academic writing in the form of research papers has become a central focus of educational programs, particularly postgraduate research programs (Huang, 2017; Li, 2006).

Writing as a product

The view of writing as a *product*, the third dimension in the four-P perspective, is centered around the understanding of writing as semiotic performance, as an actual artifact or object. Several examples can be provided to illustrate this product-oriented view of writing. Figure 2.1 which represents text and context in that Clark and Ivanič (1997) adopted from Fairclough (1989) locates the concept of writing as product in the centre of the diagram, as the narrowest understanding of writing. This view of writing is associated with description of the language used in written texts and the meaning that it makes. In other words, this product-oriented view relates to mechanical skills and sees the description of writing as involving facts and rules and the prioritisation of accuracy (Crawford et al., 2013). How writing is viewed will guide the teaching of writing, so writing pedagogy from this perspective focuses on teaching grammatical and lexical items and utilises much writing practice in order for writers to familiarise themselves with writing techniques and to achieve accuracy in terms of linguistic features and writing genres (Lea & Street, 1998, 2006).

One pedagogical strategy for the focus on accuracy and writing as product is the use of peer review, when a written text is constructed by one student and given to another for feedback on its grammatical and lexical accuracy and writing form (Storch, 2005). At this stage, students focus only on the written text given to them for assessment and feedback on its accuracy, while the process of how the writing is produced is ignored. Another characteristic of this approach is to introduce writers to specific models of writing which they may need to be able to produce in the future. Being exposed to these models, writers are expected to understand what different forms of writing look like and what they are used for, so that they can follow these models of successful writing in the future. Becoming familiar with different genres of writing and with their associated grammatical and lexical features is essential for “production of perfect, formally organized language patterns and discourses” (Johns, 1997, p. 7).

The school of thought of writing as product is contested by Lea and Street (1998, 2006) in their Academic Literacies Approach. While language is a semiotic system, literacy involves using that system in relation to the frameworks, influences, and expectations of specific social contexts. The Academic Literacies Approach reflects a move in writing pedagogy in the UK in which writing is conceptualised as a set of transferable skills. This has come to be known as the Study Skills model. The rationale of this model is that after being taught these skills student writers will be able to operationalise them to complete certain writing tasks without any difficulties. The model has been challenged in the UK in terms of its applicability in different contexts. For example, when high school students transfer from school to college, they typically struggle with academic writing as they are unfamiliar with the academic genres required at college level, which are very discipline-based. Their lack of understanding of different academic genres and of the relevance of the contexts in which those genres are produced present challenges which often result in failures in completing writing tasks (Wingate, 2012). The view of writing as product is therefore critiqued for its disregard of contextual influences and for the challenges it poses for writers in relation to knowing how to construct and utilise particular writing genres (Hirvela, 1999; Storch, 2005).

The process of writing

Finally, the fourth P addresses the *process* of writing, with reference to contextual influences and considerations and the strategies that writers employ to produce successful writing in context. Given that writing is understood as always being produced in a socio-political context, Clark and Ivanič (1997) have challenged the view of writing as product and proposed a broader view of writing as a complicated process; one in which it is necessary to emphasise how writing practices happen and the socio–political conditions that are involved in the process.

Hyland (2015) contends that academic writing primarily serves the purpose of persuasion: a proposition is presented, supported, and accepted (or rejected) through *negotiation* between the personal and the social, a process which brings into play the expected rhetorical conventions of particular communities. The focus on this process of negotiation has shifted the view of writing as being structured or framed to it being more flexible and negotiable, and simultaneously more complex (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Gomez et al., 1996). Written discourse is framed not only by its immediate context, but also by a larger set of social values (Fairclough, 1989; Ivanič, 2004). Therefore, conceptualising writing as a product characterised by certain semiotic features is not sufficient to understand the meaning of written messages that are shaped and influenced by contextual and social values.

As the view of writing as product is seen to limit understanding of how writers write, Flower and Hayes (1981) have proposed a cognitive model of the writing process to frame exploration of what guides writers in their writing. This cognitive process is seen to include three elements: writing tasks, writers' long-term memory, and the writing process itself. Firstly, the writing task is conceived as being out of the writer's control as it is the rhetorical situation that is needed for the writers to produce writing in response to a task. The second element is the writers' long-term memory - or knowledge - of both the topic and the intended audience. Having successfully identified these two elements, writers then proceed with the writing process, which includes generating ideas and planning text organisation, translating the ideas into words, and reviewing and evaluating the completed text and making revisions. This cognitive model is likely to apply to one-sitting writing, in which knowledge about writing and about the topic in hand is internalised in memory and can be brought into text form. Coming from a different perspective, Wingate and Harper (2021) have developed a model of the writing process which focuses on evidence-based writing. In this model the process is reiterative, starting with consultation of relevant materials to gain the necessary knowledge of the given topic, then going through the later stages of planning, composing, and revising. At any point in the later stages, writers may need to re-visit the initial material consultation stage if more knowledge is needed to complete their writing and to improve its quality.

Challenging the cognitive perspective on the writing process, the conceptualisation of writing as a social practice is elaborated with an emphasis on both the broader socio-political conditions and the immediate rhetorical situations which provide context (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Ivanič, 2004). The continuous reminder of the socio-political influences which govern the act of writing references understanding of “who” the writers are, with all of their individual characteristics, “what” the characteristics of the particular genres are, “where” the act of writing occurs, and “what” the characteristics of the social contexts are (Bastalich et al., 2014; Ferris, 2013). Flower and Hayes (1981), however, do not explicitly discuss these key points. For example, their account of the act of *translation* as transforming writers’ existing knowledge into words does not take into consideration the socio-political-cultural conditions in which the writing is happening.

A concluding remark

While the four-P perspective sheds light on the complexity of writing and on the significance of social, political, and ideological considerations, ultimately “[the] complexity of the writing process and the interrelationships of its components have been underestimated by researchers, teachers, and other educators because writing is an organic process that frustrates approaches to explain its operation” (Graves, 1975, p. 227). There is no simple theoretical account. Writers and researchers need to be able to construct a more complex theoretical model to go beyond the view of writing as a product which includes semiotic features to include the broader view of writing as a process in which writing is informed by social, cultural, and political frames of reference. The four-P model provides a view of writing from these different perspectives. As the focus of this study is voice in academic writing in the context of higher education, the chapter continues with discussion of academic writing in higher education in relation to its particular characteristics and requirements.

ACADEMIC WRITING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Although writing involves widely differing genres and practices, academic writing is primarily associated with research and pedagogy. When *writing* is mentioned in this community, the immediate association is with *academic writing*, and research studies devoted to investigating and analysing academic writing, including different genres such as academic reports, theses, research articles, abstracts, research and grant proposals, academic essays and other assignments (Connor, 1990, 2002; Hyland, 2001, 2002, 2008a, 2013; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Paltridge, 2004). The literature bears witness to the fact that academic writing has been the main focus of research on writing.

The importance of academic writing in higher education is presented in a statement that "universities are ABOUT [capitalised in original] writing" (Hyland, 2013, p. 53). To investigate the value and importance of academic writing, Paltridge (2004) undertook a review of academic writing in different educational contexts and levels, identifying and comparing the many forms of writing that are employed for academic purposes. Undergraduate students, for example, are required to complete writing tasks as different as briefs of less than a page to much lengthier essays, proposals, and reviews. In Australia, undergraduate students across a wide range of majors are most frequently required to complete academic essays, while postgraduate students engaged in course work have to produce a wider variety of written genres, such as research reports, summaries, literature reviews, and critical responses to course materials such as lectures or readings. Postgraduates engaged in research are required to write extensively in the form of research projects or dissertations. The extensive use of academic writing for the main purpose of assessing learners' knowledge and academic competence is central to the experience of higher education (Paltridge, 2004; Wette, 2021).

In relation to assessment, academic writing is recognised as the key to gaining entrance to a higher level, and to satisfying the requirements of their teachers, supervisors or examiners who act as gatekeepers (Flowerdew & Wang, 2015; Zhang, 2013; Zhao, 2012, 2019; Zhao & Llosa, 2008). Academic writing is the primary - and in many cases the only -

evidence that students are required to provide to signal their academic credibility and capability, leading to either academic success or failure (Kettle, 2017; Kettle & Ryan, 2018). Success or failure in the academic world, therefore, is largely driven by student writers' understanding of the requirements of academic writing and their ability to satisfy those requirements.

Academic writing is also seen as the key to entering a disciplinary discourse community. Students need to familiarise themselves with its conventions to become qualified for membership in the community (Hyland, 2013; McCambridge, 2019; Purves, 1986; Swales, 1988; Wette, 2021). The requirement of knowing the rhetorical tradition of such a community puts some constraints on its members in terms of content knowledge, communal values, and discoursal expertise. For students as newcomers in their disciplines, being able to pick up the expected rhetorical conventions may be an uncomfortable task. One example of this challenge is when students moving from high schools to colleges struggle with the academic genres that are now required (Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Wingate, 2012). What has been taught at high schools is not sufficient when students encounter new genres in their new context; and they do not recognise the generic characteristics nor are able to adapt to them.

Students are starting out on the path to becoming new professionals, entering new areas of expertise; and becoming successful academic writers is the key to becoming successful academics. They have to be able to write effectively to engage with their discourse community (de Magalhães et al., 2019; Hyland, 2013; Ivanič, 1998; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). The challenge of familiarising themselves with their new disciplinary literacies is great for students who are writing in an additional language (de Magalhães et al., 2019; Hyland, 2013; Wette, 2021) as well as facing higher demands in the writing itself, which involves different requirements to those encountered in undergraduate education programs (Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Kaufhold, 2015; Kettle & Luke, 2013; Purves, 1986). The requirements related to writing are very different at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Written assignments at postgraduate level require demonstration of (i) an understanding of the literature for content knowledge; (ii) an incorporation of critique and argumentation, which is commonly associated with voice; and (iii) presentation with relevant disciplinary writing conventions (Kettle, 2007, 2017; Kettle & Luke, 2013; Kettle & Ryan, 2018; Phan, 2001; Wette, 2021). Research evidence shows how postgraduate second-language writers fail in written assignments due to the complexity of demonstrating new knowledge and presenting critical arguments at the same time as mastering unfamiliar linguistic and genre forms (Kettle & Ryan, 2018; Phan, 2001).

The demonstration of written *voice* at postgraduate level involves constructing argumentation with the support of relevant literature (Morton & Storch, 2019), a capacity "particularly desired in writing at master's and doctoral levels (especially in the humanities and education) where there's a particularly high demand for students to exhibit these" (Mirador, 2018, p. 66). Students "must project a voice of individual expert authority through the developing text … and position themselves … ultimately within a disciplinary community" (Thompson, 2012, p. 119). While voice is, therefore, a crucial element of successful writing and the main focus of attention in writing pedagogy, there has not been a definitive conceptualisation of voice which can guide teaching and assessment (Tardy, 2016). There is therefore a need to investigate the concept of voice in postgraduate writing, to identify more clearly what the concept means, what it entails, and the particular nature of the challenges involved in developing a voice in postgraduate academic writing.

VOICE IN ACADEMIC WRITING

The concept of voice has been considered by researchers from multiple perspectives, as yet – as noted above - leading to no definitive conceptualisation of the term. Reference to voice commonly triggers thinking about the sounds one makes when speaking, with all the associated phonetic and prosodic features (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). However, voice is not only a vocal phenomenon; writing also carries a writer's voice, representing not only the 'message' - or content - communicated, but also conveying a sense of writers' identities through their choice of language and use of rhetorical conventions (Hyland, 2002c, 2005; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Wette, 2021). Elbow (2007) claims that the issue of voice attracted attention in debates back in the1960s, with researchers at that time describing it as representing and constituting the power of writers: those wishing to write effectively and powerfully needed a strong voice. There is a long-established understanding that voice is a critical component of writing; and that writers always convey their identities in their writing, either consciously or unconsciously (Hyland, 2002a; Ivanič, 1998; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Li & Deng, 2019; Morton & Storch, 2019). With this understanding, writing is no longer seen as impersonal.

Yet achieving an effective voice is difficult (Riyanti, 2015) due to the lack of clear and definitive conceptualisation; it is confusing for both writers and readers – both in terms of how to write with voice and how to recognise and evaluate voice in writing (Tardy, 2016). A recent study by Morton and Storch (2019) confirms the confusion of what voice means and how to identify it, even for experienced readers or writers. They demonstrated that some doctoral research supervisors are unable to reach an agreed definition of voice in their students' writing; that there are variations in relation to recognising the development or achievement of students' authorial voice (Morton & Storch, 2019).

This current study contributes to better understanding of the issue of voice in academic writing, arguing for clearer understanding of the concept and of what is involved in writing with voice. I will examine the significance of voice and the associated challenges in relation to written assignments as a specific form of academic writing. The following section explores the concept of voice as defined by researchers, and discusses it in relation to linguistics, to the concept of socially-culturally constructed identity, and to critical perspectives.

Voice through a linguistic lens

It is widely accepted that voice is realised through language used in text; and research studies have indicated how readers realise a writer's voice by identifying specific linguistic items when interpreting the writer's perspective as voice in writing (Brown, 2015; McCambridge, 2019; Morton & Storch, 2019). Due to the understanding that "voice is language performance" (Sperling & Appleman, 2011, p. 71), much research - both qualitative and/or quantitative - has been undertaken to identify linguistic items that are seen to constitute the writer's voice.

A well-known work on voice from a linguistic perspective by Hyland provides detail of the authorial stance model, involving the identification of the use of elements such as hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mentions (Hyland, 2001, 2002, 2002c, 2005). Stance is distinguished from voice as it is seen to represent writers' opinions and evaluation of the subject being written about, while voice refers to the available language and stylistic repertoire of a discourse community that writers need to be familiar with and make use of (Gray & Biber, 2012; Guinda & Hyland, 2012; Xie, 2020). The two concepts are nonetheless seen as being related to each other, combining under the umbrella term of authorial evaluation (Xie, 2020). In order to employ a voice, therefore, writers need to establish their positions or opinions about the topic, making *stance* an aspect of voice (Tardy, 2012). Some specific linguistic features that represent authorial stance have also been used to identify voice, such as *self-mentions* (Hyland, 2001; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Discussion of voice should therefore include consideration of stance and its linguistic realisation by means of elements listed above such as hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mentions (Hyland, 2005). These are now described in more detail.

In the model for stance expression (Hyland, 2005), *hedges* refer to the writer's expression of opinion rather than the communication of a fact through the use of words such as *perhaps* or *possible*, which clearly indicate writers' uncertainty, for example, in relation to their claims. The use of *hedges* is also said to welcome readers' interpretation and engagement, suggesting that readers are invited to discuss, support, or challenge the statements embedded in the hedges. *Boosters*, on the contrary, represent accredited fact and certainty, through the use of words such as *obviously* or *clearly*. These two categories are epistemic, in contrast with *attitude markers*, which are characterised by feelings or affect, such as "conveying surprise, agreement, importance, frustration, and so on", and which are "most explicitly signalled by attitude verbs (e.g. agree, prefer), sentence adverbs (unfortunately, hopefully), and adjectives (appropriate, logical, remarkable)" (Hyland, 2005, p. 180). Finally, *self-mentions* are also self-representations of writers in their texts, indicated by the use of first personal pronouns and possessive adjectives. This last category is said to be the most widely used and the strongest indicator of writers' identity in academic writing, especially in the discipline of Social Sciences (Chi, 2021; Hyland, 2005; Walková, 2019; Zareva, 2013).

In addition to the stance model (Hyland, 2001, 2005), which is widely employed in larger-scale corpus-based research, Ivanič and Camps (2001) draw on the Hallidayan macro-functions of language model to indicate writers' self-positioning in texts, also associated with voice (Brown, 2015). In this model, writers are seen to simultaneously indicate their ideational, interpersonal, and textual positions - each of which positions is characterised by its own linguistic realisations. For example, ideational positioning expresses writers' stance, interests, and knowledge constructions; these are indicated, for instance, by noting how writers use an adjective to modify a noun in a noun phrase (e.g., *rural* cultures) to indicate their view of the subjects. Interpersonal positioning indicates the writer's level of certainty and power in relation to their readers by claiming their authority through modality, evaluation, first personal reference, and mood. The final category of textual positioning operates at a more complex level as its shows how the text is constructed using not only phrases but also linking devices and different semiotic modes (Ivanič & Camps, 2001).

Other researchers have provided evidence and interpretation of further linguistic components related to voice. For example, Jiang (2015) investigated noun complement structures and realised that these are highly effective to indicate stance. In another study, Hewings and Coffin (2007) examined the power of the use of "I" and "We", as well as introduced *It–constructions* as an alternative means of establishing authorial stance; and Charles (2006) identified how reporting clauses are useful indicators of stance where writers can either explicitly or implicitly indicate their positions. These few examples show how linguistic features are employed to indicate voice, ranging from lexical to syntactic categories.

Although these linguistic categories are used to identify voice, what is lacking is an understanding of the decisions made by writers to use such linguistic features for this purpose. Writing is more than just the operation of certain linguistic conventions; it also involves the content/ideas that the writing conveys, and the use of certain linguistic items does not ensure the expression of voice (Stapleton, 2002). For example, self-mentions, hedges, and boosters may be used in writing as evidence of lexical acquisition rather than of actual evidence of voice. In other words, writers may memorise or take these linguistic features from other texts, rather than articulating informed understanding of the meaning and functions of these features (Bloch, 2010). Voice is metaphoric; it "has to do with feeling - hearing - sensing a person behind the written words" (Bowden, 1999, pp. 97–98, as cited in Hirvela & Belcher, 2001, p. 105); therefore examining voice by identifying and quantifying linguistic features is insufficient for realising the writer's sense of self or positioning in their writing (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Morton & Storch, 2019). More insight into how writers write and how the academic voice is required is needed (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Morton & Storch, 2019; Tran, 2011a; Viete & Phan, 2007).

Voice through a socially-culturally constructed identity lens

Linguistic features are only the surface 'performers' of voice. They are the material form of the writer's identity, representing "a person's relationship to his or her social world, a joint, two-way production and language allows us to create and present a coherent self to others because it ties us into webs of common sense, interests, and shared meanings" (Hyland, 2010, p. 160). This definition suggests the need for investigation into voice in relation to both writers' former identities and the new negotiated identities expected by the communities that they now are part of. In other words, voice needs to be understood from both individual and social and cultural perspectives, which are now discussed in turn.

Voice from a socially-culturally constructed individual dimension

Voice has been largely associated with individualism, particularly in relation to writing pedagogy (Tardy, 2012). The reason to see voice as representative of individualism derives from the conventional thinking that voice is closely associated with Western cultural valorisation of individualism. To illustrate, discussion about voice in relation to individualism in Western culture labels voice "as a key marker of individuality and as an ideological expression of Western cultural hegemony" (Guinda & Hyland, 2012, p. 1). Ramanathan and Atkinson (1999) documented the close relationship between voice and Western individual ideology. These researchers see voice as a significant element of "principles and practices of U.S. university writing pedagogy in which the ideology of individualism appears to be strongly, if tacitly, implicated" (Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999, p. 46) and that "such a concept of metaphorical voice exists and is important in U.S. society can be found in its frequent occurrence in the mass media and popular culture" (Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999, p. 47). Bowen (2009) also claims that voice "remains extraordinarily popular among American composition teachers and has a strong presence in contemporary classrooms and discussions of writing" (p. 173). Voice is conceived of as representing the power of writers, with an emphasis on individuality and self-expression characterising good writing in the Western world (Elbow, 2007; Matalene, 1985; Zhao & Llosa, 2008). Zhao and Llosa (2008) reviewed evaluation of writing performances in English Language Arts tests across the US and identified the attention paid to writer voice in evaluation from 41 states, showing it to be an indispensable ingredient of good writing. Voice is closely associated with Western writing style, emphasising a writer's presence in texts and contributing to the quality of writing.

Seminal work on investigating the relation between voice and identity is that of Roz Ivanič, who argues that it is impossible to separate writing and writers' identities; that however they write, a writer's identity is discernible in the action of writing (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010; Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Ivanič, 1998; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). The relationship is pulled into focus when Clark and Ivanič (1997) recall their students telling them that “this doesn’t sound like me” (p. 134). This comment reflects the understanding that writing carries with it the voice or image of the writers, providing evidence of their identities. Hyland (2013) made similar claims, arguing that the close relation between writing and identity makes it possible to identify if a writer comes from Biology or Sociology, the evidence lying in recognition of writing conventions variously employed in written form. In the model which connects voice and individualism, voice is seen as a metaphor of one’s inner self (Elbow, 2007; Lensmire, 1998; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999), a reflection of identity (Sperling & Appleman, 2011). It reveals “writers’ unique perspective in life” (Li, 1996, p. 93), and can be seen as a tool to differentiate writers from one another (Bowden, 1995).

Some writers who have had the experience of being international students in the Western world have spoken about their academic voice as an expression of the ideology of Western culture. These researchers have realised how their transition from Eastern to Western academic cultures has been associated with stepping out of a traditional collectivism perspective to the more individualist one required in Western writing (Matsuda, 2001; Park, 2013; Phan, 2001; Shen, 1989; Viete & Phan, 2007). In order to be recognised in the new context, they have had to adapt to new socio-cultural contexts and values, navigating their way between the traditional ideologies that had been acquired in their previous education and the new academic ‘self’ expected by the discourse communities they were now entering.

However, the view of voice as individual expression is contested by arguments representing different perspectives on individualism across cultures, and on the perception of individualism as being unique to Western culture (Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999). Matsuda (2001), for example, challenges the generalisation of voice as being exclusive to Western writers and alienating to non-Western ones, arguing for cross-linguistic and cross-cultural research to explore how people of diverse backgrounds understand the notion of voice from an individual perspective, and how different views of voice are constituted in different cultural contexts. In another case, Hirvela and Belcher (2001) draw attention to the fact that writers may have already developed their written voice through their writing experiences, but when they enter a new context this voice may be irrelevant to the expectations of the new discourse community; it may therefore become unheard or unaccepted. It is therefore inaccurate and inappropriate to declare the non-existence of voice in writers of particular cultures. It is in fact necessary to understand what voice means and how it is expected to ‘be’ in different social-cultural contexts. As writing is a social practice governed by a multitude of social-political conditions, writers need to be aware of how to construct their voice by drawing not only on their past experience and individual sense of self, but also on the current social conditions of the discourse communities they find themselves in.

Voice shaped by social-cultural-institutional expectations

Writers' identity is inseparable from written text, and is not innate but socially constructed by "the 'socially available subject positions'" (Clark & Ivanič, 1997, p. 143). Building on this perspective, voice as an indication of writer's identity is then concluded to be "the amalgamative effect of the use of discursive and non-discursive features that language users choose, deliberately or otherwise, from socially available, yet ever changing repertoires" (Matsuda, 2001, p. 40). In other words, when a writer enters a community, they move to identifying as part of the socio-cultural context, impacted by its values and beliefs, which shape or reshape the identities of its members (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Li & Deng, 2019).

As indicated earlier, conflicts arise between writers' existing identity and the expected identity that they are required to establish in their prospective discourse community. Tardy (2012) points out that "all texts have voice, and the voice expressed (or perceived) is not simply the property of the author but constructed by the social worlds that the author works within" (p. 39). This voice, therefore, is the outcome of a complex process of negotiation between the voice formed by writer's socio-historical backgrounds and new expectations associated with new discourse communities. Bartholomae (1986) noted that "students have to appropriate (or be appropriated by) a specialized discourse" (p. 4), which means that

> They have to invent the university by assembling and mimicking its language while finding some compromise between idiosyncrasy, a personal history, and the requirements of convention, the history of a discipline. They must learn to speak our language. (p. 5)

In the case of students writing in a second language (L2), their previous study and writing experience in their first language (L1) before embarking on their current L2 writing underpins and informs the development of their new academic voice and identity as writers. Of interest is the question of the degree to which their already developed written voice and identity either supports or constrains the development of the required new voice and identity when entering postgraduate programs in a new discourse community. Hirvela and Belcher

(2001) reported on the experience of three Latin American students who were experienced writers and were aware of how essential it was to take up the voice expected by their new discourse community. The three students reported different struggles through this transition. Fernardo, for example, did not find it very difficult to have a voice in English writing due to his extensive encounters with English texts. Jacinta, meanwhile struggled with differences in English writing style between scientific reports - that she was used to - and economics papers, which she was now working with. She struggled in particular with the new research paradigm that her advisor wanted her to adopt, which involved a significant challenge to her existing identity as a writer, which had been shaped through her previous paradigm. The last reported case of Carmen identified interesting points where she also had struggled with new writing conventions and research paradigms. However, she was able to take up a new voice as an academic English writer and bridge that with her existing voice as a journalist in Portuguese and support her career back home as a journalist. The three cases in this research study were labelled as "coming back to voice" (Hirvela & Belcher, 2001, p. 91), as each of the participants had already achieved their own voice in their L1 writing experience, and the development of a new voice helped them to reflect on the variations between the two voices, on how each worked, and on what was involved in adapting to the new one.

This negotiation for an acceptable voice is not always comfortable. It invariably involves conflicts between what students want to express and what they should express (Lensmire, 1998; Wette, 2021). Hyland and Jiang make the following observation: "personal judgments are convincing, or even meaningful, only when they contribute to and connect with a communal ideology or value system concerning what is taken to be interesting, relevant, novel, useful, good and so on" (Hyland & Jiang, 2016, p. 254). The challenge imposed on this negotiation is the need to align with the expectations of the community that the writing is addressed to. Scollon (1991) also reported on this dimension of academic writing, explaining writing as not only expressing the personal self but also acting as the entrance to a discourse community. Therefore, there needs to be a shift from a personal self to a different self that is under consideration in relation to a specific view of writing and to particular discourse practices. The negotiation for a voice needs to bear in mind the expectations of a discourse community in terms of form and content (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). Besides taking their own perspectives into the written work, writers need to adapt themselves to the pre-determined discourse conventions of the particular discourse community they are currently in or about to enter. Ede (1989, p. 158), as cited in Bowden (1995, p. 175), explained this in the following terms: "… just as you dress differently on different occasions, as a writer you assume different voices in different situations…Whatever the situation, the choice you make as you write and revise … will determine how readers interpret and respond to your presence".

Research evidence also suggests that the voice that writers need to project in their writing is a *situational voice*. Matsuda (2001), for example, provides the example of his own past experience as an international student in the U.S. Despite the advice he was given to "be yourself", as a token of individualism, he eventually realised that the self he was expected to 'be' was not his 'true self' but the one that was socially and discursively negotiated between his existing and expected self.

> Upon reflection, I came to understand that "finding my own voice" was not the process of discovering the "true self" that was within myself (which, to me, didn't exist in the first place); it was the process of negotiating my socially and discursively constructed identity with the expectation of the reader as I perceived it. (Matsuda, 2001, p. 39)

Similarly, Shen (1989) described the need to 'be himself' in his writing, but was immediately reminded that this was not his true self (his Chinese self), but the self that he was expected to assume in his new context (his English self). The process of developing, adopting and projecting voice in a written text is therefore very complicated, and is characterised by potential conflicts between writers and contexts of writing. Learning to write in another language, genre, and context is in fact a way of forming a new identity. Park (2013) argues that this process of cultural negotiation does not necessarily involve replacing a writer's existing self, but creating an additional - other - self, one which is required if they are to become a recognised member in their communities. This formation of a new self is reflected in the observations of Matsuda (2001), Park (2013), and Shen (1989) in relation to how they have changed their ways of writing to position and voice themselves in different rhetorical situations involving writing for specific readers.

In this way writers can express multiple identities even within the same text. This is exemplified by Sarah, one of the students that Clark and Ivanič (1997) worked with in their study. Sarah was able to portray herself as a member of an academic discourse community through the lexical and syntactical features that she employed in her high-quality academic writing on environmental issues. She was also playing the role of a philosopher through her discussion of philosophical perspectives in relation to social life, and of a natural scientist through her demonstration of specialised knowledge in relation to nuclear waste. Her ability to employ different discourse conventions created a sense of who she 'was'; indicating that she had power and authority in written discourse, which was recognised by her reader – in this case her instructor.

This kind of negotiation between writers' former and becoming selves - each shaped and pre-determined by the norms of their former and prospective discourse communities - is not only a matter of taking up what has been/is being made available in the discourses. It also involves an interaction to which writers bring their own writing practices that they have developed through their previous experiences, building a coherent sense of self that works best for them in the new community. This may also mean a possible rejection of certain existing dominant values in the particular discourse community, as was seen in the case of a Vietnamese international student in Australia. Instead of accepting all discourse conventions that were advocated in Australian academia, the Vietnamese student determined to establish a coherent identity that did not deny her Vietnamese self but concurrently established a shared space in which it could co-exist with becoming an academic in an English-medium setting (Viete & Phan, 2007).

This process of negotiation which involves both acceptance and denial and co-existence of aspects of writing conventions in a new context is an important part in the process of writing identity development. It takes into account the need for recognition by readers in their current discourse community and the maintenance of and respect for their existing beliefs about and practice of writing (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Ivanič, 1998). There is a complexity in relation to identities or sense of selves that writers form and project in their writing. The autobiographical and the authorial selves combine to constitute the unique voice of every writer, as they reflect their individual socio-historical background and the decisions they make on how to present themselves in texts. This constitutes the discoursal self, the self-presentation of writers through the discourse conventions and options presented to them to employ in their writing; and the employment of these discourse conventions will vary from writer to writer. Writers carry with them their past experiences and contexts which shape their choices and practices (Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Wette, 2021). Different individuals experience life events - and literacy events - differently, which is reflected in diversity in their own conventions. It is through the linguistic and rhetorical features that writers employ in their written texts that readers can sense writers' identities.

How writers portray themselves in text depends to a large extent on the immediate rhetorical situation of the event where writing occurs. A student writing an academic assignment, for example, hopes to produce good academic writing to demonstrate their academic credibility (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Ivanič, 1998); in this sense the discoursal self that writers try to demonstrate is decoded through the linguistic and rhetorical features that they use. This raises another point: in order to make the written text meaningful to readers, writers need to understand how readers will decode the written messages, so they need to select appropriate coding forms for the message.

It is recognised that readers play an important role in relation to writing. The writer not only conveys a sense of voice and identity and communicates the content; the readers of their discourse community interpret the meaning behind the words and also form an image of the writer (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Hyland, 2010; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007; Morton & Storch, 2019; Tardy, 2012). The issue of 'who we are' as writers is not only addressed by ourselves, but also by others in our social contexts, in response to discourses (Bakhtin, 1986). In the definition of voice proposed by Matsuda (2001), the word "effect" is notable, indicating how the use of discursive and non-discursive features impacts on how readers make sense of texts (Macallister, 2012).

This interpersonal writer-reader relationship requires writers to consider who their readers are when deciding what discourse conventions they adopt in their writing. Those conventions will help readers to visualise who the writers are. To illustrate, reviewers of peer-reviewed journals are 'blind' in relation to the writers, but they can construct a sense of the writer's identity through the conventions used in their papers. Use of phrases such as "this begs a larger question", "in this regard", and "herein lies the disconnect", may lead a reviewer to identify a masculine voice, based on past encounters with similar phrases typically used by male writers (Matsuda & Tardy, 2007, p. 244). Besides gender associations, a writer's disciplinary engagement can also be identified through the use of conventions such as the selection and evaluation of reference materials, which can suggest whether the writer is a novice or an established scholar in the field (Matsuda & Tardy, 2007). The use of writing conventions contribute to forming a reader's impression of a writer's identity in terms of "experience, disciplinary background, language and ethnic background, nationality, gender, age, institutional affiliation, and level of education" (Tardy, 2012, p. 43).

While the role of readers in relation to writing has been increasingly attended to, it still requires closer analysis. What can be implied from research up to this point is that readers represent a significant element of the writing process, which is an important part of the social dimension that writers need to take into account. In the particular case of academic writing, where student writers are obviously writing specifically for their course instructors who are examining/evaluating their papers, this writer-reader relationship is particularly important. The readers are the gatekeepers who will decide if the papers are of the required quality (Hyland, 2013; Zhao & Llosa, 2008). Another noteworthy issue is that of readers' various interpretations of written texts based on their different standpoints. Previous studies have shown how different readers comment differently on writers' voice based on their own definition of what voice 'means' (Morton & Storch, 2019) and how they interpret content in different ways (Hamid, 2007). Controversies occur when the same written text is differently evaluated and assessed by different readers who bring different rhetorical expectations to the evaluation process. In turn, those expectations may not be fully or accurately understood by the writers, potentially causing breakdowns in communication and affecting the writer-reader relationship.

Voice and criticality

Current research has extensively investigated the concept of voice with a focus on language use in voice construction. However, less attention has been paid to the critical characteristic of voice: crafting a critical voice is an essential requirement in postgraduate academic writing, seen as an indicator of academic competence and quality of writing (Mirador, 2018).

Academic writing particularly at postgraduate level requires voice as an indispensable component. However, not all kinds of voice are accepted at this high academic level. For example, the *solipsistic voice* merely expresses the writer's opinions without supporting evidence from the literature; an *unaverred voice* summarises others' opinions without indicating the writer's own position; and an *unattributed voice* is the voice taken by a writer from someone else without acknowledgement of ownership (Groom, 2000; Wingate, 2012). These voices, without *criticality*, are not regarded as appropriate for academic writing (Wingate, 2012). Writing at postgraduate level should not be a summary of what has been found in the field or simply an opinion of the individual writer. It needs to be a critical and well-supported evaluation of existing beliefs or theories. A typical example is the literature review section in academic papers (Bitchener, 2010; Bruce, 2014; Paltridge & Starfiled, 2007; Sun et al., 2022; Wette, 2021). This genre of writing requires a critical voice.

Researching written assignments at postgraduate level, Mirador (2018) identifies this critical dimension as essential; however, a definition of criticality is elusive. There have been too many suggestions of its meaning (Le & Hockey, 2021; Mirador, 2018). A helpful elaboration of the concept is provided by Brumfit et al. (2005):

> the motivation to persuade, engage and act on the world and self through the operation of the mindful, analytical, evaluative, interpretive, reflective understanding of a body of relevant knowledge mediated by assimilated experience of how the social and physical environment is structured combined with a willingness and capacity to question and problematize shared perceptions of relevance and experience (p. 149).

With respect to the writing of literature reviews, Bruce (2014) defines criticality as "an evaluative judgement made within any field of human activity about some aspect, object or behaviour of that field" (p. 85). These two definitions share consensus in seeing the critical stance as being able to analyse and adjudicate knowledge of the field, which is presented with the objective of convincing readers of the credibility of a writer's claims.

Some researchers equate criticality with argumentation. Horowitz (1986) and Wingate (2012), for example, recommend a three-stage process that students need to undertake to satisfy the demands of academic writing in higher education. The first is to acquire content knowledge through wide reading of multiple sources that are relevant to the task in question. This involves judicious selection of relevant information, before moving on to the second stage of organising the acquired information logically. It is easy to see that in a sea of potentially relevant information, making the writing coherent is necessary. Students are expected to present their propositions and arrange their ideas logically in written form. Finally, students are required to express these organised and coherent propositions in appropriate writing conventions (e.g., academic English). All three stages of the process are required for successful completion of the written task.

The concept of criticality is differently understood from different sociocultural perspectives. In some cultural contexts it is promoted; in others, critical thinking is discouraged (Atkinson, 1997). A contribution to understanding cultural perspectives and their influence on critical thinking was made by Tran (2011a), who researched the experience of four international students from China and Vietnam at an Australian university. She identified four ways of interpreting criticality in academic writing: pretension, evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of previous studies, judgment of the writing topic, and the ability to apply what is known to a specific context. However, these elements of critical thinking are not always easily mastered. Using the framework of Positioning Theory (Harré & van Langenhove, 1991), Tran (2011a) identified conflicts experienced by students between their self-positioning in relation of how they wanted to write and the imposed process of positioning of how they were required to write. This placed students at the intersection of being polite as they had been enculturated to be in their home countries, and being assertive and critical as required in their Australian academic environment.

In another study, Stapleton (2001) investigated the critical thinking abilities of Japanese learners of English, wanting to challenge the widely existing assumptions about the lack of this capability in non-Western learners, as criticality "is historically embedded in Western educational culture as a positive value" (Turner, 2011, p. 185). Providing a group of Japanese student writers with readings about rice imports in Japan and gun control in the US and requesting them to write responses to these readings, Stapleton (2001) found that the students did in fact engage in critical thinking, marking their individualised voices in their responses. This was indicated by how they presented their perspectives on the topics and provided evidence to support their claims. However, what was noted was the extent to which topic familiarity drawing on student writers' experience could either enhance or restrict their capacity to write critically. The transnational educational experience these Japanese learners were receiving also provided effective opportunities for them to learn how to think and write critically. This study therefore concluded that while culture may impact criticality, criticality is teachable; students can develop critical thinking and writing skills; and students from non-Western backgrounds can still perform criticality.

A further contribution by Stapleton (2001) was the argument made against generalisation in relation to writing styles of so-called Western and non-Western writers. Matsuda (2001) also critiqued this form of generalisation, which claims that learners of the same cultural background write in the same way, arguing for a writing pedagogy which pays closer attention to individual variations. As concluded by Tran (2011a),

> within the current changing global context, which is associated with cross-border education and student mobility, relying too much on the link between cultural factors and the images of Asian students may limit the possibilities of exploring complexities and variables as well as invisible aspects in

> international students' processes of participation in institutional practices. (p. 59)

Tran (2011a) supports this claim by citing the cases of two Vietnamese students in Australia who successfully demonstrated criticality in their written assignments. The two students were shown to be aware of their cultural values that did not encourage critique as respect for authority and an indication of harmony. However, when completing assignments at an Australian university, they were able to adopt a critical position through identifying both strengths and weaknesses in relation to reading materials, and using contextual characteristics to evaluate the values of a theory. They reported that through this strategy they were able to use their academic voice to evaluate and elaborate on theories, using evidence to convince their readers. Therefore, criticality is a basic element of voice that requires writers to express what they believe and support those beliefs with appropriate evidence.

A concluding remark on voice

A concluding remark from research on voice from the perspectives of individualism and social construction (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Hyland, 2002a, 2010; Ivanič, 1998; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Matsuda, 2001; Park, 2013; Phan, 2001; Riyanti, 2015) recognises that voice is a significant element of a writer's identity, which is partly pre-determined by their social-historical background and experience, which in turn shapes their worldviews, sense of self, and discoursal experiences. However, changes in socio-political conditions and contexts of writing have put the writers at the intersection between their former selves and their becoming selves. Writing is guided by both "the curriculum as designated by policy makers and the institution in which it is located" as the socio-political conditions and by "the individuals' understanding of what literacy and learning involves and how they act to achieve their goals" (Fisher, 2012, p. 299). This negotiation of the social, contextual, and the self subsequently influences the voice that writers construct and project in their writing - both in terms of what they write and how they write. Voice is attributable entirely to neither the individual or the social; it is a hybrid of the amalgamation of the two, a dialogic form between the existing and the becoming selves (Tardy, 2012).

While most research on voice in academic writing includes individual and social dimensions in the theoretical framework, for investigating voice, the critical characteristic of voice in academic writing at postgraduate level has been frequently left out of the discussion. Hyland includes the concepts of evidentiality, affect, and presence under the umbrella term of *stance* (Hyland, 2005, 2008b) when referring to writer's propositions in texts. The aspect of evidentiality includes not only the critical position taken by a writer but also the evidence used to support an argument. Referring back to the explicit requirement of criticality in postgraduate writing (Bitchener, 2010; Mirador, 2018), I find this element of evidentiality crucial to be explicitly proposed for voice in postgraduate writing. It is relevant to this study of the elements required for successful academic writing at postgraduate level, and to meeting the requirements for entry to the relevant academic discourse community. There are required elements of the written voice, involving appropriate and effective use of language and rhetorical conventions. Viewing academic writing as both a product and a process conducted in and influenced by particular contexts therefore necessarily involves exploration and analysis from the triangulation of criticality, language, and identity. It is this view of voice that is further examined and discussed in this study to investigate how international postgraduate students develop and project their voice in their written assignments.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE FURTHER INVESTIGATED ABOUT VOICE IN ACADEMIC WRITING?

The previous sections have discussed and provided evidence of the complexity of writing and of the nature and challenges associated with voice in academic writing as involving an amalgamation of language, identity, and criticality. From the literature on voice in academic writing, Tardy (2012) has witnessed two common trends in researching voice. Firstly, larger-scaled studies tend to identify writers' voice through paying attention to the linguistic features employed in their written texts. Corpus-based studies using samples of authentic texts, predominantly use the linguistic tools identified by Hyland (2005), for example by identifying stance and engagement by quantifying and classifying the linguistic patterns in the texts. Secondly, seeing voice from a social-cultural-political perspective involves text analysis that uses both linguistic tools to recognise how writers negotiate their autobiographical, authorial, and discoursal self (e.g. Ivanič, 1998). Such studies are typically small-scale, and they investigate closely how writers navigate the process of negotiation between their inner self and their textual self. In a recent review of research methodologies in relation to investigating voice in writing, Xie (2020) identifies the popularity of large-scale corpus-based approaches as well as divides small-scaled studies into two categories: in-depth textual and ethnographic approaches.

For large-scale corpus-based studies, investigation into the process that is negotiated in order to develop and establish a writing voice is not central and is in fact neglected although this approach is still dominant in research on voice (Xie, 2020). Quantitative-oriented research can be conducted through corpus-based analysis of specific language features or rating scales to identify and evaluate the qualities of voice in texts. It is argued that research using available linguistic frameworks such as those proposed by Hyland (2001, 2005, 2010) appears to only investigate the existence of voice in academic writing, specifically through lexical-grammatical realisations (Stapleton, 2002; Xie, 2020). In this research strand, writing is considered as a product; and so this research perspective leaves out the complicated process of writing involving the writer's practice of decision making on language use and also the context in which the writing is being undertaken. Therefore, there is little focus on *how* the writing occurs.

On the other hand, qualitative case studies offer a closer look at individual variations and the writing process. As Morton and Storch (2019) and Tardy (2016) have concluded from their own and others' studies, a definitive view of voice needs further investigation to establish a solid foundation for further research that aims to identify voice, its formation, and its effects on readers. This discourse-semantic approach is favoured as a means of recognising the dynamic language use of writers, which tends to be ignored in a corpus-based approach. In contrast to the self-mentions in the Stance model (Hyland, 2005), other frameworks such as the Appraisal Framework (Martin & White, 2005) and the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) are widely used to research writers' evaluation and positioning in writing, attending in these frameworks to more general language realisations rather than specific linguistic features. In addition, many qualitative studies which adopt an in-depth textual approach only achieve an in-depth analysis of written texts to identify the meaning of written messages or voice, without consideration of the contextual factors involved in the making of that meaning in the writing process (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Xie, 2020).

To better understand voice in writing, it is crucial to examine not only written texts as product but also the process involved in writing, which is shaped and influenced by social, cultural, and political factors (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Matsuda, 2001), which constitutes the central focus of the ethnographic approach to researching writing (Xie, 2020). This involves paying attention to the contexts in which texts are produced and to the factors which influence what is written and how it is written. Another important consideration is the fact that much research fails to include the view of readers in relation to this process although readers have been identified as an important agent in relation to the social dimension of voice that significantly influences writers and the writing process. The ethnographic approach tends to conduct talks with writers to explore their writing process (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Lillis, 2008; McCambridge, 2019), as well as to research readers' interpretations and evaluations of written texts. Readers are seen as playing an important or even decisive role in determining how writing is presented. In a study which focused on supervisors' perspectives on their doctoral students' development of voice, Morton and Storch (2019) concluded that a significant gap in current literature lies in identifying the ignorance about the role played by readers in the writing process and in sensing the writer's voice; a gap which they attempt to fill in their study. What surprised the two researchers were the different perspectives taken by supervisors in responding to their students' written voices, despite the fact that they were all experienced readers and experts in the field relevant to the written discourse. Some focused on specific language features, seeing them as markers of the writer's voice, while others tended to 'feel' the voice in a more general sense. The development of voice in the students' writing was therefore differently recognised by the supervisors.

Despite a large body of existing research on voice in academic writing, there are still points requiring further investigation and better understanding. Firstly, it has to be acknowledged that voice has not yet been definitively conceptualised. Yancey (1994) provided an early identification of the need to widen understanding of voice, and Hirvela and Belcher (2001) suggested a closer look at students' experiences in developing voice, with particular consideration given to the concepts of identity, self-representation, and previous and existing voice to see how the process of forming voice takes place. Voice is "a somewhat slippery and often ill-defined concept" (Tardy, 2016, p. 350), which poses several challenges to students when required to complete written assignments with an authorial voice. Different researchers over time have explored voice from different theoretical stances, such as linguistics (Hewings & Coffin, 2007; Hyland, 2002, 2005, 2008b; Tang & John, 1999), or the perspective of identity (Ivanič, 1998; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Matsuda, 2001; Park, 2013; Phan, 2001; Shen, 1989; Sperling & Appleman, 2011), making this term alarmingly confusing.

A further problem in research on voice is the lack of investigation into the process of forming and presenting voice in academic writing (Hyland, 2002a, 2002c; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Morton & Storch, 2019; Snaza & Lensmire, 2006). Connor (2008) points out the common perspective on voice as product in writing, with little attention given to the writing process itself, or to the negotiation that student writers engage in as they develop their voice. While voice is commonly assessed based on the linguistic features that writers utilise, it is uncertain as to whether such features actually represent or constitute voice or whether they are simply a result of lexical acquisition (Stapleton, 2002). As a reminder, the four-P perspective advocates consideration of the context of writing, with recognition of the fact that complex social, cultural, and political issues influence *what* is written and *how* it is written. Cultural and contextual issues engage continuously in interaction and negotiation; and for international students this movement happens at intersections between their home cultures, former and new professional cultures, different classroom cultures, and many other intersecting variables (Atkinson, 2004; Connor, 2002, 2004, 2008). International students are newcomers to a specific discourse community, in an English-medium context which is characterised by particular cultural, discoursal, and linguistic distinctions. This complex process involves the acquisition of new socio-cultural values and practices in a new discourse community (Bartholomae, 1986; Fernsten & Reda, 2011), and sometimes difficult negotiation between former selves and now-required selves (Clark & Ivanič, 1997).

The difficulties involved for international students in undertaking this kind of cultural negotiation have been the focus of much research attention (Park, 2013; Phan, 2001; Shen, 1989). Evidence has been provided through students' narratives, for example, of how they overcome conflicts between how they had been educated to write and how they were expected to write in the new context. There is a need, however, for more explicit study that takes the perspective of "voice as language performance - always social, mediated by experience, and culturally embedded" (Sperling & Appleman, 2011, p. 71), to assist in "feeling-hearing-sensing a person behind the written words" (Bowden, 1999, pp. 97–98, as cited in Hirvela & Belcher, 2001, p. 105). This requires the use of linguistic analytical tools to identify voice as the basis for investigating the process of forming and projecting that voice into written texts, and for a consideration of students' acculturation for successful writing practices in their postgraduate written assignments, as expected and required in their disciplines.

Notably, there has been very limited research on voice in academic writing which refers to both students' (as writers) and lecturers' (as readers and evaluators) perspectives. Most research takes the view of one or the other subject, which does not provide an account of the writer-reader relationship, which is noteworthy in writing (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010; Connor, 2002; Hinds, 1987; Kaplan, 1966). Connor (2002, 2008) acknowledges the significance of the role of readers in relation to writing, as they are accorded the authority to decide on the quality of the writing and on whether that writing should be approved. This writer-reader relationship in multicultural contexts is particularly and unfortunately under-researched; this is problematic given how academic voice is conceptualised as a rhetorical tradition in Western culture, which poses challenges to students from Asian backgrounds, characterised by collectivism and Confucianism, where subjectivity and critique are typically discouraged (Phan, 2001; Shen, 1989). Differences in practices and interpretations of writing in contexts involving multilingual-multicultural writers and readers who bring their own cultural beliefs into their relationship with writing call for closer attention and investigation.

In response to the identified gaps in the research literature on voice in academic writing, this study takes into consideration the values of individual practices and perspectives and contextual influences. It advocates for the exploration of voice "from dimensions external to academic texts, such as situational, socio-cultural, educational, or cognitive ones" (Xie, 2020, p. 10). Such exploration will find support in the four-P model that views writing as a process which operates under layers of social, cultural, and political influences, and in developing deeper understanding of voice from multidimensional perspectives. This more comprehensive view of voice and of writing offers deeper understanding of how international students engage in a process of acculturation in order to be able to write with the voice that is expected in the academic context.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided a complex view of academic writing under social-cultural-political conditions that influence both what to write and how to write. The essential component of voice has been explored from different theoretical perspectives to establish what voice 'means' and what it entails. This chapter has also identified common research trends on voice, concurrently pointing out gaps in the literature that need to be addressed. Limitations in current literature have been identified as requiring the construction of a more comprehensive conceptual framework to support investigation of writers' negotiation for voice, one which not only amalgamates theoretical perspectives that have been reviewed but positions them more systematically for more effective analysis of voice in academic writing. The next chapter develops a conceptual framework to support this research on voice in academic writing and the numerous social and individual factors which affect how individual writers negotiate the process of developing voice - the kind of voice that is expected by their discourse communities; and how this voice could be realised and assessed in academic writing.

Chapter Three. Conceptualising Voice in Academic Writing

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I present the theories and concepts that are used in this study to research academic writing and voice in the multilingual-multicultural context of international higher education. Since there is not one theory that entirely and closely fits the complexity of the study, I propose a combination of commensurate theories and concepts that will be brought together to inform the study of the phenomena at hand (Grant & Osanloo, 2014; Jabareen, 2009; Kivunja, 2018).

Maxwell (2005, p. 22) defines a conceptual framework as “the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs your research”. In other words, a conceptual framework is a systematic network of concepts and theories that support each other to provide a comprehensive view of the subject or phenomenon under research (Jabareen, 2009). As such, a conceptual framework is not to be *found* but rather to be *constructed* so that it is relevant to the study that is being undertaken (Maxwell, 2005). Kivunja (2018) metaphorically illustrates a conceptual framework as a house with several rooms. In this metaphorical house (conceptual framework), each room represents a theory or a concept and has its own function, but cannot represent the house on its own. Jabareen (2009) proposes that “building a conceptual framework from existent multidisciplinary literature is a process of theorization, which uses grounded theory methodology rather than a description of the data and the targeted phenomenon” (p. 52). Therefore, building a conceptual framework can help avoid the abstractions of theories and provide a view of how the theories work in a particular study (Casanave & Li, 2015).

Informed by Maxwell (2005) and by understanding of the complexity of writing under innumerable layers of influences, I posit a conceptual framework that incorporates several elements. The proposed conceptual framework will demonstrate how the writing process takes place; what factors are involved in this process; and how voice as the focus of this research is located within the framework. Being able to do this will help create a more comprehensive view of voice in terms of how it is constructed in the complex process of academic writing, as well as what needs to be considered when evaluating voice in writing.

As previously noted, voice is not only attributed to the personal self but also to a process of negotiation with several social, cultural, and political conditions in its rhetorical situation (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). Previous research on voice in academic writing, particularly second language writing, has discussed cases in which cultures and contexts influence writing but has provided limited description of how these two concepts are interconnected, nor of how they impact writers' development and use of voice in a multicultural-multilingual context such as international higher education. In further consideration of these two elements of culture and context, the theory of Intercultural Rhetoric (Connor, 2008) stands out with its approach that incorporates both concepts in its explanation of text production and interpretation. Not only that, it engages with the complexity of context and culture, and how this complexity impacts the process of acculturation in academic writing (Connor, 2008). For investigating the phenomenon of voice embedded in writing, Intercultural Rhetoric is therefore compelling and will be the principal theory that guides my research on voice. As cultures and contexts are complicated concepts, they need to be unpacked for a better understanding. In addition, the research explores how voice is evaluated by readers, hence requiring a theory that explains what constitutes successful writing. Also, as voice is presented through language, this leads to the need to find a linguistic model that can help analyse voice and its effectiveness in academic writing.

In summary of the above, this chapter constructs a conceptual framework that best fits the research. It draws on (i) Intercultural Rhetoric (Connor, 2008), with the concepts of culture and context (Atkinson, 1999, 2004; Halliday, 1999; Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Holliday, 1999) to justify the Intercultural Rhetoric principles, (ii) the Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion (Braet, 1992; Herrick, 2016) to evaluate the quality of writing and voice, and (iii) the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) that provides an analytical tool for discussing voice in academic writing.

Because Intercultural Rhetoric is attributed to general rhetorical theory dating from the traditions of the Ancient Greeks, I will start the discussion with Rhetorical theory, and then move to the more contemporary theory known as Contrastive Rhetoric (Kaplan, 1966) which is the foundation for the recent work on Intercultural Rhetoric (e.g. Connor, 2002, 2008). I then present the analytical tools used for realising and evaluating voice in academic writing, including the Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion (Braet, 1992; Herrick, 2016) and the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001).

RHETORICAL THEORY

Discussions on rhetoric normally refer to the early and strongly influential work known as Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in the fourth century B.C (Braet, 1992; Floyd-Lapp, 2014; McCormack, 2014; Newman, 2001; Rambow, 1993; Westin, 2017). Ancient Greek philosophers and politicians at the time worked on how to gain peace after a long period of war. It was concluded that peace and social advancement could happen through intellectual and moral education, a proposition upon which Aristotle and his colleagues agreed. Rhetoric was written to reflect the art of persuasion, which could create a better, more intellectual and advanced society whose governance was guided by logical reasoning and political discourse for framing the minds of its citizens towards agreement and conciliation (Floyd-Lapp, 2014; Triadafilopoulos, 1999).

A considerable amount of work has been done to investigate how rhetoric should be performed to achieve its purpose of persuasion. For example, Floyd-Lapp (2014) discusses rhetoric in terms of the power of words that contributes to successful persuasion. In her work, she presents critiques of Rhetoric by Aristophanes and Plato for the lack of credibility when they argue against using sweet words to win the minds of an audience rather than logical reasoning and judgement. However, it is Aristotle who defends the values of rhetoric by pointing out its inclusion of both reasoning and emotion (Floyd-Lapp, 2014; Killingsworth, 2005). In order to support this, Herrick (2016) states that the centrality of rhetoric lies in the persuasiveness which can be achieved through four "A"s including Argument, Appeals, Arrangement, and Aesthetics. *Argument* is seen as a statement or conclusion reached with supporting evidence for agreement from the audience; this argument is presented through an *appeal* of strategies to engage the audience in the communication; hence, these two characteristics of rhetoric are closely related and support each other to serve the central purpose of persuasion; rhetoric requires the ability to make good use of these elements to *arrange* the speech properly and to draw upon *aesthetic* values to polish the meaning and form of the messages in order for it to persuade the audience effectively.

Herrick (2016) further elaborates that "Arguments, appeals, arrangement, and aesthetics each remind us that rhetoric is carefully planned discourse, adapted to a particular audience, revealing human motives, and responsive to a set of circumstances" (p. 15). This claim establishes a view that the principles of rhetoric need to be considered in the context where the act of persuasion takes place. For instance, there is a need to think of the audience and their characteristics as well as of the general context to ensure the credibility of the text. This suggestion is understandable as each community has its own expectations of how the conventions of communication, including the act of persuasion, should take place, so those who are successful in picking up and making use of these conventions will then be recognised in the community and have the potential for persuasion (Herrick, 2016).

In short, rhetoric is the act of persuasion that involves the three elements of author-audience-logical reasoning that support the success of persuasion in a wide range of settings such as a courtroom, the advertising industry, or education. Herrick (2016) carefully reminds us that communication both builds a community and is built within a community, influenced by the community's own culture and norms. This understanding guides this current research which investigates the issue of voice in postgraduate academic writing in the higher education setting of Australia. In order to understand how voice is presented by student writers from various cultural backgrounds, it is necessary to understand how rhetorical conventions are adapted by such linguistically and culturally diverse writers in their particular discourse communities with distinctive features that guide rhetorical practices so that their writing is accepted by the readers of the community. For Kaplan (1966), "[r]hetoric, then, is not universal either, but varies, from culture to culture and even from time to time within a given culture" (p. 2). As suggested by this statement, although rhetoric is identified and examined through writing, it is said to have its roots in a writer's cultural background and to be shaped by the way the writer thinks and therefore writes. In relation to the role of culture and its influence on writing, Kaplan (1966, 1995) has been recognised for his foundational work - Contrastive Rhetoric - that investigates how cultural thought patterns and rhetorical styles are transferred from first language (L1) writing to writing in a second language (L2).

CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC

Contrastive Rhetoric, developed by Kaplan (1966), provided the pioneering work on the relation between culture and writing. Connor (2008) identified inspiration for Contrastive Rhetoric as being rooted in (i) contrastive analysis that is interested in exploring how a writer writes in their L2 compared to how they write in their L1 and how natives of that L2 write; (ii) the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis which emphasises how language shapes worldviews, and how people of different languages see the world in different ways; (iii) rhetoric, with an emphasis on the arrangement and organisation of information linguistically such as the well-known model of paragraph structures written by people of different cultures in Kaplan's (1966) work, and (iv) pedagogy referring to how language and writing are or should be taught. The primary focus of Contrastive Rhetoric is to examine how L2 writers are influenced by their L1 culture and its rhetorical preferences, and how this informs writing pedagogy. Understanding how one's own culture influences their writing is necessary if writing programs are to most effectively support students' rhetorical strategies and styles when writing in another language (Connor, 2002).

To evidence the claim that Contrastive Rhetoric sheds light on how the native language and culture shape worldviews and influence writing styles, including writing in additional languages, Kaplan (1966) investigated how different English-L2 writers construct paragraphs in English to identify how their L1 influences their L2 writing. Kaplan (1966) explains that whether they are being deductive or inductive, paragraphs written in the English language demonstrate a linear development, with nothing significant to be left out and nothing digressive to be included. However, writing from students for whom English is a foreign language shows variation in the composition of paragraphs in English. Kaplan provided examples to illustrate this point, ranging from a low-English-proficiency Korean student to a professional translator of French-English languages, and the use of digressive details is employed intentionally in their paragraphs, which Kaplan (1966) argued does not comply with English expectations for paragraph structure but is common in both Korean and French. The inclusion of additional details is considered acceptable in writing in both these languages, which influences how writers of these cultures write in their native languages; however, transfer of these tendencies to their English-L2 writing makes understanding - and acceptance - difficult for English readers. To illustrate how English-language paragraphs are written by writers of other - different - languages, Kaplan (1966) developed the much-cited and much-contested graphic representations of different rhetorical styles presented in Figure 3.1.

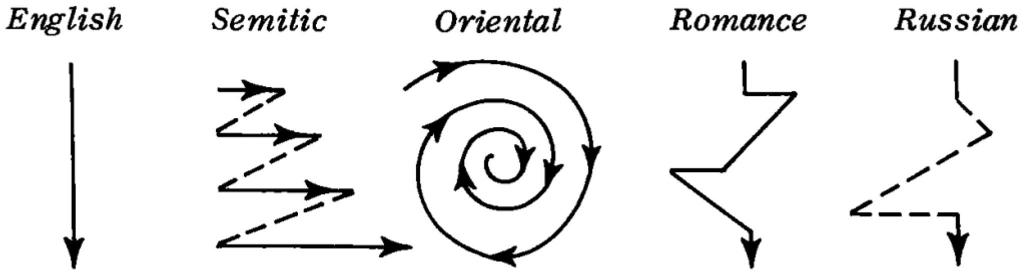


Figure 3.1. Graphical representations of different paragraph structures (Kaplan, 1966, p. 15).

Contrastive Rhetoric is acknowledged for raising the question of how differences in writing styles stem from cultural differences, and more specifically how one's L1 influences their L2 writing. While the theory has been critiqued for being reductionist and based on limited data, it nonetheless has been credited with providing an explanation of writing that embraced culture and context and provided the foundation for ongoing work in the area. There are certainly instances where the claims of Contrastive Rhetoric are borne out. For example, a study by Viete and Phan (2007) found that a Vietnamese student in Australia wrote in a way that aligned with her Vietnamese socialisation and education such as the excessive use of implicit argumentation and personal experience rather than the explicit argument and evidence required in Australian academia. In another study on indirectness in writing, Tran (2006) documented and analysed how Vietnamese writers composed newspaper commentaries in English, finding that despite the fact that they were writing in a Western language - which should be associated with its rhetoric - the commentaries were written in an indirect or implicit manner that made it challenging for English native readers to discern the intended meaning.

Another example of cultural influences on writing relates to the use of literature or references to support the writer's claims (Chien, 2014; Matalene, 1985; Thompson, 2009). To illustrate, for Chinese students, including well-known statements without listing the sources in their essays is an accepted convention, especially as those statements are widely regarded as communal property. However, in the American academic context (and indeed in many other contexts such as Australia), using someone else's statement in one's own study without acknowledging the authorship is neither appropriate nor acceptable (Matalene, 1985). Students' cultural and educational backgrounds have shaped the way they view and undertake authorship in academic writing. The above observation is not to accuse them of misdemeanours, but rather to raise the awareness of both writers and readers in terms of different understandings and practices of academic writing.

Apart from being widely recognised, Contrastive Rhetoric has also been widely critiqued, for example for seeing writing in an additional language as a problematic struggle, and for suggesting that L2 writers are fixed in their writing ways and unable to adapt to the rhetorical expectations of another language. Kubota (1997), for example, challenges the generalisation that non-native English writers cannot write effectively in English by examining the traditional Japanese style of *ki-sho-ten-ketsu*. She concludes that there have been inaccurate generalisations based on Contrastive Rhetoric because the analysis of writing samples of Japanese students shows a linear model of text organisation similar to Kaplan's 'English' category, rather than the conventional, inductive Japanese form of *ki-sho-ten-ketsu* (Kubota, 1997). One reason for this innovation in Japanese students' linear writing is the intervention of the Western writing style that has been incorporated into Japanese composition, which influences how students now write (Kubota, 1997).

In addition, Connor (2002) has argued that at the time Kaplan undertook his research, the method still relied heavily on text analysis which was decontextualised. The development of writing theory and analysis has witnessed the move away from merely examining how a text is composed to conducting a more comprehensive and broader scope of the sociocultural factors that shape the writing process. Even Kaplan himself has acknowledged the shortcomings of the early version of his Contrastive Rhetoric theory, and later moved to include elements that focus on what to write, how to write, whom to address, what evidence to provide, and how to present evidence in texts (Kaplan, 1995). By paying more attention to the writing context, he argues for greater consideration of the audience and also of the question of whose responsibility it is to make meaning of the writing. Looking back at the classical principles of rhetoric, the role of audience should never be ignored; speakers or writers need to think of who the audience will be so that they can decide how to perform, using the relevant rhetorical conventions (Connor, 2008; McCormack, 2014). To some extent writers need to visualise who the audience will be and how their work should be presented to gain that audience's understanding and acceptance.

Although Contrastive Rhetoric has been criticised for its generalisations in relation to how cultures shape writing based on small writing samples (Kubota, 1997; Kubota & Lehner, 2004), it has also contributed to raising awareness of how people of different cultural backgrounds write and of the influence of home cultures and languages on second language writing (Connor, 2002, 2009). Many researchers, such as Connor (1990, 2002, 2004), Kubota and Lehner (2004), and Matalene (1985), have shown great interest in the diversity of rhetoric due to the diversity of languages and cultures. They oppose any form of normative position that conceives of any one form of rhetoric being either 'normal' or 'better' than others. For instance, Matalene (1985) reminds us that "Western rhetoric is only Western" (p. 790). There should not be one form that is viewed as a worldwide framework for writers of different cultures, but the world should be seen as a "global village" where diversity is valued

(Matalene, 1985, p. 790). As an American composition teacher working with Chinese students and encountering English writing influenced by Chinese culture and language, Matalene was interested in the fact that her Chinese students avoided individualism in their writing. She surmised that it was the emphasis on social harmony in Chinese culture that was transposed into Chinese rhetoric, while Western rhetoric values individualism. However, Matalene (1985) investigated the rhetoric of Chinese discourse not to involve judgement or devaluing of the quality of the discourse, she was suggesting closer consideration of the issue of rhetorical variations across languages and cultures, so that writing is better understood and appreciated across cultures. She concluded that “Our responsibility is surely to try to understand and appreciate, to admit the relativity of our own rhetoric, and to realize that logics different from our own are not necessarily illogical” (Matalene, 1985, p. 806). This is an important point as writing is a means of communication and understanding how and why writers write in particular ways will strengthen cultural empathy and enhance writer-reader relationships.

The writer-reader relationship is a key concept in relation to writing although the role of readers often receives less attention than that of writers (Morton & Storch, 2019). The relationship involves not only paying attention to who the reader is, but also taking responsibility for making the written discourse readable to avoid misinterpretation and miscommunication (Hamid, 2007). A researcher who highlights the relationship between the writer and reader in written communication is Hinds (1987), who is well-known for making the claim about writer and reader responsibility in making meaning of written texts. Focusing on Japanese-English written texts, Hinds (1987) argues that Japanese writers prefer the implicit way of proposing ideas, making it the reader’s responsibility to interpret and create meaning from the texts. English writers, on the other hand, are explicit in pointing out the meaning they want to make.

The idea of writer-reader responsibility is crucial in writing pedagogy. Matalene (1985) makes similar observations to Hinds, noting that rather than taking responsibility for making meaning explicit to their readers, which is what L1 English writers do, Chinese writers prefer to make it implicit and leave it to the readers to interpret the meaning of the written text. This variation of writer-reader responsibility is seen as problematic in many cases in which communication breaks down between writers and readers who come from different traditions. Connor (2002), after reviewing the development of Contrastive Rhetoric over thirty years, proposes the introduction of writing programs that accord a much greater level of attention to the expectations of readers. Her research evidence indicates that even Finnish grant applicants who were quite proficient in the English language were found to need better understanding of what the grant committee - consisting of reviewers of different language backgrounds - expected from a grant application. The meaning needed to be made clear through the relevant writing style.

Over the years, Contrastive Rhetoric reached a milestone of "embracing research-situated reflexivity and [is] becoming more sensitive to the social context and the local situatedness and particularity of writing activity" (Connor, 2002, p. 506). The focus of attention in writing research and pedagogy has evolved into a more comprehensive model that takes into consideration the writers, the readers, the situation of writing, the genres, and the broader sociocultural contexts that significantly determine how writing should be performed and interpreted. After realising the limitations of his early work with decontextualised text and the impression of advocating for normative English linear conventions, Kaplan (1995) recommended a closer look at genres and at the culturally-based act of writing, including the conditions that guide it, especially for L2 writers. This shift acknowledges the role of politics and the context of culture in writing (Clark & Ivanič, 1997).

As previously discussed in Chapter Two, the four-P perspective advocates understanding writing as a process which involves social, cultural, and political influences. This complexity suggests a focus on the process of writing, rather than looking at writing as a product, as was the focus of Kaplan (1966). Some work related to rhetoric has also emphasised the need to attend to the process of constructing messages. To illustrate, examining Aristotle's *Physics,* Westin (2017) concludes that Aristotle refers *Energeia* to the actuality that is constructable and to the process of construction. Using a house construction as a metaphoric illustration, it is the act of observing how a house is constructed and shaped that provides observers with experiences and understanding, rather than merely looking at a completed house as the outcome of the construction process. Aristotle stresses the actuality of something constructable that exists in its process of construction, and which involves changes. However, when the actualised outcome is achieved, the process ends as there is nothing constructable left. This idea of *Rhetorical Energeia* promotes the values of the "making-present" process rather than of the actualised product. The point to highlight from this view is the consideration that should be given to how something is being made rather than just to the product at the end of that process. Therefore, a framework that pays close attention to the process of writing, with a more culturally-based perspective has been proposed, known as Intercultural Rhetoric advocated by Connor (2002, 2004, 2008, 2009, 2011). This model acknowledges and extends the foundational work conducted in Contrastive Rhetoric.

INTERCULTURAL RHETORIC AND ITS PREMISES

As indicated above, Intercultural Rhetoric, developed by Connor (2008), was foregrounded by Contrastive Rhetoric (Kaplan, 1966, 1995). Connor (1999, 2008) investigated how different English-L2 readers comprehend English-written texts based on the similarities between their L1 - Spanish and Vietnamese in Connor's case - with English. It is assumed by Contrastive Rhetoric that Vietnamese readers will have more difficulties than Spanish readers in understanding English texts due to the greater alignment between Spanish and English. However, her study surprisingly challenged this view when she found that readers' social-cultural-historical backgrounds had a stronger impact on their ability to comprehend the English texts. Following years of working with different genres and with writers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, her interest in the impact of cultural background and the context of writing on rhetorical characteristics caused her to challenge many of the premises of Contrastive Rhetoric:

> Contrastive rhetoric has been useful and explanatory. Yet, to stay alive and continue developing, contrastive rhetoric needs to move far beyond such binary distinctions as linear versus nonlinear discourse, Japanese prose versus Finnish prose, inductive versus deductive logic, and collectivist versus individualist norms. Instead, it needs to describe the vast complexities of cultural, social, and educational factors affecting a writing situation. (Connor, 2008, p. 304)

When researching voice in academic writing, the context and culture which frame the act of writing should not be ignored because writing has been identified as a contextualised social practice (Connor, 2008). It is recognised that the process of acculturation is complex and important, as students negotiate between their existing beliefs and the beliefs of the discourse community that they are entering. Connor (2008) proposes Intercultural Rhetoric, which "stresses the connections rather than the cultural and rhetorical differences" (p. 312) and is "sensitive to context and considers influences both due to inter-person and inter-culture influences" (p. 313). Intercultural Rhetoric provides a relevant framework to this study which explores and explains how writers of different cultural backgrounds write and respond to rhetorical variation and diversity.

Intercultural Rhetoric and Contrastive Rhetoric are sometimes used interchangeably although Intercultural Rhetoric focuses on the cultural diversity that makes writing diverse in its rhetorical conventions and provides a focus on informing writers and readers of possible rhetoric variations (Connor, 1990, 2002, 2004). The value of Contrastive Rhetoric lies in its foregrounding of how language and culture affect writing, but it has also implied that each culture has its own fixed conventions, and it has been challenged for its advocacy of dominant writing conventions without taking into account different kinds of genres or the dynamism of culture which forms cohesive behaviours in different discourse communities (Kaplan, 1995). Contrastive Rhetoric is also critiqued for its implication that non-native English writers cannot write effectively in English because they are influenced by their L1 experience (Kubota, 1997). Intercultural Rhetoric, meanwhile, allows for an understanding of "writing styles and structures in comparable genres across languages and varieties, as well as providing social, cultural, and historical explanations for such preferences and highlighting instances where different varieties of English have been used successfully" (McIntosh et al., 2017, p. 14).

Globalisation has made English a lingua franca (Jenkins, 2012), which has also allowed the appearance of varieties of English used by people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This phenomenon demands a more careful view of linguistic and cultural influences on how the act of writing and the making sense of writing occur. In cases where English is the language used as the lingua franca by people of various backgrounds, it is of interest and importance to investigate how different people write in English with various rhetorical styles, and how writing is interpreted by readers who come from different backgrounds. To ensure that a writer can successfully write for effective communication and support their entrance into a new discourse community, Intercultural Rhetoric introduces three principles that inform writing and interpreting written texts: (i) the need to refer texts to their social contexts in terms of both production and interpretation; (ii) recognition of the complexity and dynamism of culture - both large and small culture(s) - by which individuals are influenced and from which they draw when writing; and (iii) the need for negotiation and reflexivity in producing written discourses (Connor, 2004, 2008; Ene et al., 2019; McIntosh et al., 2017). Each of these principles will be elaborated, supported by the literature, to provide a more detailed view of how context and culture govern the acts of writing and interpreting writing in which voice is central.

Texts and contexts

The first tenet of Intercultural Rhetoric is that of making meaning of texts in context, as contextual features influence how texts are written. As a social practice, the act of writing is attached to its context and to the socio-political conditions that guide the writing practice. As Janks comments, “texts are instantiations of socially regulated discourses and [that] the processes of production and reception are socially constrained” (Janks, 1997, p. 329). The literature review presented in Chapter Two has illustrated contextual influences on writing through referencing studies which, for example, document students writing critically (Phan, 2001), the use of personal pronouns (Shen, 1989), and the situational self (Matsuda, 2001; Shen, 1989). As reported in these studies, the influence starts with the immediate contexts in which students are required to complete written assignments following the instructions of their lecturers. The studies also show, however, that appropriate writing is not only attributed to the immediate rhetorical situations of the written assignments but also to the larger and more abstract notion of academic culture that determines how written assignments should be completed in that immediate rhetorical situation. To capture these levels of contextual influences, researchers have put forward the notions of *context of situation* and *context of culture* (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Halliday, 1985, 1999).

The *context of situation* is regarded as the immediate environment in which the act of writing happens (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Halliday & Hasan, 1985). It is recognised that as humans we make sense of what others say and even predict what others are going to say based on the context of situation where the communication takes place (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). The development of this concept can be traced back to the early work of the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, the linguist John Rupert Firth, and the ethnographer Dell Hymes (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). Malinowski introduced the concept while realising the need to include an understanding of the total environment and situation in which text is produced in order to make it comprehensible to readers (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). Firth takes the concept to the discipline of General Linguistics, proposing a framework for the context of situation which comprises the elements of “participants”, “action”, “other relevant features” of the situation, and the “effects” of the communication (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, p. 8). Focusing on interaction and social setting, Hymes (1967) notes that a child not only acquires a language, but also the whole system of attitudes and habits that guide how the language should be used in given communicative situations.

In order to confirm the relationship between text and social context, Halliday and Hasan (1985) developed a model of the context of situation which included the *field* of discourse, the *tenor* of discourse, and the *mode* of discourse. The field refers to the social environment where the discourse is formed; the tenor to the relationships between participants in that situation, including their roles and status; and the mode refers to how the discourse should be formed and constructed, drawing on the expectations of the participants in the context of the particular meaning exchange (Halliday & Hasan, 1985).

Different communicative situations require "special consideration to audience, purposes, level of perfection, and correspondingly may require varying amounts of revision, collaboration, and attention to detail" (Connor, 2004, p. 293). Therefore, successful communication is achieved when these components of context or situation are carefully considered; and a key point to consider in written communication is the writer-reader relationship. This relationship in which power relations and the positioning of participants are established is significant because it influences how writing is performed (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). For example, a note to a friend would be written differently from one to a postman, or a wealthy writer may write differently than a less wealthy writer when writing to request a loan (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). Considering the context of writing in many cases can lead to a shift in perception of positions between the writer and reader, as well as a shift in the writer's identity which also influences rhetorical conventions. For example, Shen (1989) reports how different writing contexts guided him to decide whether an English self, using "I", or a Chinese self, using the preferable "We", would be appropriate; and the switch between these two selves is a clear illustration of how the context of writing dictates relevant rhetorical conventions. The example that Shen (1989) provides is valuable in terms of understanding the significance of the context of situation and the broader context of culture. Shen (1989) understood what his readers in different discourse communities expected of his writing, "I" or "We"; he understood how culturally formed beliefs and values guide how language should be used in communicative situations. On a broader level, the context of situation is governed by the culture in which it is located.

According to Clark and Ivanič (1997), the *context of culture* involves "all the values, beliefs, constructions of reality, possible social roles and relationships, and associated norms and conventions for practices, genres and discourses which are in principle available to members of that culture" (p. 67); and "[w]riters use language the way they do because of the socio-cultural norms that operate in the context in which they are writing" (p. 70). The concept of context of culture is complicated in terms of how culture itself is understood and of what cultures are involved in any context. For example, writing can be influenced by both national cultural values and more specific institutional cultures (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Connor, 2008). Writing is connected to cultural traditions, sociocultural norms, writer-reader power relationships, characteristics of readers and writers that are formed by their socio-cultural backgrounds, and the discourses that are available to them.

Although the context of situation is impacted by the larger and more abstract context of culture, it has its own power that may shift the way writing is practiced. For example, in order to get used to the expectations of a new discourse community in terms of rhetorical conventions, it is suggested that writers be exposed to a large number of texts, which collectively and progressively provide a sense of what is expected and preferred in that community (Connor & Traversa, 2014; Ene et al., 2019; Hyland, 2000; Paltridge, 2012). However, a specific context of situation, as the immediate writing environment, may require an adaptation in response to the particular purpose of writing and the expectations of the particular audience (Herrick, 2016). It is not always the case that all characteristics and norms relating to the context of culture are evident in the context of situation. When completing a writing task, writers need to think of the particular purposes and requirements of the task and the intended readers (Ryan & Kettle, 2012).

The relationship between text and context should be seen in terms of how contexts guide the production of texts, a process in which writers need to be able to take into consideration both larger socio-cultural beliefs and more specific, narrower circumstances which frame the writing task. Applying this point to the current study, international postgraduate students are tasked with completing written assignments; the context of situation can be regarded as the immediate circumstances of the assignment in a course with its own disciplinary requirements. The students need to understand both the assignment criteria and the reader, who is the course lecturer. This context of situation is therefore shaped by the larger context of the particular English-medium institution, with its own academic culture, that guides how an assignment at postgraduate level should be structured and produced (e.g., its rhetorical conventions, including persuasive argument supported by literature and data). Students have to familiarise themselves with these specific contextual and cultural conditions in order to satisfy the multi-level requirements of their assignments.

Complexity and dynamism of culture

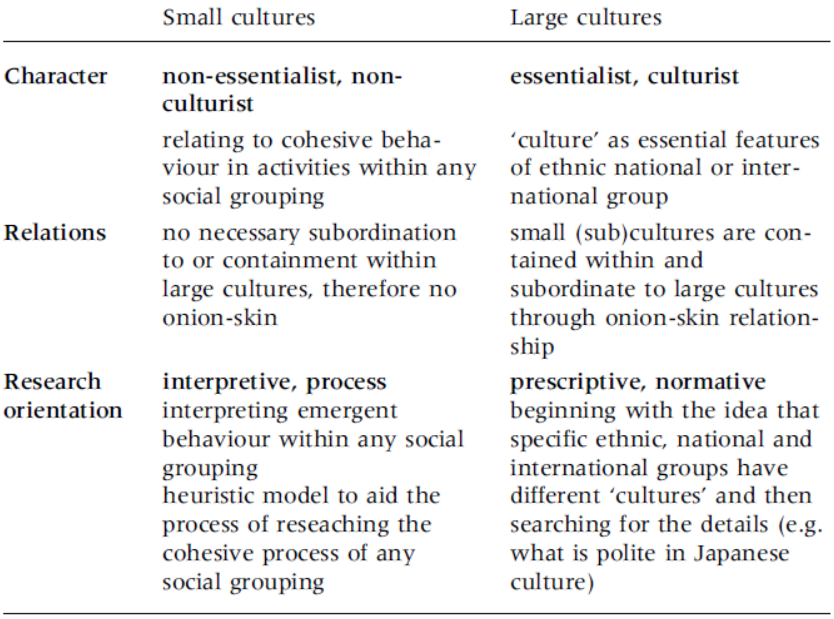
As discussed above, the first tenet of Intercultural Rhetoric refers to the relationship between text and context which involves context of culture and context of situation. The second tenet involves the complexity and dynamism of the contextual and cultural factors that form writers' understanding and shape their practices of academic writing. These are so important that they should never be neglected in consideration of academic writing, especially in the case of international students. When entering a new academic environment in a foreign country, these students need to understand how they are expected to perform in their written work, and, as argued previously, this may be very different from the expectations they have known in their home countries (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). In other words, different cultures will have different requirements for international students in terms of how they are expected to write. The notion of complexity of culture reflects the intersections between students' own cultural values and those of the new academic context. Students have already formed worldviews and views about writing developed through their past experience; and these may collide with the beliefs and views of the discourse communities which they are entering (Connor, 2008). And the new context, including the context of situation in which they will write and the associated larger sociocultural norms, will present other values and beliefs to these students. While culture has been a topic of interest widely researched in academic writing, there is a need for further elaboration on the complexity and dynamism of culture and cultural influences on writing.

Culture is one of the most debated concepts in research because a definitive conceptualisation of culture has not been established yet (Atkinson, 1999, 2004). One fundamental view of culture can be presented under the notion of *received culture* (Atkinson, 1999). This term is the one most commonly employed in the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) area, which views culture as being both geographically based and homogeneous. It tends to group members of the same 'culture' into a particular social group. This notion of received culture has been critiqued for ignoring the dynamism of culture, its ever-changing and negotiable nature (Atkinson, 1999). The concept of received culture emphasises cultural homogeneity, neglecting cultural variations and complexities, as well as the power influences involved in the conceptualisation of culture (Atkinson, 1999;

Fairclough, 1989). Attempting to refine the understanding of culture, Atkinson (1999) reminds us of individual variations and the reflexivity of human beings in different social contexts; of how individuals are able to create and enact different identities depending on the social context that they are in, accounting for multiple individual-in-contexts. Through social interaction, people become members of different social groups, which have different behavioural expectations; and adapting to different, new, and unfamiliar social groups involves challenges.

The notion of *received culture* that Atkinson (1999) proposes seems to associate with Holliday's (1999) use of the term *large culture*, that represents national, international, or ethnic culture. Holliday (1999) poses the simple question of what 'culture' means to academics, with answers equating to national or international culture, such as British culture or Western culture. Further to this view of large culture as national, international, or ethnic scopes, small culture is very easily mis-conceptualised as a sub-set of large culture. It is a concept of interest to Clark and Ivanič (1997), as they are concerned about the social contexts of writing where culture is involved. It is their view that there is both acceptance and resistance of cultural values of a larger national context in terms of small culture. The authors illustrate the idea with the example of two hospitals located in two different national large cultures but are very similar in terms of their institutional cultures, such as how they are operated. These two hospitals with overlapping cultural values imply that they only partially acquire the cultural values of their large cultures, as they also have their own cultural values that function well within their institutions (Clark & Ivanič, 1997).

Also acknowledging the complexity of small culture, Holliday (1999, 2010, 2016) proposes that it is the outcome of social groupings where negotiation among members forms cohesive behaviours that are accepted and shared in their community. It is therefore not prescriptive but interpretive, and, as Holliday (1999) notes, tends to be 'softer' and more malleable than large culture as it involves the constant interaction of different values and beliefs of the members who may come from different large cultures. It is important, therefore, to understand the values of a small culture, to examine how cultural interaction and negotiation happens among its members, as well as the influences of the large culture. In these social groups, the members may come from different large cultures, but they need to achieve the so-called cultural harmony of their small culture community. This harmony does not simply mean picking up what is available from their large cultures; it however involves a more interpretive process of selecting and negotiating what may work in that small culture (Holliday, 1999, 2010, 2016). The figure below illustrates the differences between large culture and small culture and addresses the common mis-conceptualisation of small culture as a sub-set of a large culture.



	Small cultures	Large cultures
Character	**non-essentialist, non-culturist**	**essentialist, culturist**
	relating to cohesive behaviour in activities within any social grouping	'culture' as essential features of ethnic national or international group
Relations	no necessary subordination to or containment within large cultures, therefore no onion-skin	small (sub)cultures are contained within and subordinate to large cultures through onion-skin relationship
Research orientation	**interpretive, process** interpreting emergent behaviour within any social grouping heuristic model to aid the process of reseaching the cohesive process of any social grouping	**prescriptive, normative** beginning with the idea that specific ethnic, national and international groups have different 'cultures' and then searching for the details (e.g. what is polite in Japanese culture)

Figure 3.2. The two paradigms of cultures, adapted from Holliday (1999, p. 241).

As international students come from different large cultures, the complexity of small cultures is indicated through how these students recognise and negotiate what values are accepted in their social groupings. The small culture in my study can be equivalent to a course in an academic program at an institution. It is therefore conceptualised that a discourse community is a small culture, that has the coherent and cohesive values and beliefs of that community (Connor & Traversa, 2014; Holliday, 1999). Seeing a classroom as a discourse community, or a small culture, Connor and Traversa (2014) have illustrated the complexity of this community as one that comprises dynamic cultural values, presented in Figure 3.3.

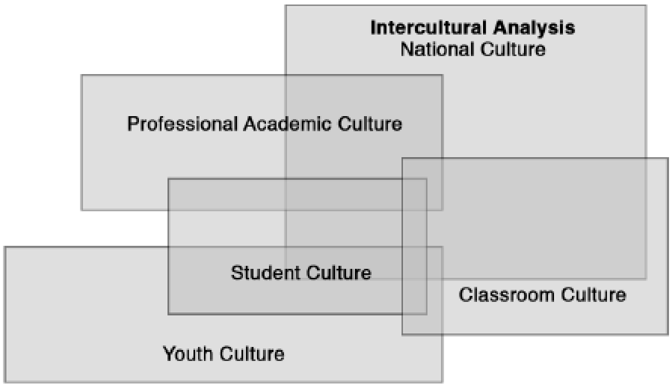


Figure 3.3. The complexity of a discourse community as a small culture (Connor & Traversa, 2014, p. 21), adapted from Atkinson (2004) and Holliday (1999).

Understanding the complexity and dynamism of culture involves a shift from viewing received culture as the traditional view of culture as conceptualised in Contrastive Rhetoric to an alternative and more dynamic model of culture (Atkinson, 2004). However, the alternative view of culture, which is commonly thought about in terms of how cultures interact with others to produce hybridity, also recognises the existence of power and dominance (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). It argues that there is no homogeneous society, due to the multiple classes associated with different power relations; therefore, the conflict and complexity of what constitutes the shared values and beliefs of a community needs to be acknowledged (Atkinson, 2004). This is perceived as “on the go” model, emphasising the constant evolution of values and beliefs through the constant interactions of cultural values that are brought to the group by members of multiple small cultures (Holliday, 2016, p. 1). Individuals are also in constant movement, as they focus on the need for intercultural competence as they move across and between different small cultures. From an identity point of view, these members frequently find themselves at the intersection of the Self and Other in different discourse communities as small cultures (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Connor, 2008; Connor & Traversa, 2014; Ene et al., 2019; Holliday, 2016; McIntosh et al., 2017).

Discussions of culture and writing usually mention the need to understand the culture of the community that guides the writing behaviour. In the case of academic writing, that community will provide guidance and expectations of how one should write (Hyland, 2013, 2015). Understanding the characteristics and expectations is all-important for writers who are members of or are attempting to enter that community. As Herzberg (1986, p.1), as cited in Swales (1990, p. 21) observes:

> Use of the term ‘discourse community’ testifies to the increasingly common assumption that discourse operates within conventions defined by communities, be they academic disciplines or social groups. The pedagogies associated with writing across the curriculum and academic English now use the notion of ‘discourse communities’ to signify a cluster of ideas: that language use in a group is a form of social behavior, that discourse is a means of maintaining and extending the group’s knowledge and of initiating new members into the group, and that discourse is epistemic or constitutive of the group’s knowledge.

In this definition, Herzberg (1986) uses the term “discourse” but provides no explanation of what he means by the term. Gee (1996) defines it as follows:

> A Discourse is a socially accepted association among ways of using language and other symbolic expressions, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and acting, as well as using various tools, technologies, or props that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or “social network,” to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful “role,” or to signal that one is filling a social niche in a distinctively recognizable fashion. (p. 161)

This definition of a Discourse and a discourse community identifies certain distinctive features in terms of language use and of a more abstract perspective on social behaviours through which knowledge is constructed, enacted, and disseminated. In relation to writing pedagogy, a student writer undertaking higher education and engaging in academic writing to enter a discourse community needs to understand the specific characteristics and conventions of that community (Hyland, 2013) such as the genres that may be exclusive to that community (Paltridge, 2012; Swales, 1988, 1990, 2016).

For example, a discourse community may use genres as abstract tools, involving “distinctive rhetorical practices”, which illustrate “how language is used and how the social, cultural, and epistemological characteristics of different disciplines and professions are made real” (Hyland, 2002b, p. 121). For genres as text types to be adopted and utilised by a discourse community, they are shared and recognised by the members of that community for use in specific rhetorical events (Paltridge, 2012; Swales, 1990, 2016). Members are exposed to different kinds of genres, and above all, as writers and readers, they become familiar with these genres (Paltridge, 2012; Swales, 1988). As Berkenkotter and Huckin (1993) observe, “genre conventions signal a discourse community’s norms, epistemology, ideology, and social ontology” (p. 475).

An example of a distinctive disciplinary writing convention is when the writer can be recognised as coming from a Natural Science or Social Science community by various features in the written texts they produce (Hyland, 2013). Each discipline has its own way of communicating so that communication among members is conducted successfully. The stability of the genres of a particular discourse community is not the important question (Borg, 2003). As genres are defined as text types that serve particular rhetorical functions (Paltridge, 2012; Swales, 1988), there is no fixed number or category of text types that cover the many communicative functions of a discourse community. In his later work, Swales (2016) acknowledges that it is impossible for a discourse community to stabilise genres, as it will continuously refine them, for example by adding lexical items to its existing repertoire.

Also, a discourse community may be characterised by sub-communities that share common interests and goals which do not always align with the overarching community, which also affects genre stability (Swales, 2016). For example, a TESOL association can be seen as a large discourse community in which there are different kinds of research areas, commonly known as Special Interest Groups. Although these Special Interest Groups are also regarded as discourse communities, they are aware of the expected social behaviours of the larger TESOL discourse community. This view of different levels of discourse community led Swales (2016) to propose three types of *local, focal,* and *folocal* discourse communities. *Local* discourse communities are those of residential, vocational, and professional groups which have their own features, such as a use of particular terminology; when its members visit another local discourse community, this terminology may not be applied in the same way. A *focal* discourse community is normally seen at regional, national, or international levels, such as international associations. Its members are drawn from a wide range of locations, ages, and social statuses, with common interests and shared values. The *folocal* discourse community is a combination of the other two, which aims at the local communities that are branches of their focal one. Folocal discourse community members therefore are characterised by social behaviours that align with focal and local norms. Swales (2016) provides the analogy of a folocal discourse community being like a local branch of a bank. This local bank has its own style of operation that fits the local conditions but is still governed by the headquarters (the focal community).

The idea of the three kinds of discourse community, as Swales (2016) proposes, will be helpful in this study which investigates how student writers are guided by the social behaviours and conventions of their discourse communities, so it is necessary to identify which type of discourse community is being discussed and where its social behaviours come from. What is then problematic for writers is the set of conventions that are preferred in a particular discourse community, which Purves (1986) also calls a rhetorical community and points out its rhetorical conventions as tools that differentiates one community from another.

> …there is evidence that each discipline is also a "rhetorical community," which is to say a field with certain norms, expectations, and conventions with respect to writing. One can clearly see the differences among disciplines if one looks at the scholarly journals, even though language courses (being taught by humanistically trained teachers) often imply that the style of literary research is applicable to all other fields. (p. 39)

Students are able to explore and familiarise themselves with those expectations and values through faculty guidance and instructions and through the available written discourse of the community (Johns, 1997; Swales, 1988, 2016). However, the notable point for students to keep in mind is how they can negotiate between different genres, and the characteristics of the discourse community they belong to so that they are able to accommodate what is acceptable in their current contexts.

Rhetorical negotiation and accommodation

The first two principles of Intercultural Rhetoric highlight the importance of context, which governs what to write and how to write and which might be different from the understandings and practices of writing formed by a writer's sociohistorical-cultural background. The third principle of Intercultural Rhetoric in relation to producing and interpreting writing involves the processes of negotiation and accommodation. Identifying the contextual and cultural influences on writing, the complex and dynamic nature of culture, and the requirements of discourse communities for members to behave in accordance with the norms of the community, Connor (2008) highlights the need for rhetorical negotiation in relation to understanding and satisfying discourse community expectations.

Inspired by Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), Connor (1999, 2002) is particularly interested in exploring negotiation among interlocutors from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, which is also a starting point for Intercultural Rhetoric. This is of interest also to Giles and Ogay (2007), who discuss communicative events involving interlocutors of different dimensions of age, gender, class, and other factors. The interest lies in observing how communication occurs among these interlocutors, and how they accommodate their communicative styles so that messages are understood. CAT has its value in taking into account not only the immediate communicative event but also the socio-historical contexts in which the event is embedded (Giles & Ogay, 2007). For example, communicative strategies employed by interlocutors are negotiable, such as shifting from a British to an American dialect when discussing American-based topics (Connor, 2008; Giles & Ogay, 2007). Strategies used must align with the expectations of the interlocutors, and with their social groups, to both facilitate the meaning exchange and signal the identity of the interlocutors.

While oral communication is central to CAT, with increasing attention paid to accent shift, Connor takes analysis of the negotiation and accommodation of communicative strategies into the dimension of written communication. She does this by looking at both micro-level language use and the macro-level negotiation process across communicative situations, with understanding of the importance of the contexts of communication and the expectations of other interlocutors (Connor, 1999). An effective example which illustrates how this vital negotiation works is how a fish broker is successful in his business communication thanks to his understanding of the interlocutors’ cultures (Connor, 1999). He understands what his clients - who come from the very different cultural backgrounds of Japan and Estonia - expect to see in written messages. He successfully adapts his communicative strategies in English as a lingua franca to conduct business with these customers. Understanding what is expected in different situations is vital for successful communication. However, how such negotiation happens is still relatively unclear in relation to multicultural and multilingual writers.

Connor (2008) reminds us, however, that social, cultural, and educational backgrounds impact significantly on how writers write; and that negotiation and accommodation are crucial processes in writing to accord with readers’ expectations. For example, in the context of the European Union, Connor (2002) proposes training programs for Finnish grant applicants so that they can write effective grant proposals in English. Such advice and support would ensure the applications align with the expectations of the grant committee, members of which are not necessarily native speakers of English. It is important that grant proposals are comprehensible to these readers who will be evaluating and potentially approving them. Nonetheless, this is not always achievable for Finnish grant applicants. Other researchers have also acknowledged the need for cultural negotiation and accommodation in balancing the writer's practices and community expectations (Lee & Canagarajah, 2019; Viete & Phan, 2007), how to be more assertive and critical in writing, despite being uncomfortable or confused (Phan, 2001, 2011), and how to be able to switch between different rhetorical conventions and identities for different rhetorical situations (Park, 2013; Shen, 1989).

A summary of Intercultural Rhetoric and its relation to voice

The above discussion of Intercultural Rhetoric has provided an explanation of how text is influenced by contexts and cultures. As these concepts are significant in relation to investigating the practice of writing, they have been further elaborated using the concepts of context of culture and context of situation (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Halliday, 1999; Halliday & Hasan, 1985), large and small cultures (Atkinson, 2004; Holliday, 1999, 2016), and the necessary rhetorical negotiation and accommodation (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Connor, 1999; Holliday, 2016; Phan, 2001; Shen, 1989).

Voice as writers' self-presentation is described as "a multidimensional phenomenon" which is markedly dependent on "the way in which writers characterize their audience and other facets of the rhetorical situation" (Cherry, 1988, p. 252). The conceptual framework developed from Intercultural Rhetoric and other relevant concepts has conceptualised a multiplicity of layers of sociocultural and contextual influences on the process of acculturation, including the use of voice in academic writing which is indisputably not exempted from contextual and cultural conditions related to discourse communities. In line with this understanding, Kettle and Luke (2013) focus attention not only on students' academic experiences but also on the life experiences that frame and shape their views of their positioning in new contexts, and influence how they see themselves in the new world. Voice may not be a new concept to discussion of student writers (Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Zhang & Zhan, 2020); however, the process of constructing voice in texts under multiple layers of sociocultural-historical-political influences is complicated, and needs further investigation. The autobiographical self which is formed by a writer's socio-historical background is the starting point that captures the student's sense of self, their worldviews, their power relations in relation to others, and their enactment of cultural negotiation to be recognised in their communities (Ivanič, 1998). It is therefore important that the student negotiates their existing self with their becoming-self for a situationally acceptable voice in written discourse. Indeed, Connor (2008) and Matsuda (2001) have both proposed individual variations as the ultimate concern in the writing process.

Although Intercultural Rhetoric explains how the process of writing as a social construct happens, identifying principles which have been further supported by other research work, another point to consider is how to examine and evaluate the quality of voice in writing, which is also a focus of this study. With voice being such an important element of academic writing, especially at postgraduate level, its quality significantly impacts the quality of academic papers (Bowden, 1995; Sperling & Appleman, 2011). Therefore, discussion and examination of quality of voice is crucial.

RHETORICAL MODES OF PERSUASION - LOGOS, ETHOS, AND PATHOS

The concept of voice includes writers' self-presentations and positioning in relation to readers, with the aim of not only expressing the negotiated self but also of having this voice heard and accepted by readers in the discourse community. For this reason, the well-known *Modes* or *Proofs of Persuasion of Aristotelian Rhetoric* (henceforth referred to as the Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion), which include the concepts of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos, provides an essential reference, as successful writing is a means of communication between writers with credibility (Ethos) and readers with distinctive emotions and expectations (Pathos) through the use of effective argumentation in voice (Logos) (Amos et al., 2022; Braet, 1992; Herrick, 2016; Samuels, 2020). The Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion theory therefore functions as a reminder of what both writers and readers need to consider when producing and consuming texts.

In this model, Ethos refers to the credibility of the authors (the student writers in this research context) by showing that they are knowledgeable about the topic of discussion and obtain the quality of goodness. It is the responsibility of the author to sound trustworthy through the way that the speech is performed, which is seen as determining the author's credibility (Braet, 1992; Herrick, 2016; McCormack, 2014). This credibility impacts significantly on how the audience perceives the discourse, and the degree to which they are likely to be convinced by what the author is presenting. As noted by Braet (1992), the credibility of a speaker does not depend entirely on their appearance, rate of speech, body language, or social status, but importantly on the persuasiveness of their discourse. To achieve Ethos, the author needs to show understanding of their audience's interests, and to establish an argument they will approve of. Therefore, Ethos does not simply exist as a premise but is *created* through premise(s) established by the author for their audience. As Rambow (1993) postulates, if a speaker/writer wants to entertain a hearer/reader or make them identify with the beliefs or intentions encoded in communicated messages, the author need to understand how the receiver of the messages will decode them. Without this understanding, the encoded message will not make sense and the communication breaks down. Varpio (2018) explains this process by using the terms *similitude,* to suggest that the speaker needs to engage the audience in a mutual zone that has the potential to establish common and shared sense, and *deference,* to show respect to the other parties involved in the communication. Rhetoric as the art of communication and persuasion works as a reminder of how communicative discourse needs to be planned and presented to be successfully transferred to, understood, and accepted by the audience. Communication is purposeful, and only through understanding how messages will be decoded can they be effectively encoded (e.g. by effective text structure) (Rambow, 1993).

Pathos represents the emotions of the audience (the readers in this research context), who should be kept in mind to ensure the use of appropriate and persuasive writing strategies. This element of emotion is very important. It influences the audience’s mind and may (or may not) lead them to agreement. For an illustration for how powerful Pathos is, McCormack (2014) considers the influence of emotions in the case of legal discourse which is commonly regarded as according no place to emotion, as decisions are theoretically made based on a set of logical, reasonable, and determined rules. The effectiveness of persuasion, however, may become evident when the persuader is able to trigger emotions in the audience and in jurors, so that a case may be perceived by them in the same way as it is conceived by the persuader. Overusing Pathos, however, may create negative outcomes, as – in Aristotelian Rhetorical terms - persuasion should be rooted in rationality and the integrity of argument (Floyd-Lapp, 2014). In respect to both legal discourse (McCormack, 2014) and academic research papers (Varpio, 2018), the audience expects evidence and logical reasoning. Pathos should therefore act as a supplement to logical reasoning to achieve optimum consensus on the subject.

Another element that concurrently enhances the value of the persuasion is the logical reasoning known as Logos. Defined by Herrick (2016), “In the Rhetoric Aristotle uses logos to refer to proofs available in the words, arguments, or logic of a speech. Logos was the study of inference making or reasoning, a study closely related to logic” (p. 82). Logos in Rhetoric, therefore, deals with intellectuality and rationality, of “the ways people commonly reason as decisions are made about important public issues” (Herrick, 2016, p. 82). As Logos represents the logical reasoning that writers use to frame argumentation, it is often acknowledged as the most important element that supports the act of persuasion (Amos et al., 2022; McCormack, 2014; Samuels, 2020).

It should be remembered that not all kinds of voice are accepted in academic writing; an example of an unacceptable voice is the solipsistic voice, which does not include supporting evidence from relevant literature, or the unaverred voice, which involves no critical evaluation of existing literature (Wingate, 2012). In addition, readers may have their own views of what voice means, which leads to variations in identification and interpretation which in turn leads to different ways of assessment of the quality of voice (Morton & Storch, 2019). Therefore, an inclusion of the Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion theory could be helpful as a guide to the evaluation and examination of quality of voice in terms of how writers make good use of content knowledge to establish their credibility (Ethos), establish an informed voice that is developed through logical reasoning (Logos), and is appealing to and accepted by readers of the community (Pathos). All three elements are indispensable and should be considered as a whole for the effective act of persuasion in relation to the specific contextual conditions.

Intercultural Rhetoric and Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion have been used to suggest how writing can be explored and evaluated in relation to context. What is still lacking, however, is an analytical tool that helps to understand how voice is realised in individual writing. Voice is presented through language (Sperling & Appleman, 2011); therefore, a model that provides linguistic categories as elements of an analytical tool is worthy of further exploration.

SELF-POSITIONING MODEL

The identity of writers significantly shapes their individual voice because it involves negotiating the discoursal and sociocultural context in the process of developing an authorial voice which is then performed in compliance with linguistic/rhetorical conventions located in the particular discourse community. The self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) is relevant here for its conceptualisation of a writer’s voice in relation to positioning on the topic or task at hand and the associated linguistic categories needed to articulate and represent voice in writing (Brown, 2015; Burgess & Ivanič, 2010). While this model has been referred to by various names, for example, *subject-positioning* model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001), it is primarily directed at explaining ways that writers represent *themselves* in texts, particularly in relation to personal and social factors (Allison, 2018; Brown, 2015). Therefore, for the purposes of this thesis, the term *self-positioning* model, drawing on the work of Ivanič and Camps (2001) will be used to highlight writers' representation through different types of self-positioning in texts (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010; Ivanič, 1998, 2004; Ivanič & Camps, 2001).

The self-positioning model explains how writers simultaneously establish different positions in texts in relation to how they view the subjects (their *ideational* positioning), how they see their relation to the audience (their *interpersonal* positioning), and how they construct their written texts (their *textual* positioning). These forms of positioning indicate the writer's critical stance and their perspectives of the writer-reader relationship, which are subsequently enacted in their written texts. All three positions relate to the macro-functions of language (Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Hasan, 1985).

According to Halliday and Hasan (1985) in discussing the macro-functions of language, the experiential function refers to the use of language to describe a phenomenon. This can involve basic interpretation of a text at sentence level by analysing specific words that are used to represent either concrete, abstract, or metaphoric objects. In their example, Halliday and Hasan (1985, p. 21) use the phrase, "leave a kiss", in which they identify what *kiss* means: whether it is an object or an action, based on its relation to other words and to how we visualise it. Exploring how language reflects the subject of communication involves consideration of another important function: the logical relation between, for instance, parts of a sentence. In their example of, "you do (x) and I'll do (y)" (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, p. 22), the coordination of the two parts is presented by "and"; however, other words can replace this word, such as "if", which then requires a reinterpretation of the relation between the two parts of this sentence for a more accurate understanding of its meaning. Halliday and Hasan (1985) and Ivanič and Camps (2001) elaborate this understanding using the term "ideational" which refers to the writer's own interests, knowledge construction, and stance towards the subject of communication. According to Ivanič and Camps (2001), this ideational positioning represents the writer voice as 'having something to say' in their writing.

While the experiential function of language reflects the phenomenon, it is also important to consider language in terms of the relationship between participants in the communication, or the interpersonal function of language (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). There will be linguistic features that indicate this relationship, such as the use of first person pronoun and mood that reflect the relationship between the speaker/writer and the listener/reader. *Interpersonal positioning* also refers to the level of assurance and certainty demonstrated by writers and the consideration of the writer-reader relationship that can change how writers indicate their authority and power over readers (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Writer-reader relationship is an important consideration in writing, especially when writers are acutely aware of readers’ expectations (Connor, 2002; Hinds, 1987).

The self-positioning model also explains how writers simultaneously establish different positions in relation to how they construct written texts. Given the diverse functions of language, writers need to consider the exact use and structuring of language in texts. The term *textual function* or *textual positioning* refers to writers’ consideration of how their texts should be constructed when personal, institutional, and social factors are negotiated, to achieve the as-appropriate-as-possible voice and appropriate writing conventions. Voice in writing associated with a discourse community should represent a writer’s ‘self’ (Bowden, 1995) which is actually not the ‘true’ personal ‘self’, but the negotiated and accepted self in the community where the writer belongs (Matsuda, 2001; Snaza & Lensmire, 2006)

While Halliday and Hasan (1985) have described the multi-functions of language, Ivanič and Camps (2001) describe the occurrence of these functions as being simultaneous within a text. Therefore, all these functions indicated through various linguistic features need to be carefully examined within a text to identify (i) the demonstrated knowledge of the field and the socio-historical backgrounds that form the writer's voice, (ii) the negotiation and accommodation of voice with sociocultural, institutional, and personal factors, and (iii) successful presentation of that negotiated voice in text. These elements collectively constitute a voice and a rhetoric that is accepted in a discourse community.

HOW DO THE ABOVE THEORIES/CONCEPTS WORK TOGETHER AND GUIDE THIS STUDY?

From the theories and concepts discussed in this chapter, Intercultural Rhetoric works as the broad theory that guides the view of voice in texts as influenced by context and culture - the two concepts which need to be understood in their complexity, which involves innumerable layers of cultural and contextual conditions. As such, sociocultural and contextual negotiation stands out as essential if a writer's voice is to be successfully presented in the text.

In a multicultural environment such as Australia, there exist a number of cultural values that establish the norms in relation to how academic writing at postgraduate level should be performed. As has been evidenced, international students coming to this context bring with them a complexity of cultural values assembled from their life experiences, especially in terms of schooling and higher education. The immersion of these students in this new context involves interaction with different values and beliefs. They now need to negotiate, develop, and accommodate their voice in this particular writing context, which is framed and influenced by a larger context of culture; and they need to be able to still maintain their presentation of self in their writing, but in a way that is acceptable as stipulated by their new discourse community.

As one focus of this study is the quality of voice and how readers respond to it, the Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion theory is essential to identify and emphasise the elements of credibility of writers, logical reasoning, and effects on readers. Linguistic features that represent voice in academic writing, as presented in the self-positioning model, are essential elements of identification of how such negotiation and accommodation happens and of analysis of the quality of voice. It can also form the basis for further investigation into the process of acculturation in relation to voice. Putting all theories and concepts together, Figure 3.4 illustrates how they are interlinked in a systematic network.

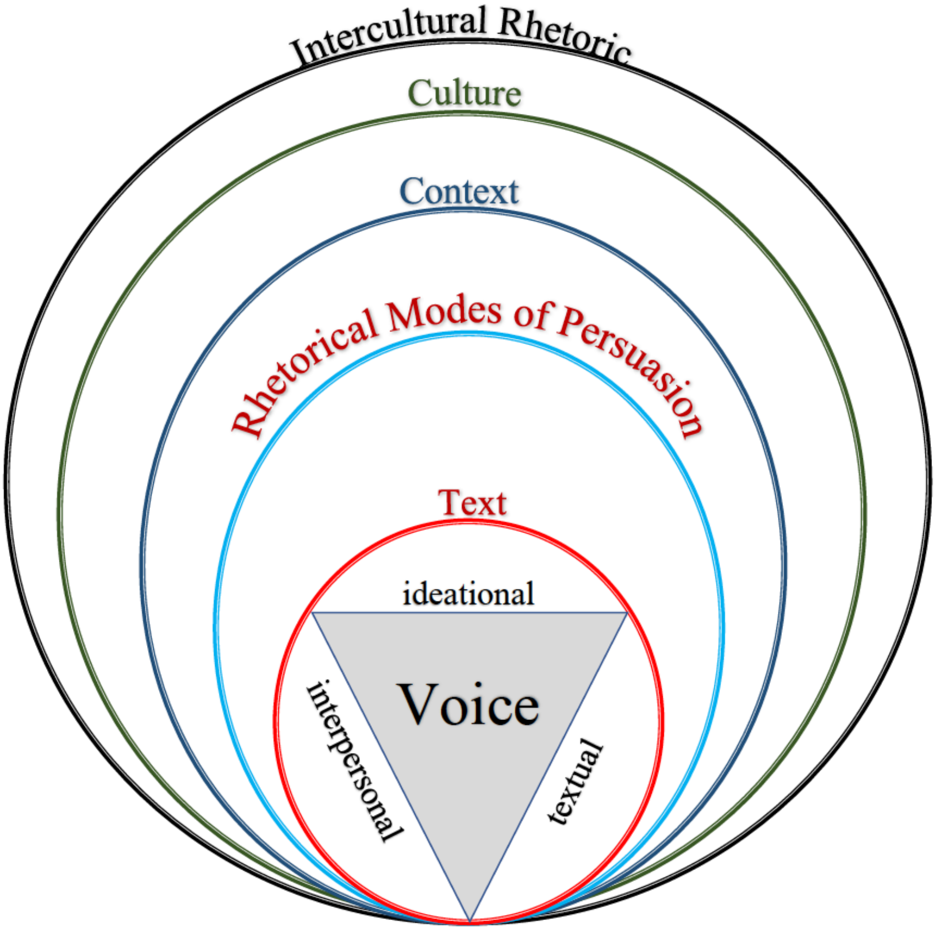

Intercultural Rhetoric
Culture
Context
Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion
Text
ideational
Voice
interpersonal
textual

Figure 3.4. An illustration of the conceptual framework for voice in academic writing.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has conceptualised how voice can be explored in academic writing in terms of the processes involved in its construction within sociocultural and contextual conditions, with a focus on how student writers are required to negotiate voice in academic writing through the use of the relevant rhetorical conventions. The chapter has also explained how voice can be realised in academic writing using certain linguistic categories and identified features that need to be considered when evaluating the quality and effectiveness of voice. These are the elements that will be the focus of this study when analysing international students' voice in academic writing. The following chapter explains how the study proposes to operationalise this conceptual framework. The research design, including participants, data collection methods and analytical tools, will be presented.

Chapter Four. Researching Voice in this Study

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters have made the case that voice needs to be explored in text in relation to context and with consideration of the writer's complex sociohistorical background. Furthermore, exploration of the quality of voice as an outcome of the writer's rhetorical negotiation and accommodation to satisfy readers' expectations is identified as being significant. The conceptual framework developed in the previous chapter has also proposed a linguistic framework to realise the writer voice. In this chapter, I introduce the methodological framework that guides the design of the study, data collection and analysis. I start with a discussion of the research aims and questions, which is followed by a section that presents my interpretivist paradigm and provides my justification for choosing qualitative research methods for this study. Under the umbrella of qualitative research, I propose the employment of case study and discuss the reasons for this choice. The participants and research context are then clarified, before I proceed with a detailed description of the specific methods for data collection and analysis and describe the research procedures. The trustworthiness of the research, how I position myself as the researcher, and associated ethical issues are also considered.

The design of this research project has been adjusted several times due to the influence of the global Covid-19 pandemic. My initial plan was to conduct a one-phase research design involving at least six international postgraduate students and their lecturer in a postgraduate course. However, the recruitment of participants was challenging as the number of international students at the selected research institution was relatively low compared to previous semesters. This could be the effects of national/regional border closures and the uncertainty around it being safe to travel and being fully supported in host countries (Croucher & Locke, 2020). Also, the pandemic changed the teaching and learning activities to online mode and isolated students from socialising with their peers due to lockdowns and travel restrictions (Nguyen & Balakrishnan, 2020). These stressful factors caused mental health problems and a sense of isolation for the international students who came to Australia to engage with a vibrant academic community at their chosen institution (Nguyen & Balakrishnan, 2020).

The dilemmas faced during the Covid-19 pandemic made it impossible to guarantee a case study with the expected number of participants; only two students and one lecturer volunteered to join my research project. Through consultations with my supervisors, I decided to implement a collective case study with participants from other courses; but I was declined by the people I reached out to for their participation. My concern then was how to design a study that was suitable for a doctoral research project, ethically sound, and responsive to the pressures associated with the pandemic that students and lecturers were currently enduring. I therefore expanded the research design to include an additional phase in the following semester, re-shaping the project as a two-phased research design. Phase One involved investigating the students' and lecturer's perspectives on the topic of voice in postgraduate writing, generated from course materials, students' written assignments, and the lecturer's responses in the form of grades and feedback. This phase was completed in one semester and involved the two students and one lecturer who participated voluntarily. The additional Phase Two was designed to bring the accumulated findings from Phase One to a focus group discussion with international students to elicit their accounts of writing experiences in Australia and other writing contexts, with a central focus on voice.

RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS

This research investigated the construction and performance of voice by international postgraduate students through their cultural and rhetorical adaptations to the requirements of written assignments when studying in Australia. The mobility of international students who come to Australia for postgraduate education has been increasing, and voice is recognised as an indication of students' critical engagement with their disciplines. I was also interested in how that voice was evaluated by the lecturer as the reader within the discourse community built around university academic courses; how they evaluated the students' practice of rhetorical negotiation, accommodation and adaptation to writing requirements. However, as noted in Chapter Two, voice is a challenging concept for these writers to understand and enact, and for readers to recognise in this context. This research therefore contributes to understanding how these students familiarise themselves with the rhetorical tradition in this new context.

Specifically, the research is designed to support a deeper understanding of (i) the characteristics of academic writing in a postgraduate course in Australia, (ii) international students' practices of cultural and contextual negotiation when developing a critical voice in postgraduate writing, (iii) the lecturer's realisation of the students' voice and their evaluation of the quality of that voice in written assignments, (iv) the extent to which there is an alignment between the understanding and expectations of the students and the lecturer in relation to voice in postgraduate written assignments, and (v) the students' reflections on their experiences in becoming successful writers in a new language and educational context characterised by cultural and rhetorical distinctions.

To address these research interests, I propose the overarching question: "How is voice in academic writing constructed, performed, evaluated, and reconceptualised by international postgraduate students in Australian higher education?" To respond to this question, the research is guided by the following sub-questions:

1. What are the rhetorical conventions of academic writing in a postgraduate course in Australia?
2. How do the international postgraduate students present their voice in academic writing at the initial and subsequent stages in the course?
    - What guides or influences the international postgraduate students' presentation of voice?
    - How does the lecturer evaluate the international postgraduate students' voice?
3. What are international postgraduate students' perspectives on the rhetoric of postgraduate academic written discourse in Australia?

There are different approaches that can be employed to seek answers to these research questions. The decision about what approaches would be most suitable depends largely on the researcher's philosophical stance which shapes their beliefs in relation to the phenomenon that is under examination and to how that phenomenon should be investigated (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, in order to select the most relevant research design for this study, it is useful to firstly discuss my philosophical stance or worldview towards the topic of voice in academic writing. Understanding this stance will support my justification for decisions made about how the research has been designed to best answer the proposed research questions (Creswell, 2009).

RESEARCH PARADIGM

Designing research means selecting specific instruments to collect and analyse data and deciding upon and explaining the philosophical stance taken. This stance is often known as the researcher's worldview and reflects the researcher's beliefs about how research should be designed (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). A worldview can be defined as "a basic set of beliefs that guide action" (Guba, 1990, p. 17). These philosophical beliefs include dimensions related to *ontology* which refers to the nature of reality or "how we see the world and our place within it" (Burton & Bartlett, 2009, p. 17); to *epistemology* which guides our understanding of what is counted as knowledge; and to *methodology* which provides the principles for research strategies and procedures to obtain knowledge (Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The design of a study is, therefore, ultimately an outcome of the researcher's philosophical worldview or stance and of their selected strategies of inquiry and research methods (Creswell, 2009). A worldview facilitates the decision of, for example, whether a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method design would best achieve the research aims and answer the research questions.

The two widely used worldviews in research are those of positivism and interpretivism, which determine whether the research is more quantitatively- or qualitatively- oriented (Bryman, 2001; Burton & Bartlett, 2009; Creswell, 2009; Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). Positivism represents the fundamental worldview that quantitatively-oriented researchers take, believing that the world is guided by laws and rules that - while perhaps not absolute - are always testable (Burton & Bartlett, 2009; Creswell, 2009). Objectivity and neutrality are key characteristics in quantitative research, so that generalisations can be made and causal relationships among the pre-determined variables are determined and justified through standardised measurements (Hesse-Biber, 2017). Interpretivism, on the other hand, takes into account human beings, with their life experiences, their beliefs, and their social contexts, when working to understand how the world works (Burton & Bartlett, 2009; Creswell, 2009).

In this study, I believe that a closer look at individual international student writers as they develop voice in their writing will create the opportunity for a more in-depth understanding of the complexity of voice and its development in a multilingual and multicultural setting. Voice is argued to be necessarily examined in relation to writing context, to a writer's complex but dynamic cultural identity, and to the rhetorical negotiation and accommodation to writing requirements in a new context. Researching voice, therefore, should attend to contextual influences, to individual writer's interpretation of the writing requirements in the new context, and to the decisions made in respect to how to comply with those requirements. As interpretivism advocates a more subjective standpoint and encourages seeing the world as a social construction, I selected the interpretivist position that allowed me to understand voice in academic writing from individual perspectives under contextual and cultural influences (Burton & Bartlett, 2009; Marvasti, 2004).

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative research is suitable for research related to Applied Linguistics area due to (i) the increasing consideration given to the sociocultural contexts that play influential roles in language teaching and learning, and (ii) the use of textual analysis to explore how discourse reflects the social (Croker, 2009; Lew et al., 2018). While making no claims in relation to how dominant qualitative inquiry has become in the Applied Linguistics field, Lew et al. (2018) acknowledge that qualitative research has "become a routine and well-accepted mode of inquiry in contemporary applied linguistics research, appearing regularly in peer-reviewed journals, books, and book chapters" (p. 93).

While quantitative researchers argue the need for objectivity and neutrality in relation to their research contexts and the participants' subjectivity, qualitative researchers are keen to investigate and identify participants' perspectives on the researched phenomenon, with an emic viewpoint that seeks "to understand the process by which participants make sense of their own behaviour and the rules that govern their actions" (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002, p. 13). Although the previous chapter has provided a conceptual framework to investigate the process of acculturation in relation to the development of voice in academic writing, different writers would employ different strategies in this acculturation process (Ene et al., 2019). As different individuals have different life stories, there will be no taken-for-granted views for researchers in this school of inquiry as there will be dimensions which are "extraordinary" in relation to "ordinary features of everyday life" (Silverman, 2013, p. 49). Individual variations in writing are so considerable that they contribute not only to the complexity but also to the diversity of writing (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Matsuda, 2001). It is therefore advised that individual writers be closely observed in order to understand their perspectives in the process of writing because generalisations on how writing is conducted seem irrelevant in terms of both research and writing pedagogy (Matsuda, 2001).

Voice in academic writing starts with the writer's autobiographical self that derives from their life histories and past experiences (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Ivanič, 1998). As discussed in the previous chapter, when writers enter a new writing context or a discourse community with different writing requirements, this personal self will be negotiated, so that a situated self is formed which aligns with the expectations of the new community. This process of negotiation is undertaken differently by different individual writers in different contexts. Qualitative research is therefore relevant to this study which investigates both the personal and the social selves under sociocultural conditions.

Research has previously been conducted that utilises a quantitative or a mixed-method approach to investigate voice through identifying and quantifying linguistic features (Hyland, 2001, 2005, 2010; Zhao, 2012; Zhao & Llosa, 2008). However, my study is interested in international postgraduate students' negotiation of voice in their written assignments, the lecturer's judgement on the quality of their voice, and the students' reflections on becoming a writer in a new context with different rhetorical conventions. To understand how voice in academic writing is formed through negotiation between the writers' existing understanding and the beliefs of their current discourse communities, I initially needed to understand these two belief systems, including the extent to which they are similar or different. Drawing on their socio-historical backgrounds, writers construct their own way of writing which differentiates them from other writers (Hirvela & Belcher, 2001); therefore familiarising myself with the participants' contextual and cultural conditions, by listening to and observing them, would allow me to understand their behaviours and the reasons behind their actions (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). These are the characteristics of qualitative research that would align well with the design and intention of my study.

As my main aim in this research was to understand issues related to *how* and *why* voice in academic writing is constructed and evaluated in a particular context, a qualitative case study has therefore been selected as case study is relevant for a study on voice in academic writing in a multilingual-multicultural context with its tremendous complexities (Simons, 2009; Yin, 2003).

CASE STUDY

Case study is a dominant form of inquiry in the field of Applied Linguistics (Lew et al., 2018). It enables researchers to answer the "how" and "why" questions relating to the occurrence and complexity of a phenomenon studied under its contextual conditions (Simons, 2009; Yin, 2003). In educational settings, case study research appears firstly in educational evaluation, where pre/post quantitative testing leaves a void in understanding *how* and *why* the test results were achieved. Case study research helps to address these two concerns, as it provides space to explain reasons for successes or failures in education policy and practice and to investigate the influential factors that inform educational policies and practices (Simons, 2009). It allows researchers to look at a phenomenon from multiple perspectives in order to gain an in-depth understanding of how a particular phenomenon happens and why it happens in a particular way (Simons, 2009; Yin, 2003). Qualitative researchers are also often interested in finding out participants' perspectives, formed by their experiences and by social/contextual conditions (Lew et al., 2018). Case study is therefore highly relevant for qualitative research, which aims to study the complexities of a phenomenon (Stake, 2003); it should not, however, be misunderstood as being exclusive to or synonymous with qualitative research (Simons, 2009; Stake, 2003).

According to Yin (2014), case study research investigates "a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 16). It can be understood "in terms of the process of actually carrying out the investigation, the unit of analysis (the bounded system, the case), or the end product" (Merriam, 1988, p. 34). Following discussion of qualitative case study, Simons (2009) makes some remarks about the strengths of case study which help to explain why I decided to use it for this research. Simons (2009) offered her definition of case study as "an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution or system in a "real-life" context" (p. 21). The aim of this research study was to study in depth the writing experiences of international postgraduate students in Australia in relation to the construction and performance of authorial voice, and the process and practice of rhetorical negotiation and adaptation which is required to produce successful writing and to project an acceptable voice. The study explores voice and writing from the multiple perspectives of the student writers and their lecturer as the primary reader. It also acknowledges the influence of the writing context, including elements such as rhetorical conventions and students' sociohistorical backgrounds. A case study was therefore relevant to this investigation involving how and why students present voice in their writing, how this writing with voice is evaluated, and how students reflect on their writing experiences in Australia.

Conducting case study research is to understand “the singularity and the concept and the boundary of the case” (Simons, 2014, p. 457). Simons (2009) suggests that the identification of the boundaries of a case can occur through a number of factors, from a concrete “physical location, such as a classroom or an institution” to a more abstract notion of “people, policies and histories” (p. 29). This classification of the boundaries of a case, which draws on the purpose of the research, is designed to assist the selection of appropriate research methods (Simons, 2009; Stake, 2003). A case study then is designed to investigate a phenomenon in-depth within a particular bounded context. The idea of *bounded context* is important (Duff, 2008) because the clear definition of the boundary of the case will help the researcher to identify the subjects to be researched, and will also determine a reasonable scope of study (Duff, 2008). A common problem in qualitative case study research is the excessive breadth of a topic or subjects; therefore, it is necessary to understand how to bind a case (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

While employing case study research design to explore my selected topic, I kept in mind the need to determine the boundary of the case and the contextual conditions and culture that influence the writing practices of the students (Simons, 2009, 2014, 2015). So, to be specific, the case study reported in this thesis was bounded in a Master’s level program at an Australian university which required particular writing conventions, ways of evaluating writing, and factors that enabled and constrained the students’ understanding and performance of writing and voice.

Advocating case study research, Flyvbjerg (2006, 2013) highlights some common misunderstandings about its values, clarifying each point. Firstly, a shortcoming of case study research is an associated lack of general theoretical knowledge as it only provides contextually bounded understanding. However, while he acknowledges the need for theoretical knowledge as a general rule, he sees this as providing a very beginning level of understanding. In Social Sciences particularly, contextual conditions are also taken into serious consideration (Silverman, 2013). It seems impossible for rules to be applied or conclusions to be reached in different contexts, as the role of context in knowledge construction relating to human beings can never be ignored. A predictive theory in Social Sciences is unlikely to exist. The point of case study research is to study not only the common but also the particular that each case lays bare. An in-depth understanding of the complexity of a phenomenon can therefore be achieved when general theoretical knowledge is combined with a careful examination of a case. This understanding is central to case study research. The second argument often tabled against case study research is the fact that it is impossible to generalise based on the restrictions of a case. However, an example of a contribution of case study may be its ability to test pre-determined theories and to suggest modifications to them. For example, Flyvbjerg (2006, 2013) and Silverman (2013) report that deviant cases can in fact falsify an existing theory, a conclusion which leads to a consideration of revision or rejection of a particular theory. This is related to the third misunderstanding, which claims that case study is more suitable for generating hypotheses than for testing or building theories. Advocating for the value of deviant cases in theory testing, Flyvbjerg (2006, p. 228) provides an example of the statement “all swans are white” as providing a general rule; if a single case of a black swan is found, that rule is rejected and needs revision.

Informed by Flyvbjerg (2006, 2013) and Simons (2009, 2014, 2015), this study made no attempt to generate general rules about academic writing or voice that are applicable in all contexts, but rather aimed to provide a greater understanding of writing practices and the negotiation for acceptable voice by international students as multilingual-multicultural writers. This was selected as an important but under-investigated issue. Specifically, this study aimed to explore:

(i) how voice was constructed and presented in academic writing by international postgraduate students within a course of a postgraduate program in Australia (the bounded system in this case study);
(ii) why those students constructed and presented their voice in particular ways;
(iii) how that voice was evaluated by the lecturer and why it was so evaluated; and
(iv) how the students in the program reflected on the process of becoming successful writers in a new context.

To summarise, the study has focused on voice and the writing experiences of a cohort of international students and the assessment practices of their lecturer in a postgraduate program. In-depth understanding of the construction, presentation, and evaluation of voice was only achievable if careful consideration was given to the contexts of writing and to the participants themselves. Writing is not a universal or generic issue; it involves individual variations (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Connor, 2008; Matsuda, 2001), and researching individual writers provides the means of understanding their diverse perspectives and the dynamic and complex nature of cultural negotiation for acceptable voice in academic writing in a specific socio-political context. The following sections describe in more detail how the case study in this research project was conducted, including the research context, participants, and the adopted research methods.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

This study was undertaken at The Coastal University (pseudonym, hereafter TCU) which provides academic education programs at different levels, from short courses to higher degrees by research courses. TCU offers a wide range of postgraduate education programs with a number of international students enrolled in these programs annually. While there is an increasing degree of flexibility in terms of offerings, many students at TCU still organise their course load around two semesters in an academic year, completing four courses each semester if they are full-time students and one or two if enrolled part-time.

To enter these postgraduate programs, the students need to hold at least a recognised Bachelor's degree. Evidence of English proficiency is also required for prospective students for whom English is not their first language. This evidence is established through measures such as IELTS Academic (requiring at least 6.5 overall, and at least 6.0 for individual bands), TOEFL iBT (requiring at least 79 overall, at least 16 for Listening and Reading, at least 21 for Writing, and at least 18 for Speaking), Pearson PTE Academic (requiring at least 58 overall, and at least 50 for all individual bands), Cambridge English Score (requiring at least 176 overall, and at least 169 for individual bands), or other approved certificates or evidence of English proficiency. All test results must be from assessment taken within two years preceding application to the postgraduate program.

Having researched course information relating to courses in these postgraduate educational programs, I recognised the common focus on requirements of written assignments, such as the ability to write a literature review or a critical essay of at least 2000 words in which an understanding and critique of literature were explicitly mentioned in Assessment details in the course outlines. As noted in Chapter Two, this requirement for students to engage in critique is prioritised as providing the opportunity for them to develop a critical and situational academic stance (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). When completing written assignments, the students need to pay attention to both the *context of situation* of the course and the assignment and the broader *context of culture*, in the form of the academic culture of the institution and the country where the students are studying (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). TCU was considered to be a potentially relevant research site which could provide suitable participants and enable the collection of data in the form of students' written assignments.

PARTICIPANTS

I designed two research phases as a response to the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic, as explained earlier in the chapter. The first phase focused on students' writing and voice in the *Innovations in Education* course, a core course in the Master of Educational Principles (MEP) program at TCU. Phase Two was a focus group discussion with international postgraduate students in the same program at TCU at the end of their program, in which they discussed their writing experiences in Australia. After obtaining ethics approval from the Ethics Committee at the institution (Appendix One) where I was studying, I started approaching the potential group of participants for my study. Simons (2009) advises initiating contacts with the "gatekeeper" where the study is to be undertaken. I therefore contacted the Head of School and the Program Convenor where I planned to collect data, after researching online to find out what courses were offered that might be relevant, and to gain permission to collect data in that division. Stake (2003) discusses consideration of criteria for selecting participants in case study research. In the following section I describe the participants that I recruited for my study and why I believed them to be suitable.

For Phase One, I involved two international postgraduate students from China and the lecturer of the *Innovations in Education* course in the MEP program at TCU. The course was selected because the students were required to complete written assignments (e.g., a critical essay or literature review) for assessment purposes. I targeted international students in this research due to my interest in how language, context, and culture are influential in shaping, performing, and perceiving voice (Connor, 2002; Kaplan, 1966; Kettle, 2017; Kubota & Lehner, 2004; Phan, 2001). I chose to research postgraduate students because there is a general expectation that postgraduate students will demonstrate a strong voice in their writing (Allison, 2018; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Kettle, 2007, 2017; Kettle & Luke, 2013; Phan, 2001).

The lecturer of the course was also approached to participate in the study as I was interested in the assessment process and how the lecturer's evaluation of students' written work impacted the development of their writing and voice. In assessing the students' assignments, she also assessed their critical voice, based on her own cultural beliefs, playing the role of 'gatekeeper' to the discourse community. I believed that researching both the students and the lecturer would provide a comprehensive view on both presentation/performance and evaluation which would provide insight to the multicultural writer-reader relationship (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010; Kaplan, 1966; Matalene, 1985) which was also a focus of the study.

In relation to recruiting the participants, the course lecturer was sent an email that communicated my interest in researching academic writing and voice in the course. This email also provided details of my study with an attached ethics-approved Participant Information Sheet. Simons (2009) suggests a short written piece of one page to highlight the research aims. I was careful to provide enough information about the research in a precise way in the body of the email so that participants would be aware of the research but would not get anxious through encountering a too detailed description of it. I also strictly followed my institution's code for responsible conduct of research when approaching the research site and participants. It should be noted that all information exchanges were conducted online, following the institutional Covid-19 Safe Plan.

Simons (2009) suggests that it is useful to visit the research site to establish a relationship with potential participants, and I followed this procedure and consulted with the lecturer. After she agreed to participate in the project, I approached the students, in consultation with her. With her permission, I visited the online class sessions, and the lecturer placed me in a breakout room with international students in the course so that I could introduce my research and discuss it with them. I also made use of the online course page to post a video recording of my introduction to the research and the relevant research forms. Two international students in the course emailed me, indicating their interest in participating in my research. I organised an individual meeting with each of them via Zoom to further discuss the research and to respond to any concerns they might have. I also mentioned their rights in relation to participation and withdrawal procedures.

When the students contacted me to agree to participate, they also emailed me their Consent Forms which they had downloaded from the online course page where I had posted them. I then emailed them a Participant Biographical form (Appendix Two) to obtain information about their educational, linguistic, and professional experience, and also their English writing experience. Given that voice is an outcome of negotiation between the writer’s self and their social self in their discourse community (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Ivanič, 1998; Ivanič & Camps, 2001), it was important to have information about the students’ cultural and literacy backgrounds. I assumed that their backgrounds would influence their construction of voice (Connor, 2008; Hirvela & Belcher, 2001). Specific background information that I looked for and gained from the Participant Biographical form included:

- language proficiency (e.g., IELTS scores, other achievements)
- educational history (e.g., previous degree programs – places of study, other courses/training in additional to undergraduate programs)
- professional experience (years of employment, place of employment, work characteristics)
- writing experience (e.g., previous degrees, professional writing).

For Phase Two, I involved six international postgraduate students who were in the final year of their MEP program at TCU, including the two student participants in Phase One. These students were from different countries (China, Papua New Guinea, The Philippines, and Vietnam) with different education and work experience. At this stage these students had either completed or were going to begin their final semester in the program. Further information about student demographics is presented in Chapter Eight. These students were selected as they had almost completed their degree programs, which meant that they had extensive experience of academic writing and authorial voice in the Australian context. Also, having been immersed in Australian academic life for an extended period of time, they would have a strong sense of the differences in the characteristics of academic writing in Australia and their home contexts. This awareness would assist their reflections when discussing the diversity and complexity of academic writing and authorial voice, and the need for rhetorical negotiation and adaptation. For this focus group, I employed the snowball sample technique in which I contacted a participant in Phase One for her assistance in seeking other participants. My contact details were given to those potential participants, and they sent me emails to express interest in joining in the research. I sent them Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms to provide further information about the research and a Student Background Information sheet. The date of the discussion was set to fit in with the convenience of the participants. The focus group discussion was conducted online via Zoom, as per Covid-19 protocols.

DATA COLLECTION

Although case study research can be quite flexible in its methods, this does not mean that a researcher randomly goes to the research site and starts observing or interviewing. A case study needs careful design, although it is regarded as being more emergent than pre-determined (Simons, 2009). Methods such as interviews, observation, and the collection of documents for analysis can ensure in-depth exploration of a phenomenon (Simons, 2009). Qualitative researchers typically draw on "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (Denzin, 1970, p. 241), using at least two sources of evidence (Bowen, 2009) to establish credibility in relation to understanding the phenomenon comprehensively. In the section that follows, I provide details about each of the different data sets collected, and I present the procedures of the two phases of the research design.

Phase One – Academic writing and authorial voice in a postgraduate course

This phase was designed to answer the first two research questions that focused on rhetorical conventions of postgraduate academic writing, the students' writing practices and presentation of voice, and the lecturer's evaluation of writing and voice in one postgraduate course. As guided by Intercultural Rhetoric theory (Connor, 2008), I would examine text in relation to context. The use of course materials as data was therefore necessary to understand the rhetorical conventions of the writing context that would influence both the students' writing practice and the lecturer's evaluation. Also, as voice is embedded in writing and is linguistically recognised, the collection of students' written assignments was necessary for analysis, informed by the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) to realise voice in text, combined with the Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion (Herrick, 2016) to understand how writing and voice were evaluated and what was seen to constitute successful writing and voice in the context of this specific course. The collection and analysis of the course materials, the students' written assignments (both early and submitted drafts) (Galbraith & Vedder, 2019), and the lecturer's feedback would form the basis for follow-up interviews in the form of 'talk around texts' (Lillis, 2008).

Course materials

The examination of any academic writing needs to be undertaken in relation to the immediate context of writing. Students are conceptualised as emerging members of an academic community; to become fully-fledged members, they need to understand and comply with the ideologies and requirements of their respective communities. Students' written assignments constitute a particular genre, with associated generic expectations to be complied with. Assignments as a specific genre are not "free for all" (Paltridge, 2012, p. 66); students are obliged to perform in accordance with specific demands of the contexts. Violating these expectations places them at risk of failure as their writing will not be accepted by other members of their communities (Kettle & Ryan, 2018; Paltridge, 2012).

The investigation of academic writing and authorial voice, therefore, is inseparable from the contexts where writing takes place (Connor, 2008; Paltridge, 2012); and it is further suggested that the writing norms of any academic course, as a discourse community, are communicated and distributed to students by lecturers through different instructional channels. These may include course materials that outline the expectations of the gatekeeping lecturers and task demands that orient students' performances (Hackney & Newman, 2013; Kettle, 2007). It is necessary that students be explicitly instructed on what to write and how to write by more experienced members in their academic communities - who are primarily the lecturers. As researcher, I needed to understand the requirements in the writing contexts - the rhetorical conventions referred to in Research Question One - to help me to understand the students' writing practices, their construction and presentation of voice, and the lecturer's assessment practices.

The expectations communicated by the lecturer influence the students' understanding of the requirements of academic writing in the course – the writing in which they embed their authorial voice. Therefore, before analysing the students' written assignments and ultimately making claims in relation to their understanding of academic writing and voice, I needed to access the channels through which the lecturer explained the characteristics of academic writing at postgraduate level and the specific demands of the written assignments. However, I found that the lecturer's expectations and the task demands as indicated through course materials, assignment guidelines, and marking criteria tended to be communicated as tacit knowledge, that might be unrecognisable to students. Therefore, other sources, such as exemplars and feedback provided on students' written performances, were invaluable in determining what was required to perform well in the writing tasks (Carless & Chan, 2017; To & Carless, 2016). I was granted access to the course page and collected the course materials, including course outlines, assignment guidelines, marking criteria, and exemplars. These documents provided details of the course objectives, task demands, and specific guidance which illustrated the lecturer’s expectations of the students’ performances in their assignments.

Written assignments

As writing is considered as both a product and a process (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Connor, 1987), a significant body of research on academic writing generally - not only on the topic of voice - has made use of written products as the starting point to investigate a wide range of topics. For example, Ivanič and Camps (2001) drew on their self-positioning model to identify linguistic features such as the use of nouns, adjectives, modality, and many other features that represent the writers’ positions in their writing, seeing writing firstly as a product. However, these researchers also explored students’ perspectives and decisions in relation to how to represent themselves in writing, and the reasons for those self-representations, through conducting interviews with them to gain an understanding of the writing process. Hyland (2001, 2005, 2008b) and Yoon (2017) focused on the linguistic categories of hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mentions to identify the stances taken by writers of journal articles; and Morton and Storch (2019) investigated how research supervisors recognise their students’ voice, concluding that they tend to look for either specific linguistic features or segments in the texts that show students’ viewpoints. Meanwhile, Connor (2008) has reminded us of the need to explore the process of writing by drawing from both texts themselves and the writers’ perspectives to better understand how the texts are produced. Therefore, I firstly made use of these written texts as artefacts to identify and realise students’ voice in writing as a product of this research.

The starting point, then, was a collection of writing products produced by the student participants as part of their assessment requirements in the course. The objective was to analyse their responses to the task demands. This text analysis would form the basis for my investigation into how writing is produced which embeds voice and is influenced by various factors involved in the process (Bowen, 2009). From my observations, postgraduate education courses at TCU usually require students to produce assignments of at least 2000 words, which would demonstrate the required understanding and evaluation of the relevant literature. I therefore collected the two written assignments of the student participants at initial and subsequent writing stages, including the drafts that they produced during the process and the final versions after they had been graded by the lecturer. I also collected relevant course documents to identify how voice was performed by the students and evaluated by the lecturer.

There are different ways to track the student writing process, such as the use of think-aloud protocols and student drafts. Galbraith and Vedder (2019), however, express concern about the heavy cognitive load that writers may suffer from think-aloud protocols when they need to complete multiple tasks simultaneously. Using students' drafts could be helpful in reducing this cognitive load. As writing is a way of transmitting content knowledge from long-term memory to a more concrete written form, using multiple drafts is suggested as an aid to writers' development of their understanding of content knowledge at different writing stages, as writers may make use of different sources to improve the quality of their writing, such as additional materials or interactions with others (Galbraith & Vedder, 2019; Kettle & Ryan, 2018; Leijten et al., 2019; Wingate & Harper, 2021). Therefore, students' drafts of written assignments can assist in tracking the development of their understanding of both content knowledge and rhetorical features, as perceived through changes they make in the drafts. I collected and analysed the drafts to identify changes students had made as the basis for discussion and reflection in the later retrospective interviews (Student Interview One – Appendix Three), and to explore their cognitive processes when undertaking the writing process (Lillis, 2008; Morton & Storch, 2019). This data would contribute to providing answers to the second research questions regarding elements that guide or influence students' presentation of voice in writing at different writing stages.

The lecturer's grades and feedback on assignments were analysed to also inform the later interview to explore the lecturer's perspectives on the students' writing performances against the task demands. The analysis of the graded assignments allowed me to examine and identify the students' responses to the written tasks, including their performance of voice, and in turn to ascertain the lecturer's views of student voice. This analysis of the written assignments and the lecturer's feedback provided insights into how the students linguistically, syntactically, and rhetorically presented their voice in their written discourse and about the lecturer's perspectives on the quality of that voice.

To understand the students' experience in becoming successful writers in the new academic context, subsequent written texts (e.g., the second assignment) were used to track development in their writing (Morton & Storch, 2019). Research has evidenced the usefulness of teachers' feedback on students' subsequent performances, transforming unsatisfactory assignments into more successful ones (Kettle & Ryan, 2018). Therefore, exploring the subsequent writing stage of the second assignment was necessary to investigate students' (re)conceptualisation of voice in academic writing and ways to become successful writers. The second written assignments were therefore collected after they had been graded and commented on by the lecturer, to explore how students had further developed their understanding of the rhetorical requirements in completing written assignments at postgraduate level. The use of later writing has been variously employed in composition studies to investigate students' experience and development in writing performance (Brown, 2015; Morton & Storch, 2019).

Talk around texts

An evaluation of voice based only on the analysis of written assignments may have limitations (Connor, 2008; Galbraith & Vedder, 2019; Stapleton, 2002). Conducting text analysis can support the realisation of students' voice and the lecturer's evaluation; however, it is not sufficient in itself to gain insights to how that voice is formed or evaluated, or to the influential factors in the formation and evaluation of voice. For that reason, I conducted interviews in the style of those commonly known as *talk around texts* (Lillis, 2008), in which both the students and the lecturer expressed their understandings of voice and the reasons for their respective performances and evaluation of voice in the written assignments (Lillis, 2008; Morton & Storch, 2019).

As text analysis can support the understanding of *how* voice is presented and evaluated in assignments, talk around texts can be used as a supplement to identify *why* voice is constructed, performed, and evaluated in particular ways. Advocating an ethnographic approach, Lillis (2008) identifies herself as a researcher who is interested in exploring a phenomenon in context. In relation to researching academic writing, she argues against a sole focus on texts as products, thus separating writing from context. She regards talk around texts as a method that recognises texts themselves as primary materials for follow-up supplementary discussion.

The use of talk around texts was helpful to me. I was able to draw on excerpts of the texts and thus gain access to the perspectives of the student writers as producers and the lecturer as reader and consumer of those excerpts. This technique enables researchers to develop "openness to writer-insiders' comments, perspectives, and discourses, whether or not these relate to a research focus (textual or otherwise) predefined by the researcher" (Lillis, 2008, p. 360). This aligns with what Creswell (2009) identifies as a key characteristic of qualitative research: the fact that while the researcher plays the crucial role in deciding the research methods, they need to learn from participants' behaviours and commentaries in making meaning of the issue under investigation. While unstructured and open-ended interviews are very useful in gaining access to the opinions of participants (Creswell, 2009), a researcher must have in mind intended outcomes from the interviews, and must guide the communication accordingly (Richards, 2003; Simons, 2009). Therefore, talk around texts in the form of semi-structured interviews, drawing on elements identified in the texts, would help to capture the perspectives of the students and the lecturer – remaining open to the emerging perspectives of the participants.

Three interviews were conducted with students to obtain more detail relating to the process of developing and constructing voice. I paid close attention to the linguistic categories used by the students in their assignments - both the drafts and the submitted versions - drawing on the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) to retrieve information relating to why they had decided to write the way they did, as well as to track changes in different writing stages which could indicate development of their voice (Morton & Storch, 2019).

The first interview with the students was conducted after they had submitted their first assignment. This interview aimed to ascertain their initial understanding of what was required in written assignments in the course and the support that they had received such as supplementary materials and instructions on how to complete the assignments (Student Interview One – Appendix Three). Secondly, I identified how students negotiated between their own beliefs about voice in academic writing and the beliefs they thought were expected in their new discourse community. I focused on specific voice segments, based on the self-positioning model, and tried to elicit reasons for their performance of voice in the written assignments, including changes in voice between the draft stage and the submitted versions. Text analysis and interviews at this stage helped to answer the research question on how voice was presented and why it was presented in the way it was.

The second interview was undertaken after the students had received comments and grades from the lecturer on the first assignment. It was conducted to gain students' perspectives on their performance, based on the grades and feedback provided by the lecturer, on their reconstructed understanding of academic writing and voice as informed by the feedback, and on necessary preparation now for Assignment Two (Student Interview Two – Appendix Three). I questioned them about what they understood by the lecturer's feedback on their work, whether the comments aligned with what they had attempted to express in the writing, and how they would take these comments as experience to inform subsequent assignments in the course. I noted the answers for further comparison with feedback and interview with the lecturer, to investigate whether the lecturer's expectations in respect to written voice aligned with the students' understanding. To recapitulate, my aim was to investigate the students' perspectives on their construction of voice through cultural and contextual negotiation, and how - based on the lecturer's feedback - they reflected on the experience and process of becoming a writer in the new context. I was also interested in their perspectives on how authorial voice was expected to be demonstrated in this course as an example of a discourse community.

After the first assignment was returned with grades and feedback to the students, I also interviewed the lecturer as I was interested in how she had come up with her judgements of the students' voice within the first assignment (see Appendix Four). Being aware that all readers bring their own experience in interpreting and evaluating writing to the reading of a text, I aimed to learn about the lecturer's teaching experience, particularly in relation to teaching and marking international students' assignments. General information about the course was also obtained through questions about the use of materials, instructional and teaching approaches, and her expectations of students' performances in accordance with the course objectives. I then pointed to the voice segments which showed students' ideational, interpersonal, and textual positioning, using the self-positioning model noted in the initial analysis, and I obtained her feedback on these segments to see how she understood the issue of students' voice in academic writing, and to ascertain whether the voice segments aligned with her expectations in terms of postgraduate written assignments. To investigate how she had assessed the quality of voice, it was relevant to draw on the marking criteria, in combination with the Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion (Braet, 1992; Herrick, 2016) that considers the logical reasoning of voice and how writers persuade readers, to explore what she understood as constituting successful writing and authorial voice in the context of the course.

The third interview with the students was conducted after they had received the grades and feedback for Assignment Two. This interview was intended to explore the students' elaboration on how they had applied their constructed knowledge about academic writing and voice, as learned from the first assignment (the initial writing stage) into the second assignment (the subsequent writing stage). Also, as case study research is emergent rather than pre-determined in style, some issues arose from the first interviews that required follow-up in the second ones, in order to capture the complete picture of the phenomenon (Richards, 2003; Simons, 2009). Lillis (2008) also reminds of the risk of not gaining enough detail of participants' perspectives in one-off interviews. Hence a number of conversations may be needed to fully capture the participants' perspectives on the phenomenon (Creswell, 2009; Lillis, 2008). Data based on the first assignment alone, including a number of its drafts, may not indicate or track the students' development or transformation to successful writers. I believed it necessary therefore to conduct subsequent text analysis and interviews with the students once the second assignment was completed, to realise and identify development in authorial voice and in terms of perspectives on being successful writers in the Australian higher education context (Student Interview Three – Appendix Three).

Phase Two – Focus group discussion on academic writing and authorial voice

In this phase, I conducted a focus group discussion with six international postgraduate students who had just completed[1] or were heading into the final semester of the MEP program at TCU. I aimed to capture the subjectivities of the international postgraduate students in relation to the characteristics of successful academic writing in Australia, the articulation of their authorial voice, the strategies adopted to succeed in academic writing, and their writing experiences in different contexts (Appendix Five). The discussion focused on the students' experiences with academic writing in a more general sense, instead of concentrating on assignments in a particular course, and it aimed to answer the third research question.

The focus group discussion was an adjunct research method designed to bring the findings from the previous research phase to a broader group of international students (Hennink, 2014; Wilkinson, 1998). A 'hall-mark' of a focus group discussion is seen to be its potential to have participants interact and co-construct knowledge (Morgan, 1997). Participants may not need to achieve consensus in the discussion, but they are given the opportunity to accept, modify, scaffold, or challenge contributions by their peers, to construct a comprehensive view of the topic under discussion. Writing is governed by sociocultural-historical conditions that are not identical among writers and that makes individual writing trajectories distinctive (Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Thus, interactions in the group discussion helped with conceptualising the qualities of postgraduate academic writing, the concept of authorial voice, and the strategies needed to succeed in writing in Australia. The group as a whole was able to draw on their diverse socioculturally-historically constructed perspectives (Polio & Friedman, 2017) to contribute to the discussion.

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[1] For those who had just completed the Master of Educational Principles program, they had not yet graduated and still maintained their student status at the time of the focus group discussion.

At the start of the group discussion, I introduced the focus, the topics that would be covered, and the ground rules of the discussion. I also gave the participants an opportunity to raise any questions before they got to know each other. I moderated the discussion by raising different topics in the form of questions, encouraging the students to present their ideas, and ensuring that they all had an opportunity to share their perspectives to enrich the discussion. The discussion started with their general views on postgraduate academic writing in Australia, based on their experiences in their programs. The discussion then shifted to comparing strategies to write successfully, talking about their understanding of authorial voice in writing and their perspectives on academic writing in different contexts. I raised questions as guidance and let the participants discuss among themselves. In some cases, I called upon a student to initiate the discussion as the starting point for others to follow. I encouraged interaction, because a focus group discussion is designed to facilitate interaction among group members to co-construct the meaning of the phenomenon being discussed. Table 4.1 summarises the phases of the study, the research questions, the participants, and the data collection tools relevant to each phase. Table 4.2 outlines the research procedure of both phases.

Table 4.1

A Summary of the Research Design

Research Phase	Research questions	Participants	Data sources
Phase One	RQ1: What are the rhetorical conventions of postgraduate writing in Australia?	- Within one postgraduate course - Two international postgraduate students - One lecturer	- Course materials to identify task demands as rhetorical conventions - Lecturer’s feedback on students’ assignments to clarify the course materials’ information - Interview with the lecturer to clarify the course materials’ information
	RQ2: How do the international postgraduate students present their voice in academic writing at the initial and subsequent stages? - What guides or influences the international postgraduate students’ presentation of voice? - How does the lecturer evaluate the international postgraduate students’ voice?		- Students’ written assignments including early drafts and graded assignments • Initial writing stage: Assignment One • Subsequent writing stage: Assignment Two - Lecturer’s feedback and grades to identify evaluation practices - Interviews with: • Students to identify writing practices, understanding of writing and voice in Australia, influential factors on the writing process and presentation of voice, and the transformation of writing practices and voice in both writing stages in the course • Lecturer to identify perspectives on the rhetorical conventions, quality of voice and writing of the students in the course
Phase Two	RQ3. What are international postgraduate students’ perspectives on the rhetoric of postgraduate academic written discourse in Australia?	- Six international postgraduate students	- Focus group discussion around the themes found in analysis of Phase One data to reveal the students’ reflections on postgraduate academic writing in Australia and the concept of authorial voice

Table 4.2

A Summary of the Research Procedure

Research Phase	**Step**	**Actions**
Phase One (July 2020 – Feb 2021)	1	Ethics application and approval
	2	Participant recruitment and consent obtained
	3	Collecting and analysing course materials, students’ drafted and submitted versions of Assignment One
	4	Interviewing the students (Interview One)
	5	Collecting and analysing graded Assignment One
	6	Interviewing the students (Interview Two)
	7	Interviewing the lecturer
	8	Collecting the students’ Assignment Two (with grades and feedback)
	9	Interviewing the students (Interview Three)
	10	Writing report on Phase One
Phase Two (March 2021 – October 2021)	1	Redesign of research project to include Phase Two; Ethics variation submitted and approved
	2	Participant recruitment and consent obtained
	3	Conducting focus group discussion
	4	Analysing data of focus group discussion
	5	Reporting data of focus group discussion

DATA ANALYSIS

This section provides details on how texts and interviews were analysed in my study. I illustrate how the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) was used to identify the students' voice in written assignments. Specific examples are given for a clear understanding of how language represented voice. In addition, I also explain how data from the interviews were analysed and coded, using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2017) and guided by the conceptual framework developed in the previous chapter to answer the research questions. In this section, I describe how the written texts (e.g., course materials and students' written assignments) and interview data were analysed. I also explain how themes were formed from the combination of both text and interview analyses.

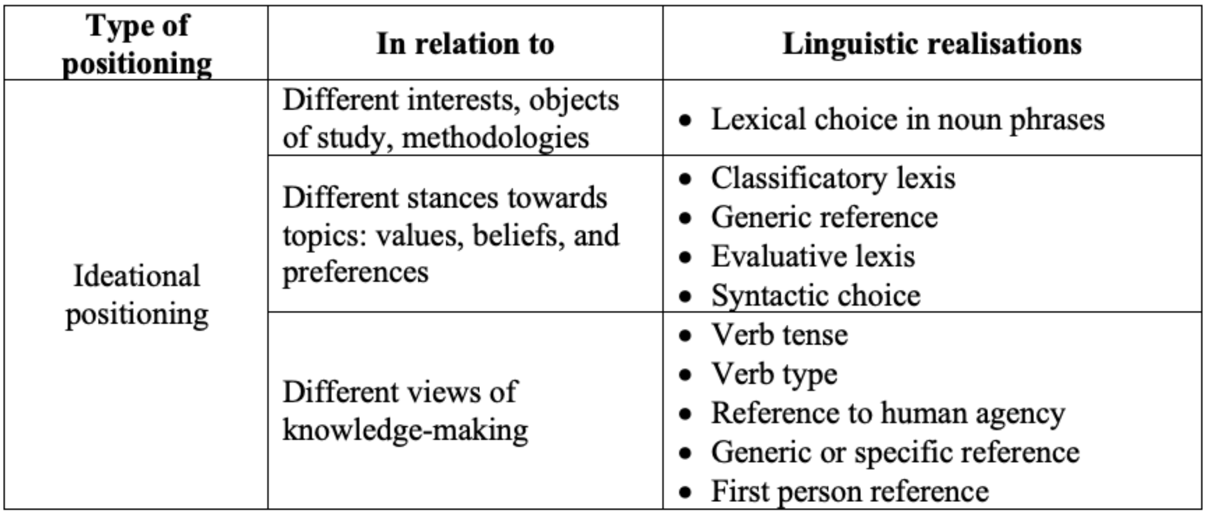
Course materials and written assignments

To analyse written texts, I followed the linguistic categories used in the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) to identify the language embedded in these texts and to capture their meanings. For the course materials, I focus on the lecturer's use of language in the task information and marking criteria sheets to explain the task demands to the students as well as to describe the different levels of quality and grading.

Regarding students' voice in texts, Sperling and Appleman (2011) have clearly stated that "voice is language performance" (p. 71), so I firstly looked for the voice that the students 'performed', or projected, in their written assignments by drawing on the linguistic features that they had used in their texts. The self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) proposes three components of voice, *ideational, interpersonal,* and *textual* positionings (Brown, 2015; Ivanič & Camps, 2001) and the related linguistic categories. This model was used as the analytical framework at the first stage of my analysis. To illustrate how it was used, I provided some examples that Ivanič and Camps (2001) reported on in their study, and also provided details of how the model was later employed by Brown (2015). These examples formed the foundation for the analytical tool for my analysis.

Ideational positioning

Ivanič and Camps (2001) divide the ideational positioning category into three areas: (i) "different interests, objects of study, methodologies", (ii) "different stance towards the topics”, and (iii) “different views of knowledge-making” (p. 11). Each of these categories associates with its linguistic realisations as detailed below.



Type of positioning	In relation to	Linguistic realisations
Ideational positioning	Different interests, objects of study, methodologies	• Lexical choice in noun phrases
	Different stances towards topics: values, beliefs, and preferences	• Classificatory lexis • Generic reference • Evaluative lexis • Syntactic choice
	Different views of knowledge-making	• Verb tense • Verb type • Reference to human agency • Generic or specific reference • First person reference

Figure 4.1. Linguistic realisations for ideational positioning, adapted from Ivanič and Camps (2001, p. 11).

Brown (2015) mentions that lexical choices that are exclusive to a particular discipline not only identify a writer as a member of that community but also indicate their credibility as having expertise in that area. An example provided was an excerpt of a student’s writing in the field of Information Systems Engineering: “Transient and permanent entities are distinguished by the symbol ("X"), it maps into a Terminate Action, i.e., the object will be destroyed” (Ivanič & Camps, 2001, p. 12). According to Ivanič and Camps (2001), the lexical choice of adjective and noun in this sentence - *transient and permanent entities* - identifies the writer as an insider of the Information Systems Engineering discipline with its objects, methodology, and discourse.

The use of lexis is also related to how writers express their views towards the topic about which they are writing (Brown, 2015; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). An obvious indication of this is the use of adjectives as evaluative lexis to indicate how writers perceive the characteristics or quality of the subjects. For example, one student writes: “To untangle the complexities of an unsustainable present, it was imperative to look at its roots in the dominant economic ideology” (Ivanič & Camps, 2001, p. 13). Using *unsustainable* and *imperative* in this sentence, the student shows her[2] judgement or stance of *the present* and *the look at the roots* she is writing about. Also employing this model, Brown (2015) provides a more simple example with evaluative features: “It is critical to create an appropriate learning environment in school because the quality of student’s behaviours makes a significant difference to school and student outcomes” (p. 61). Brown (2015) underlines *critical, appropriate,* and *significant* as indications of the writer’s evaluation of topics such as the *creation* of a learning environment, *learning environment* itself, and the *difference* in the outcomes respectively.

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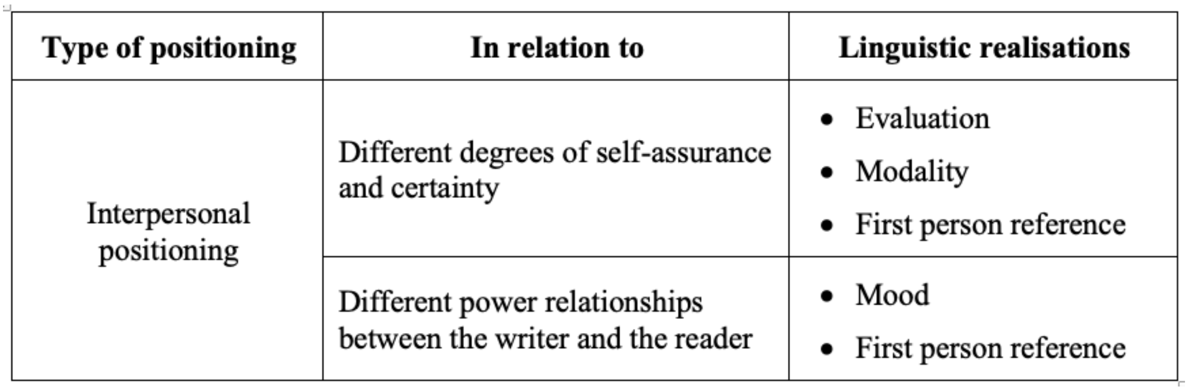
[2] Third person singular pronouns in these examples are used in accordance with the identity of the student in the original sources.

Ivanič and Camps (2001) also explain that how knowledge is constructed is indicated by tense or sentence voice. For example, the use of the simple present tense represents facts or universal truths, and the use of passive voice can signal an avoidance of human agency in constructing knowledge. The act of knowledge making also represents the paradigm subscribed to by the writers. For instance, positivists see knowledge construction as impersonal, so the use of the passive voice and the avoidance of first person pronouns is preferred. The verb use in this case suggests that researching, thinking, and writing should be referenced in passive forms, such as *is characterised, are distinguished,* or *should be stated* (Ivanič & Camps, 2001, p. 19). For those who contest this impersonal model of knowledge construction, the use of the active voice with a first person pronoun - such as *I consider the technical framework, I will describe,* or *according to my knowledge and experience* (Ivanič & Camps, 2001, p. 20) - positions the writer as the main focus and agent of the sentence. However, it should be acknowledged that using active or passive forms in a sentence also largely depends on individual agency, as well as on characteristics of the discourse community (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). In the case of academic discourse, formality and established distance from the writer is widely preferred (Hyland, 2001); thus it has been demonstrated that the use of a third person pronoun and the passive voice is sometimes a better choice than the first-person reference and active voice - in spite of the fact that humans are active agents in knowledge making practices (Brown, 2015).

Interpersonal positioning

The two points that represent interpersonal positioning are (i) “different degrees of self-assurance and certainty” and (ii) “different power relationships between the writer and reader” (Ivanič & Camps, 2001, p. 11). While the degrees of assurance and certainty are indicated by using evaluative lexis, modality, and first-person reference, the power relationships between the writer and the readers are indicated by mood and first-person reference. Figure 4.2 below outlines the linguistic categories that represent interpersonal positioning.



Type of positioning	In relation to	Linguistic realisations
Interpersonal positioning	Different degrees of self-assurance and certainty	• Evaluation • Modality • First person reference
	Different power relationships between the writer and the reader	• Mood • First person reference

Figure 4.2. Linguistic realisations for interpersonal positioning, adapted from Ivanič and Camps (2001, p. 11).

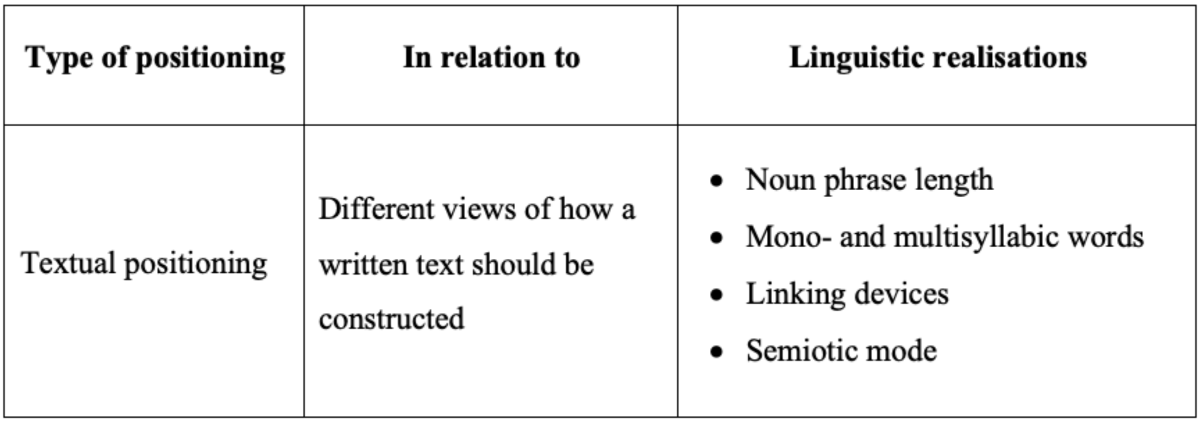
Using one student's assignment as an example, Ivanič and Camps (2001) identify the uncertainty of the student's voice through the use of modalities and evaluation in phrases such as, "It *could* be said" and "It *cannot* be *assured*" (p. 23); but they also highlight a more affirmative position that the student achieves by using phrases such as, "What is *true* is that" and "Knowles *accurately* says" (p. 23). In these latter instances, the writer indicates her certainty and assurance through using evaluative language such as "true" and "accurately", but she has not yet expressed her authoritativeness as there is no explicit reference to her agency in these instances. In another case, when writing "I believe that" (p. 26), the voice of the author is taken to be explicitly indicated and the authority is claimed through the first-person reference "I" and "believe" to claim both authorship and certainty.

Self-assurance and certainty in the writers' statements also reflect their positioning in power relationships with the readers (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Ivanič, 1998). Being certain of what has been written, the writers are able to claim the authoritativeness and their power over the readers. To illustrate, the use of a declarative or interrogative mood reflects the level of certainty and by extension the power of the writers over the readers (Brown, 2015; Ivanič & Camps, 2001).

Also, pronouns are tools that indicate the nature of the writer-reader relationship. To illustrate, in the case of "We, as biologists" (Ivanič & Camps, 2001, p. 26), a student is using "We" as a collective pronoun representing biologists, which the reader finds confusing. The ambiguity in using this collective noun occurs as "We" can also be interpreted as indicating that the student is suggesting equality and shared identity between himself and the readers of the text, who are being assumed to be other biologists in his community. The text identifies him as a biologist and makes an inclusive reference in relation to his assumed readers. There was not a clear explanation of who the “We” referred to, and Ivanič and Camps (2001) suggest that its use may be a result of the student’s first degree in Biology, making him a biologist or reflecting an adaptation to the use of pronouns in the genres that he acquires from the discourses that he encounters. What can be concluded in this example, however, is that using the first-person reference indicates an equal positioning of the writer with other specialists in the field, therefore claiming credibility for their voice and for knowledge as the property of researchers in the discourse community (Brown, 2015; Ivanič & Camps, 2001).

Textual positioning

Textual positioning refers to writers’ decisions on how their texts should be constructed in line with discourse community expectations (Ivanič & Camps, 2001, p. 11). In Figure 4.3 below, I detail the linguistic realisations for this kind of positioning.



Type of positioning	**In relation to**	**Linguistic realisations**
Textual positioning	Different views of how a written text should be constructed	• Noun phrase length • Mono- and multisyllabic words • Linking devices • Semiotic mode

Figure 4.3. Linguistic realisations for textual positioning, adapted from Ivanič and Camps (2001, p. 11).

This textual positioning is discerned through a number of indicators. For example, one student in the study by Ivanič and Camps (2001) wrote long sentences, long phrases with multiple words, and multisyllabic words, which can be interpreted as a demonstration of her academic voice. Coupled with the use of linking devices to form complex sentences containing several subordinate clauses, this student’s writing choices can be taken as her way of presenting her “imbued-with-academic-literacy” voice (Ivanič & Camps, 2001, p. 28) or showing herself to be highly “academically literate” (Brown, 2015, p. 67). On the other hand, another student example uses plain English, with short sentences, simple lexis, and mono-syllabled words as he attempts to *speak* through his writing so that readers can *hear* his voice. Through textual positioning, these writers have made decisions about their self-representations and the way that they would like to communicate with their readers (Ivanič &

Camps, 2001). These techniques can also be considered as providing a guide to readers of the texts on how to read and interpret their writing, although readers may also have their own ways of interpreting these texts (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Another point to consider is how students include other semiotic modes, such as visuals, fonts and sizes of words, or spacing, all of which are factors for consideration when reading texts to identify writers' implied meaning and voice as communicated via these semiotic forms (Ivanič & Camps, 2001).

To summarise, using these linguistics realisations adopted from the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) of text analysis allowed me to understand the complexity of the writers' voice in relation to specific linguistic features and textual presentation. Ivanič and Camps (2001) indicate that these voice types and characteristics are employed simultaneously in writing. I decided, therefore, that I needed to start with text analysis of linguistics categories as a basis for further exploration of the process of voice construction, undertaken through talk-around-text interviews. I drew on the self-positioning model to identify voice segments in students' written assignments and to read and analyse the feedback to see how the lecturer evaluated the voice. This model was used to analyse both the students' drafts and their submitted versions of the assignments to identify how they developed their writing and their authorial voice through noting changes in linguistic and rhetorical features between the drafts and the finished products.

In reference to quality of voice, I focused on the written feedback of the course lecturer to see how she had identified and evaluated it. I then employed the Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion (Ethos, Logos, Pathos) (Braet, 1992; Herrick, 2016) and the course assessment criteria to understand why voice was realised and evaluated in the way that it was. This model worked as a reminder of the three elements that I could draw from to examine the quality of writing and voice. These elements included the logical reasoning that the students projected into their voice, making them credible to the lecturer, and how that voice triggered an affective response in the lecturer as reader.

The identification of so-called voice segments and the feedback provided were noted for discussion in the following interviews with both the students and the lecturer. In the case that using the self-positioning model helped me to identify additional segments of voice not previously recognised or assessed by the lecturer, I noted those extra segments for mention in subsequent interviews, to gain the lecturer's perspectives on them, to determine why they had not been recognised, and to enquire how they had been evaluated. I also noted instances in the assignments noted as voice by the lecturer that either I was unaware of or they had not been classified by the self-positioning model. I also put these unrecognised features aside for discussion in the interviews, to provide further insight into how voice was defined by the lecturer in that course. It was useful to acquire additional insights as new themes for the conceptualisation of voice. An example of this was the use of a quote as the topic sentence in one of the paragraphs in a student's text, which the lecturer had questioned as an instance of student voice in that paragraph. I took note of that point and brought that to the interview with the lecturer for further clarification in terms of her definition and expectations of voice (see Chapter Six).

Talk around texts

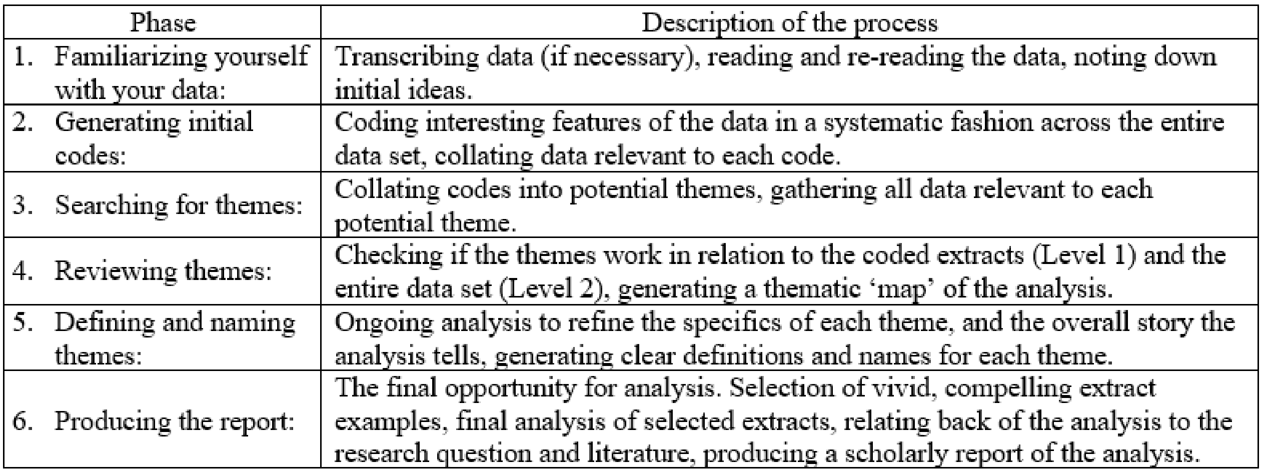
The data from the interviews were transcribed and thematically analysed according to methods proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). "Thematic analysis is defined as the method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). In addition, a theme "captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). From these definitions it is clear that when conducting thematic analysis, researchers are already aware of the themes generated from the research questions and will be looking for segments in the data set that are relevant to these (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2017).

An issue worth considering in relation to thematic analysis relates to the *pattern:* it should be questioned as to *what* and *how much* information from the data constitutes a pattern or a theme. Braun and Clarke (2006) admit that there is not a stable answer to how much information will form a theme, so quantifying segments from the data is not a must for realising a theme. For example, Braun and Clarke (2006) illustrate how six themes are identified in a study of one of the authors from 26 talk shows about lesbians and gay men. The themes are identified from a range of 2 to 22 out of 26 talk shows. This means that it is not only patterns that obtain the highest instances from the data set that will be recognised; qualitative research and thematic analysis are flexible, so researchers will decide what constitutes a theme in their research as long as they are able to identify important and relevant pieces of information that can help answer the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). What determines a theme, therefore, is its *relevance* to the research questions rather than its *prevalence* in the data set.

Thematic analysis can be conducted in either - or both - an inductive way, in which themes are generated through analysis, or a deductive way, which is guided by topics and themes existing in the literature and in established theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The decision on which of these ways of coding will be most suitable depends on the researcher and on the research questions (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Writing is guided by social-cultural-political conditions and involves individual variation (Clark & Ivanič, 1997); and this study has adopted a hybrid approach of both deductive and inductive methods of coding within one analysis for a complete capture of data-driven and theory-driven codes (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). In other words, using both methods of coding, I am able to answer the research questions by: (i) finding evidence for the general themes guided by the questions (e.g. different kinds of voice, linguistic categories representing voice, the types of feedback on voice, sociocultural and personal factors involved in constructing and evaluating voice, and the meaning of being a writer in a new context); (ii) generating sub-themes from the codes; and (iii) being open to the emergence of new themes in the data analysis process that help to modify the constructed conceptual framework related to the subject of constructing and evaluating voice in the postgraduate writing of multilingual-multicultural writers.

The interpretation of data for themes can be conducted at semantic and latent levels of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). While the former refers to the semantic surface meaning retrieved from the data by identifying linguistic features, the latter goes beyond to explore the beliefs and values that underpin the meaning. In other words, the latent level allows researchers to “theorize the sociocultural contexts, and structural conditions, that enable the individual accounts that are provided” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 85). My research not only pays attention to the surface level of language use in written assignments, but also explores the underlying assumptions and beliefs that guide how the voice is constructed and evaluated in the assignments. Reaching the latent level of thematic analysis is therefore necessary for obtaining an in-depth understanding not only of *how* voice is constructed and evaluated, but also of *why* that construction and evaluation is undertaken in the way that it is.

Thematic analysis is useful for analysing and coding data to answer the research questions which frame this study. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the coding and analysis process consists of six phases.



Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

*Figure 4.4.*The process of thematic analysis, reproduced from Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87).

Conducting thematic analysis requires tracking back to the data several times rather than performing a straightforward, one-off act; therefore well-organised data storage is imperative (Nowell et al., 2017). After collecting the data from the participants, I therefore named and stored the data using labels that best represented them, using pseudonyms of the participants, the kinds of data, and dates of collection (e.g., Participant One_Assignment One_01.01.2020). I also used a Word document with different tables to keep a record of the data with descriptions (Nowell et al., 2017), so that it was easy to keep track for further referencing. In addition, I moved backwards and forwards between the above phases to ensure accuracy of the data analysis and interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017).

At the first phase of familiarising myself with the data, after having organised them effectively, I listened to the recordings several times to gain an initial understanding and then started transcribing the recordings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). While transcribing, I kept in mind distinctive features of the data. Firstly, it was my intention to include fillers, repetition, and inaccuracies identified in interview extracts. These features provide evidence of the authenticity and spontaneity of speech by both the lecturer and the students, regardless of whether English was their L1 or L2 (Fox Tree, 2010), even though these features were not significant in terms of the speakers' propositional intentions (Carney, 2022). The analysis then was focused on meaning and while transcribing, I created a hybrid form of naturalised or verbatim transcription that included speech features linked to meaning making (MacLean et al., 2004; Oliver et al., 2005). The transcripts were cross-checked with the recordings several times for accuracy. This transcribing and cross-checking process helped me to familiarise myself with the data and formed my initial understanding of the meanings being articulated in them by the participants.

The second phase of analysis was to generate initial codes. After transcribing and acquainting myself with the ideas contained in the text transcripts, coupled with the general themes generated by the research questions (e.g., voice - ideational, interpersonal, textual positioning), I coded the data and identified the features that were relevant to these themes (see Appendix Six). Codes are used as labels for segments in the data and are collated for themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Coding allows the researchers "to simplify and focus on specific characteristics of the data" (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 5). As this study employed both deductive and inductive thematic analysis, I carefully and extensively searched for relevant information and formed as many codes as possible from the data so that new themes or sub-themes were generated. Deductively, I searched for linguistic features that were relevant to the forms of positioning listed in the self-positioning model (e.g., evaluative judgements, knowledge construction). Inductively, there were features in the assignments that were identified by the lecturer as being related to voice, such as the topic sentence of a paragraph or the use of quotes. While these features were not included in the self-positioning model, within this study they are considered relevant to the context and conditions of being an international student and were indeed, highlighted by the lecturer. NVivo12 was used in combination with pen-and-paper coding to maximise recognition of codes in the data. For example, I inserted the transcripts of the interview data into NVivo and relevant segments in the transcripts were highlighted and coded. For pen-and-paper coding, I printed the transcripts and used highlighters of different colours and underlining and circling to identify codes.

The third phase was to form themes from the codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After establishing the codes, I started analysing them to group them into relevant and meaningful sets for themes (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000). A theme is defined as "an abstract entity that brings meaning and identity to a recurrent experience and its variant manifestations", so it "captures and unifies the nature or basis of the experience into a meaningful whole" (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000, p. 362). Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest using thematic maps or tables so that the codes relevant to one theme can be allocated into a network to avoid missing or misplacing codes. In this study, codes were analysed for both main themes and sub-themes. For those codes that did not belong to any pre-defined themes, they were considered as emerging themes, provided that they were still related to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The use of NVivo assisted in organising codes and themes. Using NVivo, I formed themes by moving all the relevant codes into the themes. This helped me to see clearly the themes, the embedded codes in those themes, and the relevant segments in the data for the codes. As the study involved data from written artefacts (e.g., course documents, written assignments with grades and feedback) and interviews, these data sources were compiled in the analyses to form the themes. To explain, artefact analysis was conducted following the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) which had already established some pre-determined themes in relation to different forms of positioning. I compared the themes from my written text analysis with those which emerged from the talk around texts to ensure that the data from both sources complemented each other, as guided by the self-positioning model. This approach provided voice as associated with particular language use in text, together with language features that the students might use in interviews. Hence cross-checking between the meaning suggested by language features in the texts and the meaning articulated by the students in the interviews was important for establishing the overarching themes. For example, the theme “Veronica’s authoritative voice as a legitimate knowledge provider” was the result of analyses of evaluative lexis her written texts and her responses in the interview (see Chapter Six). Further details of how I made use of data from these sources to form the themes can be found in Appendix Six.

The fourth phase of this approach was to review themes after they were formed from codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I reviewed the themes I had, the coded extracts, and the recordings to ensure that I had the relevant codes and accurate themes from the codes. This stage involved both reviewing and refining themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For the first stage, I reviewed the extracts to make sure that they were correctly coded, and that those codes were accurately collated into themes. The second stage was conducted at a broader level, where I checked the themes to see if there were any overlapping ones, or ones with little supporting information so that additional coding might be needed. “The researcher should be able to clearly show how each theme was derived from the data” (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 10). At the end of this stage, I considered how these themes were interrelated to form a general picture for the later report. Notably, I cross-checked between the codes and themes in NVivo and those in pen-and-paper form to ensure their consistency. In addition, interpreting data from the interviews following thematic analysis provided reference to the research contexts so that the information was accurately understood (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In the fifth phase of the analysis, after the codes and themes were reviewed and revised, each theme was carefully defined and named so that a logic was created about the theme and its relationship with other themes and sub-themes; in other words, a story was created (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For example, the theme of a student's *heterogeneous* voice was an umbrella for the sub-themes of *authoritative* voice, *hesitant* voice, and *confused* voice (see Chapter Six). The labelling also ensured the relevance of the theme and its contribution to answering the respective research question. In naming the themes, I made sure that the names were interesting and explicit to help readers form an immediate idea of what they were about (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The meaning of each theme would also be elaborated in the written report which constituted the sixth phase.

This written report was the last stage of thematic analysis. It was produced with reference to the literature and to the research questions to ensure the consistency of the research and to construct an argument rather than to provide a simple description of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). Extracts were provided with specific linguistic features for illustration, these being carefully selected to ensure that they were interesting to readers and showed the merits of the research. The use of extracts as examples was *discussed* rather than simply *provided* (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I elaborated on the relevance of those extracts to the codes and themes that they were embedded in.

Focus group discussion

The data from the focus group discussion were also analysed following thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I also conducted both deductive and inductive coding methods to find responses to the pre-determined themes and to take into consideration emerging themes from the data. While analysing the focus group discussion, I also paid attention to the interactions between the participants. These interactions were demonstrated through their agreements, disagreements, elaborations, and requests for clarifications of others' contributions. I believed that these interactions provided insights to how the concepts were perceived individually and finalised collaboratively by the group. Consideration of these interactions informed me of commonalities and contradictions in the participants' perspectives on academic writing and authorial voice in Australia, which constituted the themes to demonstrate the diversities and complexities of these topics.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics is indispensable in all kinds of research in terms of the respect and protection given to research participants and research sites (Creswell, 2009; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). The key point to consider when conducting research is to not expose the participants and the site to risks. It is therefore necessary for researchers to be aware of the vulnerability of the participants and the sites to ensure that no harm occurs to them through their participation in the research (Simons, 2009).

Ethics in research should refer to procedural ethics and ethics in practice (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Procedural ethics represents hurdle task: researchers need to hand in an ethics application to a committee for approval before conducting the research. Ethics in practice involves ethical matters which arise during the research process (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). I therefore started with procedural research ethics by preparing documents to apply for ethics approval from the relevant Ethics Committee at the institution where I was enrolled. Once the ethics application had been approved, ethics were carefully considered and strictly followed throughout the research process.

Following the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (Australian Government, 2018), the participants were fully informed of the elements of the research, including its aims, methods, procedures, demands, risks, and significance in a way that was suitable for the participants. I made use of emails and online meetings via Zoom, to ensure the safety of the participants during the Covid-19 pandemic and for the convenience of not having to get to the research site. Only the interview with the lecturer was conducted in person, following her suggestion. After being fully informed, they decided if they wanted to participate and whether there were any risks or concerns that needed to be carefully considered (Simons, 2009). After fully informing the participants of the research, I obtained informed consent from them (Simons, 2009). I provided informed consent forms to the participants, and by signing those forms they agreed to voluntarily participate in the research. They had the right to withdraw at any point (Creswell, 2009). The introduction to the research and to the consent forms was clearly conducted at my first meeting with the participants, as some who were not familiar with this procedure could be intimidated, thinking that they were going to participate in some very serious action (Nguyen, 2015). When informing them of the research and inviting their participation, I was careful to mention that there was no power dominance or coercion that forced them to be part of the study (Simons, 2009).

When recruiting the participants, ethics was a consideration in respect to both participants and persons in authority, known as the *gatekeepers* (Creswell, 2009; Simons, 2009). The gatekeepers in my study were the course lecturer, the program convenor, and the Head of School where the study took place. These individuals were carefully informed of the research and reassured that there would be no risks to their institution as the research site. For the lecturer, as the gatekeeper in the course, these issues were prepared and introduced to her so that she could decide if she was able to participate. I also emailed the Head of School and the program convenor to inform them of the study and data collection procedure. I obtained the consent of both the research participants and their site, so the research was in this respect ethically conducted.

Another point of research ethics relates to the issue of confidentiality in respect to both participants and the research site. The researchers, participants, and the site (e.g., schools, organisations) need to be aware of any risk when their confidentiality might be violated. Therefore they were carefully informed that anonymity was a way of protecting them from any risks that non-confidentiality might pose (Allmark et al., 2009; Creswell, 2009). Pseudonyms were used in my study to maintain the anonymity of the participants and the research site, and any sensitive or personal information was removed (Simons, 2009). The storage of data from the participants and the site were secured, following the ethics guidelines of the institution where I was studying.

Ethical consideration was also important at the presentation and dissemination stage of the research (Creswell, 2009). I ensured that the data were accurately interpreted and presented in the research without falsifying or inventing information to achieve the purpose of the study. The participants had the right to control what information should become public to avoid any risks to themselves or others (Simons, 2009). As Ebbs argues, “the person doing the telling has the power to choose what they will tell” (Ebbs, 1996, p. 221). Any data included in the thesis that might be risky to participants - such as quotes - were discussed with them to ensure accurate interpretation, and their permission to use the data was obtained. I also ensured that any use of the information (e.g. for publication purposes) was properly acknowledged (Creswell, 2009).

RESEARCH TRUSTWORTHINESS

An area of interest in qualitative research has been the emergence of criteria that can be used to ensure trustworthiness in research (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Guba, 1981; Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Lincoln, 1995). The foundational and general guidelines of trustworthiness presented by a leading scholar, Guba (1981), include truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. These criteria are suggested for all kinds of research (Silverman, 2017). In qualitative research these values can be referred to as *credibility*, *dependability*, *transferabilit*y, and *confirmability* (Guba, 1981; Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Credibility refers to the true value or the validity of the research (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Guba, 1981; Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In a qualitative study, it is important to bear in mind the fact that the phenomenon under investigation is full of complexities. This means prolonged engagement by researchers with the research participants and with the site, to fully observe the phenomenon. This long-term engagement should be characterised by persistence so that the researchers are able to capture and make sense of a sufficient amount of relevant information. Also, because of the complexity of the researched phenomenon, triangulation is needed, which in qualitative research means linking at least two sources of data to build a comprehensive account of the phenomena being researched (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Guba, 1981; Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Polio & Friedman, 2017). It is also suggested that interaction with other experts in the field is a useful way to enhance the credibility of the study, as this allows researchers to receive feedback on their understanding of the phenomenon after a prolonged period of engagement at the research site (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Guba, 1981; Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

These features of credibility were sufficiently taken into account in my study as I spent a considerable amount of time familiarising myself with the researched course, the participants (both the students and the lecturer), the assessment, and the culture of the research site. I also collected data from several sources, including course materials, to enhance my understanding of the characteristics of the assignments. Additionally, the written assignments and interviews were checked several times in the data analysis. My examination of voice in the written texts involved theoretical triangulation in that I drew from different theories and models to frame the investigation and conduct the analysis. My supervisory panel were those who I came back to for feedback to strengthen my understanding of the phenomenon and of the writing of the thesis.

Dependability refers to the stability of the data (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Guba, 1981; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Enhancing dependability involves conducting an “audit” or a peer-debriefing in relation to the data (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Guba, 1981; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In this study, the process of data collection, analysis, and interpretation was guided by my approved ethics application, university milestones and progress reports, and my supervisory team.

Transferability refers to the applicability of the research findings to other contexts (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Guba, 1981; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Despite the fact that it is not aiming to make generalisations or universal rules, this study is mindful of transferability. Guba (1981) suggests the use of theoretical or purposive sampling, which means selecting participants and research sites with a purpose. This study satisfied this criterion by justifying why the group of international students at postgraduate level and their lecturer were selected to explore the complexities of the cultural negotiation of voice in written assignments. Also, thick description was helpful in relation to enhancing the transferability of a study. As a qualitative study focuses on specifics in a given context, this context - including the site, the participants, the methods, and the findings - was described in detail. This would be helpful in relation to other contexts with similar features, who might see the relevance of the study to their situation.

The final point in relation to research trustworthiness is the confirmability of the study. Confirmability means “the degree to which the findings are determined by the subjects (respondents) and conditions of the inquiry and not by the biases, motivations, interests or perspectives of the inquirer” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). It is acknowledged that researchers are influenced by their worldviews, experiences, and perspectives in relation to research topics (Simons, 2009). Therefore, in order to guide researcher engagement with the data and analyses during the process of data collection, analysis, and interpretation, the practice of reflexivity is recommended (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Guba, 1981; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Reflexivity refers to the recognition of the relationship between the researcher and the researched. Mindful of this advice, I kept a reflective journal to record changes and shifts in my perspective on the topic that might influence the way I collected, analysed, and interpreted the data. I drew on this journal to reflect on how these influences and changes occurred and conducted debriefing sessions with my supervisors to resolve any possible issues related to the trustworthiness of the analyses and claims.

MY ROLE AS THE RESEARCHER

Being an international student in Australia, I understood the difficulties international students face during their learning processes. It might not be possible for me to have freed myself from the influences of my life experience and the stance that shaped the way I collected, analysed, and interpreted the data in my study. However, as a researcher I was able to find ways to ensure fairness and faithfulness to the stories that the participants told.

In conducting qualitative research, a key concern is the relationship between the researchers and the researched (Creswell, 2009; Ebbs, 1996). Researchers question the power relationship that exists between these two subjects and how that relationship affects the recruitment of participants and the process of data collection. In this research, while text analysis was employed, I was not playing the role of an examiner. That was the job of the course lecturer. I was playing my role as an international student who was keen to listen to the stories of other international students about the ways in which they acculturated for their academic success in Australia. I portrayed myself, therefore, as *an insider*, who had also experienced this process (Nguyen, 2015), who has told their own story in the first chapter. This helped to reduce or even eliminate any power dominance that I, as researcher, had over the researched, positioning the participants and myself with equal status, each with our own stories to share. Also, as my research employed interviews, I was able to exhibit cultural sensitivity and understanding of the participants' situation, which allowed for the development of a good relationship which was conducive to comfortable extensive communication (Nguyen, 2015).

Being qualitatively-oriented, I was interested in the life experience and the contexts of the participants, but I might not be fully aware of their issues. Therefore, as *an outsider* of their life stories, it was important to be respectful when establishing the kind of *faithful relationship* which is claimed to enhance the openness that leads to extensive discussions (Ebbs, 1996; Simons, 2009). I worked towards this objective by thinking about the research in terms of respectful collaboration and reciprocity, rather than as involving unequal status between me (as knowledgeable) and the student participants (as knowledge-less). Attempting to discover the stories that lay behind the behaviours, I was patient in listening to and active in guiding discussions. I was conscious of the fact that the participants - especially in the interviews - might not consider some points as necessary, although they could in fact be of great value to my research (Nguyen, 2015). As the researcher, therefore, I was active in guiding the communication, eliciting more details that I believed to be relevant to the research. Also, reflexivity was helpful as a reminder of "how your actions, values, beliefs, preferences and biases influence the research process and outcome" (Simons, 2009, p. 91).

Qualitative research values subjectivity, and my autobiographical self has undoubtedly shaped the ways that I see the world and my relationship to others. However, my role as a researcher required me to be open, faithful, and truthful in relation to the stories that were told, analysed, and interpreted.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented my selected research paradigm of interpretivism that guides how I view voice in academic writing. In summary, I decided to employ a qualitative case study with a group of international postgraduate students and the lecturer in a postgraduate Education program at an Australian university with the objective of appreciating individual writers' variations and the influence of contexts and cultures on the construction and evaluation of voice in academic writing. In addition, this chapter has explained the rationale for using text analysis and talk around texts to support my exploration of the complexities involved in both constructing and evaluating the voice of linguistically and culturally diverse participants. These methods for data analysis have been justified in relation to the theories and models which constitute the conceptual framework developed in Chapter Three for the realisation and evaluation of student voice in written assignments and for the thematic analysis of interview data. I have also explained the addition of a focus group discussion as Phase Two of the study in response to the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure the value of the study at doctoral level. Ethical considerations in conducting this research, the issue of research trustworthiness, and my role as the researcher to ensure the merit of the study have also been discussed. In the following chapters, I present the findings of this study.

The first chapter in the Findings Section, Chapter Five, introduces the rhetorical conventions of postgraduate academic writing as reflected in a course in an Australian university. This chapter takes the *Innovations in Education* course to represent the rhetorical conventions of postgraduate writing in Australia more generally. The findings in this chapter represent an amalgamation of analysis of course materials, including the course outline, assignment sheets, marking criteria sheets, and sample assignments, and selected excerpts of the interviews conducted with the course lecturer.

Chapter Six presents the performances of the students in their first written assignment, the processes and strategies involved in their writing practices and the lecturer's assessment practices, thus addressing the second research question. It reports on the students’ initial stage of writing, on the data generated from analysis of the first written assignments, the first interviews with the students, and the interview with the lecturer. It is informed by Intercultural Rhetoric theory (Connor, 2004, 2008), the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001), and the Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion (Braet, 1992; Herrick, 2016).

Chapter Seven focuses on the subsequent writing stage. It is preceded by the performance of the students and the responses of the lecturer in the initial writing stage, and presents the students’ reflections on what they understand as constituting successful academic writing in the context of this course in Australia, and the translation of that reflection into practice in their subsequent writing. This provides insight to the transformation of the students’ understanding of intercultural rhetoric in relation to successful rhetorical negotiation and accommodation in writing. The chapter brings together the collected and analysed data from the second interview with the students, their performances in the second assignment, and the third interview with them.

Chapter Eight reports on the data collected from the focus group discussion to explore the students’ perspectives on academic writing in Australia, their articulation of authorial voice, and their rhetorical negotiation of successful writing in different contexts.

Chapter Five. The Rhetorical Conventions of Academic Writing in a Postgraduate Course

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to explore how postgraduate students demonstrate their authorial voice in their writing. As a course forms a rhetorical community with distinctive norms and conventions of writing (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1993; Purves, 1986; Swales, 1988), the lecturer as the gatekeeper establishes what constitutes successful rhetorical discourse and evaluates its qualities as evidenced in students' writing. The student writers, in turn, need to be aware of and to satisfy the lecturer's expectations. This chapter therefore addresses the first research question by examining the rhetorical characteristics of successful writing in a postgraduate course - the *Innovations in Education* course – as expected by the 'gatekeeping' lecturer. This examination foregrounds the exploration in later chapters of how students respond to these rhetorical conventions as they develop their trajectories to become successful academic writers in a new rhetorical context, and how they articulate their authorial voice in their writing.

To investigate the rhetorical conventions associated with the course, the Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion theory (Braet, 1992; Herrick, 2016) - part of the conceptual framework described in Chapter Three - informs me of different components to consider. In addition to logical reasoning as the nature of a convincing argument (Logos), the characteristics and expectations of the audience also need to be considered (Pathos). The audience plays a central role in rhetorical discourse, as argumentation "cannot be adequately understood apart from a theory of audience"; it is "also adapted to an audience" (Herrick, 2016, p. 193). Furthermore, the structure of the argument and of the discourse and the values of beauty and attractiveness in relation to the argument and the discourse are also involved in constructing the credibility of the writers (Ethos) and the quality of their rhetorical discourse (Logos) to persuade the audience (Braet, 1992; Herrick, 2016). These features are interrelated and need to be examined in context (Connor, 2008) because "a piece of discourse must be judged against the cultural and situational contexts in which it was produced and in which it is being interpreted" (Kinneavy, 1990, p. 192, as cited in Herrick, 2016, p. 209). The synthesis of rhetorical theories presented here therefore prioritises the following points: (i) the quality of argument in writing; (ii) the proper presentation of the argument in texts; and (iii) the requirement that the two previous features align with the readers' expectations for being persuaded on an argument. Understanding and including these elements constitutes the persuasiveness of written discourse and the writer's credibility (Ethos). It is therefore necessary to firstly explore rhetorical expectations in the specific context of the postgraduate course in this study to assist my subsequent investigation in later chapters of the students' writing and their embedded authorial voice.

In this chapter, following the general introduction, I introduce the specific course that was the context of this study, the *Innovations in Education* course at The Coastal University (TCU). I will firstly introduce the course content and objectives and the sources that help to identify the rhetorical expectations in this course. I then present my analysis of these sources, and of the interview I conducted with the lecturer to understand her rhetorical expectations in relation to the students' assignments. I then undertake further analysis of the course documents and discussions to better understand what these expectations meant and why they were required in academic writing in the course.

INTRODUCTION TO THE *INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATION* COURSE

Innovations in Education is a 13-week course offered as a core component of the Language and Literacy strand in the Master of Educational Principles (MEP) program run in second semester of each academic year by the Faculty of Educational Principles (FEP). The course aims to prepare students with the necessary knowledge and skills for effective language course design, integrating theoretical knowledge with understanding of contextual conditions and policies, including those related to learners' needs and stakeholders' requirements. The topics covered in this course include the general principles of course design, the contextualisation of course design, course content and sequencing, the selection of materials and teaching approaches, assessment, and course evaluation. In addition, some specific models of course design in different contexts are provided to crystallise understanding of how a context and associated factors guide the design of a course.

When this study was being conducted, the course was being offered during the Covid-19 pandemic in Australia. As with so many courses and programs in tertiary institutions across the globe in 2020, the pandemic led to the course being transformed to online teaching mode via Zoom in a very short turn-around time. However, the students were still expected to take part in discussions with their peers in break-out groups, even though all this occurred online. Every week, an online lecture was recorded and uploaded to the online course page, the students were expected to watch the recording and to complete prescribed readings for the online session. In this session, the discussions were foregrounded by the checking of students' comprehension of reading materials and the sharing of their practical experience, facilitated by the lecturer who visited the virtual break-out groups during their discussions. The students were particularly encouraged to elaborate on the conditions and challenges associated with their own teaching contexts and to critically reflect on how course design should be implemented under those specific conditions. Questions were encouraged from the students, to support and scaffold discussions among the class members and to progress knowledge construction.

In the interview, the lecturer reported that the online teaching mode and the pandemic had drastically affected students' engagement in the academic community and its activities, given that they had few opportunities to interact with other students in face-to-face mode because of the University's Covid-19 safe plan. Having been aware of these changes and their effects on international students, the lecturer implemented online discussions and encouraged students to take advantage of these discussions for social interaction as well as academic purposes (Roose, 2022; Roose & Newell, 2020). She believed that being part of the academic community in Australia was one of the ultimate goals of international students for new experiences; and she believed that the 2020 situation had been uncomfortable for them. While she did not talk explicitly about the effects of this isolation on students' academic achievements, the lecturer recalled her observations in previous semesters when students had gathered in the library for group study. This was impossible under the pandemic circumstances. However, she expected that the students could still find ways to succeed in their academic work and to engage in some form of social interaction, as the University had several support services for both academic and personal issues.

Apart from the fact that being part of the community could be a valuable experience for the students and could contribute to their academic success, success in this course relied heavily on how well students were able to satisfy the lecturer's expectations. Lecturers play an essential role as gatekeepers who establish the standards that students need to reach and as the ones who evaluate the quality of their performance (Hackney & Newman, 2013; Kettle & Ryan, 2018; Purves, 1986). It is critical, therefore, that students understand the lecturer's expectations. In the next section, I identify the potential sources of information that helped me to identify these expectations, also known as the rhetorical conventions and requirements in this course.

SOURCES TO IDENTIFY RHETORICAL CONVENTIONS IN THE *INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATION* COURSE

A classroom or a course constitutes a rhetorical community (Hackney & Newman, 2013; Purves, 1986); and course assignments can function as rhetorical discourses. Course materials, particularly assignment-related documents, are utilised as mediation tools to disseminate the rhetorical conventions of postgraduate academic writing to the students (Hackney & Newman, 2013; Purves, 1986). In the *Innovations in Education* course, playing her role of community gatekeeper, the lecturer directed students very clearly to assignment-related materials such as task sheets, marking criteria, and the assignment exemplars that collectively identified and defined the rhetorical expectations students needed to comply with in this course. According to the lecturer, different writing genres and tasks have different requirements that define the quality of the work:

> Extract 5.1
>
> I guess the good thing is criteria reference…you know it's interpreted and graded, assigned in terms of applying particular criteria to that piece of writing. … what I am saying of what's expected in providing sample assignment so they can see what success looks like for this task and the other lies in you know how the task sheets frame up the task and then the criteria and the descriptive within that criteria, so I guess hopefully those would be helpful for the learners in understanding what's expected. (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020)

In the above extract, the lecturer explicitly mentioned how she communicated her expectations of student performance in this course, mainly through the materials she delivered to the students. In addition to the course outline, which explains the objectives, teaching approach, schedule, assessment, reading list, and policy of the course, in Extract 5.1 the lecturer has highlighted (i) the task information sheet that describes in detail what the task requires, word limit, and due date, (ii) the task marking criteria, which describe the criteria in detail and the scale from one to seven, with a detailed description of each scale, (iii) exemplars of successful responses to the tasks. These documents were available on the online course page which I was granted access to by the lecturer. Applying the view of the course as a rhetorical community (Hackney & Newman, 2013) and taking into account the situational context (Herrick, 2016) in which the discourse is presented and evaluated, these documents are seen to constitute the primary sources that presented the requirements for the students to satisfy in the course.

Among these materials, the lecturer particularly emphasised the usefulness of exemplars as models of successful writing from which the students could learn. Exemplars are “carefully chosen samples of student work which are used to illustrate dimensions of quality and clarify assessment expectations” (Carless & Chan, 2017, p. 930). I therefore recognise that exemplars are helpful to familiarise students with postgraduate academic writing and how to successfully communicate their knowledge in written form (Carless & Chan, 2017; Chong, 2019). My focus in this chapter is not to analyse how the exemplars fit the lecturer’s expectations, as no available comments or grades were awarded to these samples. However, because of the exemplars’ usefulness in the course context, I acknowledge them as supplementary materials which assist in establishing the course’s rhetorical expectations. I discuss these exemplars in more detail in later chapters when I explore the students’ performance in their assignments and their perspectives on how the provided exemplars assisted their construction of their rhetorical self in postgraduate academic writing.

In addition to the course materials, the lecturer’s feedback to students’ written work also played an essential role in communicating and reinforcing the lecturer’s expectations and in (re)constructing the students’ understanding of successful academic writing (Carless & Boud, 2018; Hyland, 2019; Kettle & Ryan, 2018). I therefore used a section of the lecturer’s feedback on the students’ assignments to clarify rhetorical aspects that are implicit in the course materials. Further focus on the lecturer’s feedback is provided in detail in Chapter Six when I explore how the lecturer responded to the students’ written performances.

When examining course documents, it is crucial to pay attention to the linguistic features used to convey the meaning of the texts. The linguistic analytical framework guides reflection on how the language used by the lecturer in the different texts communicates her requirements to the students as their guidance for successful performance in the course. I therefore identified linguistic features as per the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) in analysing the course documents to identify what the students were required to do. Furthermore, to gain more in-depth understanding of textual meaning via the analysis, I conducted a talk-around-text interview (Lillis, 2008) with the lecturer to clarify the points I had identified in the course materials. The following section outlines the course assessment in the forms of assignments that were reflections of the lecturer's expectations. My aim was to gain an understanding of the lecturer's priorities and how these priorities in terms of content and writing requirements were transformed into specific rhetorical conventions required for written assignments. From these expectations, the lecturer was then able to assess the extent of the students' mastery of these elements.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ASSIGNMENTS IN THIS COURSE

My goal in this section is to provide an initial account of what each assignment in this course required and of commonalities in the different assignments' requirements to take forward as the lecturer's rhetorical expectations. I made use of the course materials (e.g., the task information sheet) and the interview with the lecturer to understand more about the nature of the assignments and the lecturer's expectations. The interview with the lecturer was conducted after she had returned the first assignments with grades and feedback to the students. In the interview, the lecturer firstly introduced the objectives of the course and showed how these objectives were indicated in the course assessment requirements relating to the two written assignments. This section presents findings from the first part of the interview with the lecturer in which she talked about her teaching experience in postgraduate courses with international students. She then proceeded to introduce the course assignments, designed to assist students to achieve the course objectives, and her expectations of the students. Prior to this interview, I had analysed the first assignments of the student participants in this study and the relevant course materials to understand the task requirements, which offered me an initial understanding of the lecturer's expectations, before coming to discuss them in more detail with her.

In the interview, the lecturer elaborated her perspectives on international students and her requirements in the course, which formed the basis of her assessment practices. She taught in Language Education/Applied Linguistics/Language and Literacy areas and had extensive experience in teaching postgraduate courses and supervising research students in this area at TCU. She was therefore knowledgeable in relation to the rhetorical conventions of academic writing at postgraduate level and to how those conventions were applied in the specific *Innovations in Education* course. Furthermore, with her extensive teaching experience, she was able to provide different forms of instruction to the students, so that they could acquire these conventions and align with the requirements for successful written assignments, which were determinants of their success in the course.

The lecturer had been working with international students for several years at TCU, and she was well aware of the objectives and expectations that international students bring with them on their academic journeys to Australia. Also, having been in close contact with these students, she was familiar with the challenges they face regarding their socialisation in both daily and academic life in this new context. As noted earlier, she had good understanding of the linguistic, cultural, and educational differences between contexts which can make students uncomfortable or confused when they arrive in Australia (Lecturer:Interview:14.11.2020).

Having worked closely with such students, the lecturer was very aware of the kind of support that needed to be offered to them for their academic success and adaptation to different aspects of life in Australia. She mentioned the need for universities to provide “pre-sessional support and con-current support, and that’s not just for international students but also for domestic students” (Lecturer: Interview:14.11.2020) to help students understand the new academic culture and academic expectations at different levels. They also need to receive this support “in a timely manner to enable those learners to succeed” (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). She noted that institutions need to be well-prepared in terms of the provision of resources to support students before the courses begin as these resources “should probably be there before building any Master’s study is undertaken” (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). Understanding of the challenges that international students typically encounter and of the support needed had informed her practices in terms of assessment and mediation.

Following her introduction to her teaching experience, the lecturer provided a brief description of the assignments in the course outline and a more detailed presentation of them in the task sheets for each assignment. The task sheet outlined the aims of the assignment, its account of its total grade, the word limit, criteria, due date, and the elements of the assignment. In addition to the task sheets, each assignment was accompanied by a sample assignment and the marking criteria. Hackney and Newman (2013) remind us that assessment materials are valuable sources for students to identify rhetorical conventions. The course lecturer also made this point during the interview (see Extract 5.1). For example, she highlighted the use of marking criteria and exemplars as important mediation tools to scaffold learners’ understanding of assignments and academic writing at Master’s level. The marking criteria help the students understand “what is being judged, how is their writing, how is their response to a task, evaluated” (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). She noted that students “ask[ed] very explicit questions about the wording of the criteria” (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). They wanted to know what the criteria implied. The exemplars show what a successful response to a task looks like, and the students in her course “have a model, and actually we have kind of deconstructed that model” through class discussion via Zoom in which the students want to know “what this student’s done is so good because I said it is a successful response” (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). They want to understand exactly why that exemplar satisfies the marking criteria and task demands. The use of marking criteria and exemplars, combined with classroom discussion, helps to clarify the task demands for the students.

Following the lecturer’s recommendation to look at course materials to understand the demands of the course, I relied on the assignment guidelines and assessment criteria for both assignments to clarify the lecturer’s rhetorical expectations of the students’ writing. I did not focus on the exemplars provided by the lecturer at this stage, but I do describe in later chapters how they assisted the students’ performances. When introducing each assignment in this section, I will describe the objectives and requirements as identified in the assignment guidelines and the interview with the lecturer. I will also draw on the interview with the lecturer to highlight her rhetorical expectations and to establish the standard requirements for each assignment.

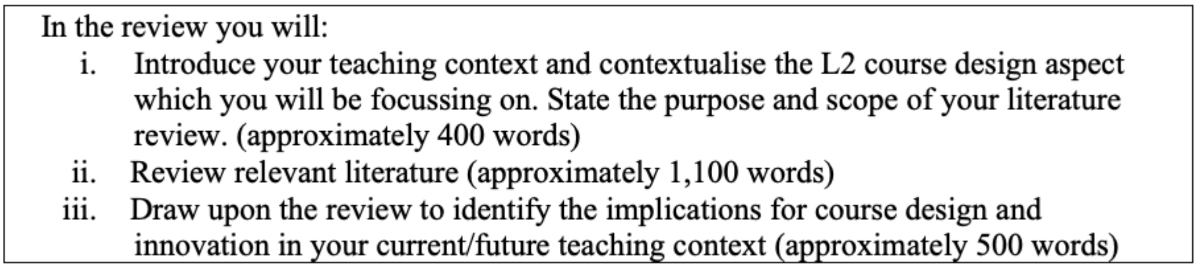
Assignment One

The first assignment was a 2000-word literature review weighted 40% and designed to develop the students' understanding of the principles of developing language teaching courses. The students needed to firstly select a topic related to language teaching, learning, and course development. For example, the topics might include teaching language skills, test design, or course-related activity design; they then had to source a wide range of relevant readings from books and journal articles published since the year 2000, except for earlier foundational works. The students then had to make use of the literature in terms of their own specific contexts. The first assignment formed the Rationale and basis for the second assignment. According to the lecturer:

> Extract 5.2
>
> The first assignment gets the students to establish the context, a very clear context for teaching and learning and identify issues in that context. So, that's kind of foregrounding the importance of context. And then in relation to that

> context, then they have to access relevant literature to find out, you know, what has actually what research has been done, what we know about that particular issue. (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020)

To achieve the purpose of the first assignment, the students needed to include some pre-determined sections in their assignments. In-depth analysis of the first assignment guidelines and marking criteria revealed that these elements were re-affirmed with the additional aspect of implications for course design (see Figure 5.1).



In the review you will:

i. Introduce your teaching context and contextualise the L2 course design aspect which you will be focussing on. State the purpose and scope of your literature review. (approximately 400 words)
ii. Review relevant literature (approximately 1,100 words)
iii. Draw upon the review to identify the implications for course design and innovation in your current/future teaching context (approximately 500 words)

Figure 5.1. Elements of Assignment One (Assignment One Guidelines, 2020, p.1).

Analysis of the linguistic features that the lecturer employed when introducing the elements and criteria of the first assignment helped to identify her rhetorical expectations for this assignment. For example, in Figure 5.1 the modal ‘will’ could be understood as not only a temporal signal of future tense, but in some instances can indicate obligation (DeCapua, 2017). The interpretation of modality meaning such as ‘will’ lies within the situation and the framework in which the modality is embedded. Analysing the situation in which ‘will’ was used in the assignment guidelines (Figure 5.1), the lecturer coupled this modality with a detailed description of each element that students needed to include in their assignments in the form of actions (*introduce, contextualise, state, review, draw upon*) and with use of the personal pronoun ‘you’ to designate the tasks to specific individuals (the students) and to the sections that she would expect to see and assess in the students' writing. The use of the personal pronoun ‘you’ to imply the students and the subsequent imperative structures as interpersonal features position the lecturer as the person authorised to define the desired components in the assignment (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). The lecturer’s high degree of assertiveness and authoritativeness portrays her as the agent of knowledge construction in the course, who is imposing obligations on the students in relation to compulsory elements of an introduction to teaching contexts. The use of relevant literature guided the development of the proposal for innovative implications for course design. The elements discussed above are identified as affordances for a successful written assignment, and it is the students’ responsibility to address them in the first assignment.

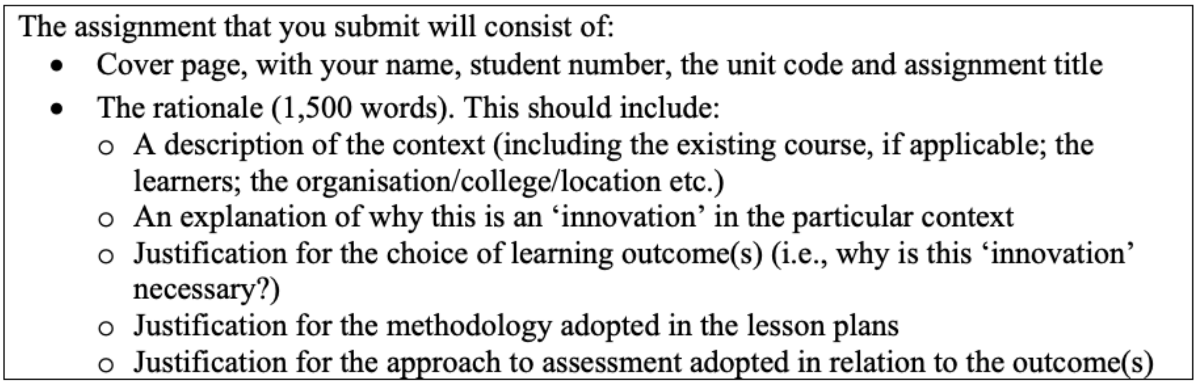
In addition to language use, the number of words designated to each section totals the allowed word limit for the entire assignment (2000 words). The linguistic features that characterise the description of what the students have to do, and the allocation of numbers of words to each section (Figure 5.1), provide a clear outline of what students have to do in Assignment One. Completing this assignment, therefore, is intended to shape students' understanding of how an effective course should be designed and helps them to tackle unresolved problems in their own teaching contexts through proposing effective solutions. These theoretical understandings were to be translated into an actual course development project in Assignment Two.

Assignment Two

Assignment Two was the actual course development project which Assignment One had scaffolded. This assignment accounted for 60% of the course's total marks and was equivalent to 3000 words. The students were required to develop a plan for three consecutive lessons in their proposed courses. They needed to provide a Rationale section of up to 1500 words, to introduce the teaching context, the learning outcomes, teaching methodology, selection of teaching materials, and proposal of assessment forms. These features needed to be well-supported by relevant literature to confirm the innovations and effectiveness of the design in that context and for that given course (see Extract 5.3). When elaborating on the purpose of this assignment, the lecturer explained:

> Extract 5.3
>
> Then the second assignment gets them to really be clear about the Rationale for innovations, something they are going to change, it's new in their teaching context in response to that issue and informed by the literature. So now they have got quite a strong rationale by the second assignment, I hope, in order to think about Ok what this change can be, what is the innovation, and what it kind of looks like in my classroom and that brings into place all the things I have been talking about like being able to think about needs of learners, being able to think about aims and objectives sort of appropriate, thinking about the tasks. What sort of tasks that they are using, what sort of things for their learners to be doing, what sort of resources for them to be using, what kind of assessment might be appropriate. (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020)

Similarly to Assignment One, the lecturer also provided a task sheet that presented what the students needed to include in the second assignment. I focused on the Rationale in which the lecturer suggested the following elements.



The assignment that you submit will consist of:

- Cover page, with your name, student number, the unit code and assignment title
- The rationale (1,500 words). This should include:
  - A description of the context (including the existing course, if applicable; the learners; the organisation/college/location etc.)
  - An explanation of why this is an 'innovation' in the particular context
  - Justification for the choice of learning outcome(s) (i.e., why is this 'innovation' necessary?)
  - Justification for the methodology adopted in the lesson plans
  - Justification for the approach to assessment adopted in relation to the outcome(s)

Figure 5.2. Elements of Assignment Two (Assignment Two Guidelines, 2020, p.1).

Analysing Assignment Two guidelines (Figure 5.2), I again noted use of the modal 'will' and the personal pronoun 'you'. This could be similarly interpreted as an expression of obligation that the students had to commit to, as in Assignment One. However, the description of the Rationale contained another modality - 'should', which raised some questions about its degree of obligation. While 'should' is typically thought of as the modality of possibilities or advice, another meaning that is rarely seen is its sense of obligation and authoritativeness which tends to be softened (DeCapua, 2017; Kettle, 2007). This instance of 'soft' obligation is frequently seen in academic documents, where an obligation is politely presented to readers (DeCapua, 2017). I read this as the course assignment guidelines *gently* displaying the required features that the assignments needed to include, which would be assessed by the lecturer, and which the students needed to comply with.

When introducing the elements of the two assignments (see Figures 5.1 and 5.2), I identified several words commonly seen in academic writing, such as 'describe', 'explain', and 'justify', and their nominalisation forms were also used (Coxhead, 2000; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). These words indicated the cognitive processes associated with research activity, including thinking and writing in an academic environment (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). The students were required to engage in these activities in their assignments; this was their responsibility if they wanted to satisfy the lecturer's expectations.

The two assignments familiarised the students with the theories of language course design, providing the foundation for the proposed practical applications in their own contexts. In the interview with the lecturer, I further questioned her about the logic of the requirements for each assignment, and also about the sequencing of the assignments. The lecturer expected the students to acquire the principles of course design, including "the scope, sequencing, aims, objectives to be able to not just do one lesson plan but to envisage connections and building up, which is a harder curriculum" (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). The completion of the assignments can therefore be seen as the students' trials, in terms of acquiring the knowledge and then applying it pedagogically. This acquisition and application process will then support the students later when they are teaching and designing courses for their own learners.

Summary of the requirements in the course assignments

After examining the elements included by the lecturer in the assignments, the criteria, and her explanation of the purpose of this course, I was able to identify key requirements that the students needed to satisfy. The lecturer had designed two assignments in which the students were required to present a review of relevant literature and to identify potential context-based and literature-informed implications. Disciplinary knowledge of course design was the first prerequisite for the students' proposal of implications. Secondly, the effectiveness of the acquired knowledge and of the offered implications would only be evident if the students were able to justify how the implications would mitigate the contextualised problems they had identified (see Extracts 5.2 and 5.3). As these requirements would be assessed in their written forms, the students were further required to adhere to academic writing conventions. For the students to be successful in their assignments, the above expectations of the gatekeeping lecturer needed to be satisfied.

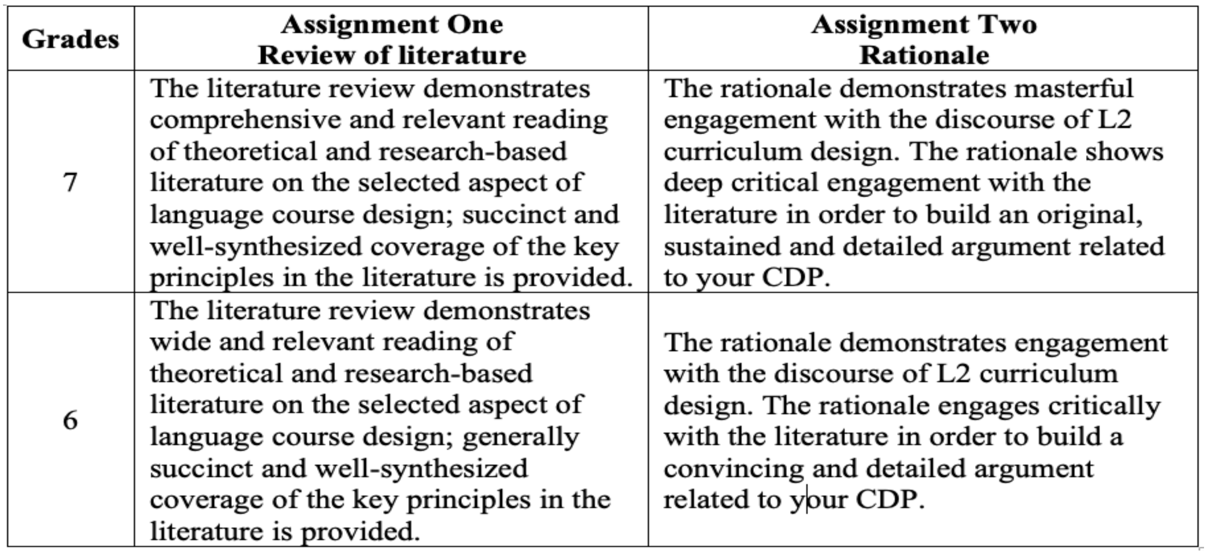
THE RHETORICAL CONVENTIONS OF ACADEMIC WRITING IN THE COURSE

This section presents in more detail the rhetorical conventions of academic writing that the students had to comply with in the course. Following the initial analysis of the assignment guidelines and the interview with the lecturer in the previous section, I now report on data collected from other course materials, notably the lecturer's feedback on students' assignments. Following the analysis, I propose three rhetorical expectations that apply to both assignments and form the conventions for postgraduate academic writing in the course: (i) present a critical review of relevant literature, thus demonstrating adequate knowledge of the topic; (ii) construct a proposal of effective literature-informed implications for practice; and (iii) adhere to conventions linked to particular writing styles and ways of communicating with an audience such as the lecturer as the primary audience. These rhetorical features of academic writing at postgraduate level are interrelated and complement each other to form a powerful discourse to which students had to adhere.

Expectation One: Critical review of relevant literature

As instructed in the assignment guidelines, referenced in the marking criteria, and reflected in the lecturer's explanations in the interview, the students had to understand field-related theories as the basis for postgraduate writing. In this 13-week course the students were introduced to core elements and principles in course design, covering contextual features, learners, course content, teaching materials, methodology and assessment, and course evaluation. Using the task sheet and marking criteria (see Figures 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3), and understanding the inter-relation of the two assignments (see Extracts 5.2 and 5.3), the students had to provide substantial, comprehensive, and relevant coverage of "theoretical and research-based" literature to identify and define key principles of course design, demonstrating understanding of the field and of how these principles would be applied through outlining informed implications for language course design.

In the marking criteria (Figure 5.3), the lecturer described different quality dimensions of the Literature Review (Assignment One) and the Rationale (Assignment Two). The assignments were graded on a 7-Grade scale, with 7 as the highest. When analysing the marking criteria, I present the criteria for grades 7 and 6 in relation to what features high-quality assignments in this course need to include.



Grades	Assignment One Review of literature	Assignment Two Rationale
7	The literature review demonstrates comprehensive and relevant reading of theoretical and research-based literature on the selected aspect of language course design; succinct and well-synthesized coverage of the key principles in the literature is provided.	The rationale demonstrates masterful engagement with the discourse of L2 curriculum design. The rationale shows deep critical engagement with the literature in order to build an original, sustained and detailed argument related to your CDP.
6	The literature review demonstrates wide and relevant reading of theoretical and research-based literature on the selected aspect of language course design; generally succinct and well-synthesized coverage of the key principles in the literature is provided.	The rationale demonstrates engagement with the discourse of L2 curriculum design. The rationale engages critically with the literature in order to build a convincing and detailed argument related to your CDP.

Figure 5.3. The marking criteria for Literature Review and Rationale (adopted from the Marking Criteria Sheets (2020).

Assignment One was a literature review in the area of language course design. The lecturer particularly emphasised the need to be critical in reviewing the literature as “the literature review is not just finding out what anyone has ever written about this” but “being able to get that criticality in a sense to be able to understand that you are in a position to actually in a sense evaluate the importance and the relationships of these readings that you are doing” (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). The lecturer expected the students to demonstrate their critical thinking in terms of their understanding of the reading materials, their analysis of how the information presented in the readings was interrelated, and their evaluation of the value of the information. The students therefore were required to *critically* review *relevant* literature from a wide range of sources such as journal articles, books, and book chapters for their 2000-word first assignment. They had to come up with a “*succinct* and *well-synthesized* coverage” (see Figure 5.3) of the literature in this first assignment which would then form the basis for the Rationale of the second assignment.

In Figure 5.3, the lecturer identifies her expectations for the Rationale section in Assignment Two of ‘*comprehensive* and *relevant* coverage’, ‘*wide* and *relevant* coverage’, ‘*masterful* engagement’, ‘*deep critical* engagement’, ‘*original, sustained* and *detailed* argument’, and ‘engage *critically*’, ‘*convincing* and *detailed* argument’. The utilisation of adjectives and adverbs indicates her evaluative judgements of the qualities of the review which would be further assessed based on different levels of performance (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). In other words, the grades awarded to the students were commensurate with the quality of the critical review of relevant literature demonstrated by them. The notions of being *critical* and *relevant* are considered more fully in this section. I elaborate on how the students select the literature they are going to review and use it to develop their disciplinary knowledge, as the first rhetorical expectation in this course. In addition to the data collected from course assessment materials and the interview with the lecturer, part of the lecturer’s comments on the students’ assignments will also be included to elaborate on these concepts.

Regarding *criticality*, the lecturer commented that criticality is central to postgraduate academic writing to develop a convincing argument. It is “the heart” of academic writing (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). She related this criticality to the students’ capacity to evaluate the value of the reading materials and the relationship between readings. This response can be exemplified and further clarified by using Veronica’s first assignment, in which she included a list of different approaches to language course design but provided no interpretation nor evaluation of them or of which might be the most suitable in her teaching context. The lecturer commented that “each of these seven approaches would need to be explained to be meaningful: otherwise, it is simply a list” (Lecturer’s comment, 2020). The lecturer commented that Veronica needed to “show a little of criticality” by stating “which of these [approaches] might be more relevant to, you know, the issues that I identify” (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). Without an interpretation or evaluation of the concepts, the lecturer was doubtful about Veronica’s understanding of them and about her ability to make judgements about the value of them for her teaching. Veronica also used lengthy quotes, which the lecturer considered ineffective. She repeatedly reminded that “Do not use the long quote, lengthy quote” (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). What the lecturer was expecting was a reformulation of the quotes (e.g., paraphrasing) or the inclusion of “reporting verbs” to indicate interpretation of the quotes and to create “idea-led writing”, which the lecturer preferred (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020).

The lecturer defined criticality as the evaluation of the literature regarding differences and similarities that emerged from the readings, and the demonstrated ability to understand the attributions of these differences. This view resonates with that of criticality as making an evaluative judgement on the quality of the written work produced by the writers themselves or others (Sun et al., 2022; Tai et al., 2018). When students are able to make such judgements, they demonstrate their “personalized, critical voice through the text” (Bruce, 2016, p. 85). This critical engagement includes the ability to “investigate, analyse, synthesise” complex concepts and theories associated with their field, which enables them to form their propositions and offer innovative implications (Australian Qualifications Framework, 2013, p. 60). Criticality, therefore, represents the writer's interpretation and communication of their understanding of previous research and it constitutes the lecturer’s “absolute foundational expectation” (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020) in relation to academic writing at the postgraduate level (Australian Qualifications Framework, 2013; Bruce, 2016; Mirador, 2018; Wette, 2021).

Criticality was identified as essential in the course assignments, as was the inclusion of *relevant* literature, as highlighted by the lecturer. I found it challenging to define the *relevance* of literature due to limited information provided in the assignment guidelines and the marking criteria. To unpack the meaning, I therefore drew on the lecturer's comment on Madison’s Assignment One: “It’s important to ensure that all studies reported are relevant to your topic and language learners” (Lecturer's comment, 2020). I noted this comment on Madison's assignment and brought it to my discussion with the lecturer for clarification. Talking with her about the issue of relevance in Madison’s assignment revealed the first quality prioritised by the lecturer, which was the *close relation* between the writing topic and the reading sources. For example, Madison referenced several sources from Engineering-based journals instead of “second language teaching and learning and curriculum journals” (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). The lecturer considered these sources “random readings” and was not convinced of the quality of Madison’s support for her claims, categorising it as “an unsupported claim because what is being used to support it is actually irrelevant” (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020).

In addition to closeness of association between content of readings and the writing topic as an indicator of relevance of literature, the recency of reading materials also implied relevance. To illustrate, analysis of the lecturer’s feedback on Veronica’s assignment identified the need to include *recent* publications. In her Assignment One, Veronica used a study published in 1992, whereas a more recent publication from 2017 was included in the course reading list – and not reviewed by Veronica. The lecturer highlighted this outdated article and pointed to the newer one from the same author. She emphasised that drawing from recent publications is important to demonstrate engagement with “advances in the field” (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). Knowledge is constantly being modified to create new knowledge, that is “a little bit different perhaps from what they [cited researchers] have found before” (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). Findings from outdated publications may have been re-constructed or further developed, being no longer relevant at the current time (Guo et al., 2021). It is important that students demonstrate awareness of the continuous development of knowledge, and consideration of what had been found earlier, how findings were later extended, and how knowledge has been constructed and modified in more recent research. Demonstrating this awareness is an indicator of a crucial element of a student’s knowledge and academic identity, that of demonstrating “masterful engagement with the discourse of L2 curriculum design” (Course Marking Criteria, 2020). This capacity is prescribed in the course, as a key element of writer credibility (Ethos) and persuasiveness of argument (Logos).

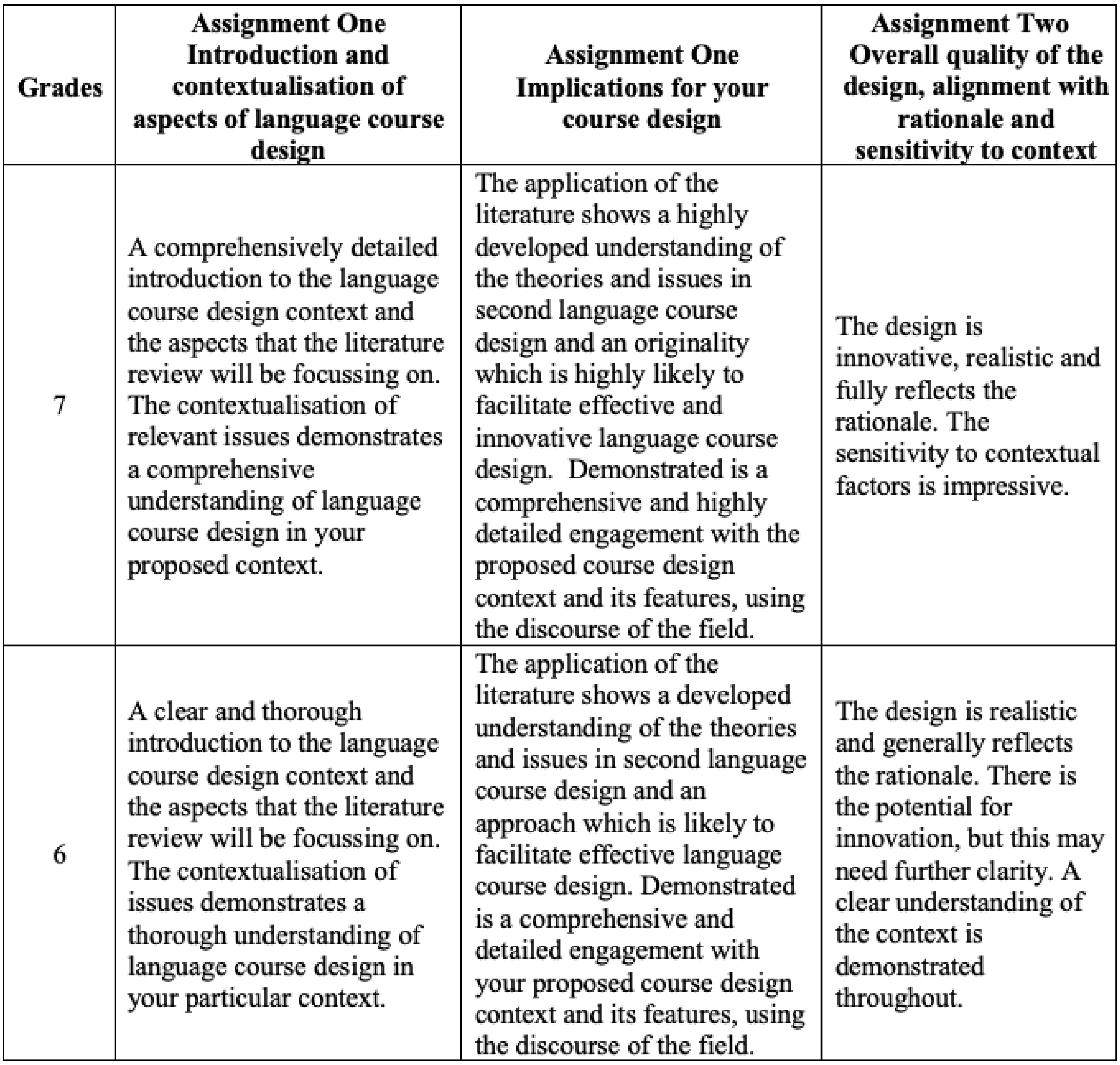
As a concluding remark, I note that the relevance of literature seems to be taken for granted but only vaguely defined, and that the findings of this study identify two qualities of relevance: the *relation* between reading sources and writing topics and the *recency* of sources, to keep up with the “state of the art” in the field, which is emphasised as a key element of quality postgraduate study (Australian Qualifications Framework, 2013). Being able to perform a critical review of relevant literature helps students to establish a strong argument in their writing, as reported by the lecturer, and to consolidate substantial knowledge about course design which will assist them in making informed conclusions or decisions relating to innovative pedagogical implications associated with particular contextual features. In other words, students need to be able to effectively design language courses in their own teaching contexts; critical engagement with relevant literature helps them to understand and operationalise the key design principles of course design in ways that take into account their own contextual conditions.

Expectation Two: Proposal and justification of innovative implications

Following the critical review of relevant literature for developing knowledge of language course design, the students were required to identify problems associated with language course curriculum in their actual or hypothetical teaching contexts and to develop a proposal for effective innovations. The lecturer emphasised the importance of the ability to propose and justify effective pedagogical innovations, as is commonly required for students in Education-based postgraduate courses (see Extract 5.4).

> Extract 5.4
>
> I think it has to be something that goes beyond reporting a body of literature and your understanding and the relationship of a body of literature. There has to be the ability, you know, because it is ‘*Innovations in Education*’ course…you know, what I have just read, what has been established about this issue, what does it mean for designing something for these learners with these issues. (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020)

The lecturer’s expectations of the students’ performances were explicated in the marking criteria, in which she highlighted the requirement of contextualisation that students had to demonstrate in their discussion of context-based problems and context-relevant proposals for innovations in both assignments. The criteria for the qualities of contextualisation are demonstrated in Figure 5.4.



Grades	Assignment One Introduction and contextualisation of aspects of language course design	Assignment One Implications for your course design	Assignment Two Overall quality of the design, alignment with rationale and sensitivity to context
7	A comprehensively detailed introduction to the language course design context and the aspects that the literature review will be focussing on. The contextualisation of relevant issues demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of language course design in your proposed context.	The application of the literature shows a highly developed understanding of the theories and issues in second language course design and an originality which is highly likely to facilitate effective and innovative language course design. Demonstrated is a comprehensive and highly detailed engagement with the proposed course design context and its features, using the discourse of the field.	The design is innovative, realistic and fully reflects the rationale. The sensitivity to contextual factors is impressive.
6	A clear and thorough introduction to the language course design context and the aspects that the literature review will be focussing on. The contextualisation of issues demonstrates a thorough understanding of language course design in your particular context.	The application of the literature shows a developed understanding of the theories and issues in second language course design and an approach which is likely to facilitate effective language course design. Demonstrated is a comprehensive and detailed engagement with your proposed course design context and its features, using the discourse of the field.	The design is realistic and generally reflects the rationale. There is the potential for innovation, but this may need further clarity. A clear understanding of the context is demonstrated throughout.

Figure 5.4. The marking criteria for contextualisation and course design, adopted from the Marking Criteria Sheets (2020).

For the first assignment, the quality of the implications was decided based on comprehensiveness, innovation, relevance, and specificity. These criteria were demonstrated through the use of different adjectives as evaluative lexis to indicate the lecturer's judgements on the quality of the student's writing (e.g., *comprehensive, relevant, clear, thorough, highly developed*) (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). The students needed to achieve an alignment between their identification of the implications and contextual characteristics, and they had to use the literature to justify the effectiveness of the proposed implications in the given context. The lecturer needed to understand the context which informed the course design, the alignment between course design and socio-contextual conditions as the context "drives everything" and decides "the degree of freedom" that teachers may have to make changes (Lecturer:

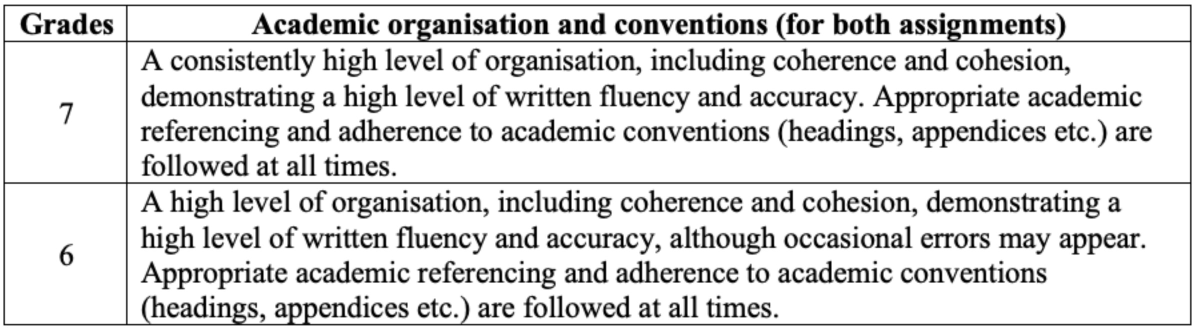
Interview: 14.11.2020). Students, therefore, "have to have a specific teaching context, if you're not teaching, you need a hypothetical teaching context" (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). In relation to this comment, regarding modality and the level of implied necessity or obligation, 'have to' and its inflectional form 'has to' are generally said to indicate lower obligation than 'must'. However, these linguistic tokens are more frequently used to convey the same obligation as 'must' in spoken language (DeCapua, 2017). There was no exception made for those without teaching experience, as they *needed* to form hypothetical teaching contexts with the necessary features; therefore, the inclusion and justification of contextual conditions and context-based implications in the assignments were considered *must-have* elements. The students had to identify "how many learners in your class, how many hours a week, what are their proficiency levels, why are they studying" (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). With details of their teaching contexts, the students would then be able to design language courses that aligned with the characteristics of their learners and other contextual conditions. Without this alignment, students would be unlikely to successfully identify implications or convince readers, as the readers would not be aware of how the implications could be translated into work in context.

The importance of understanding contextual conditions for effective course design was re-iterated in Assignment Two. For this assignment, the Rationale again required students to describe the contexts, the problems and the proposed solutions, all of which should be informed by relevant literature. The remaining task for the students in the second assignment was an actual design of three consecutive lessons that included statement of the objectives, specific contents, materials, teaching methods and activities, and forms of assessment. The design needed to be "innovative, realistic" (Marking Criteria Sheet, 2020) and consistent with the justifications outlined in the Rationale. Therefore, one of the determining factors of the quality of the second assignment was "sensitivity to contextual factors" (Marking Criteria Sheet, 2020), as the alignment between what had been proposed in the Rationale and what was subsequently designed in the course.

As a concluding remark, the rhetorical conventions in this course that have been discussed so far have included a thorough and critical understanding of the disciplinary knowledge of language course design and the ability to identify literature-informed and context-informed implications for effective language course design in alignment with the conditions of a teaching context. The demonstrated ability to make such critical statements demonstrates writer credibility (Ethos) and strong voice in written text. In addition, adherence to academic conventions constitutes the required academic qualifications of writers with professional communication skills at the Master’s level (Australian Qualifications Framework, 2013; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). It is through appropriate use of language and academic conventions that a writer is able to transfer knowledge to an audience and to portray their own identity and voice as a writer and that of the community they belong to (Hyland, 2013). The following section discusses the academic conventions that the lecturer expects students to adhere to in their written assignments.

Expectation Three: Proper adherence to academic writing conventions

In education settings, written discourse is utilised to indicate writers’ knowledge and the process of knowledge construction (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Morton & Storch, 2019, 2021; Paltridge, 2004). Given the importance of writing and voice as an artefact of knowledge and identity, understanding how academic texts should be constructed is indispensable for student writers (Ivanič, 1998; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). In the *Innovations in Education* course, standards were given to describe how academic writing should be performed. The primary source to identify these academic writing conventions was the marking criteria sheet in which the lecturer listed the aspects that the students had to conform to and would be assessed on. Examining the assignment guidelines and the marking criteria, I realised that the prescribed academic writing conventions were identical in both assignments; I therefore decided to select one assignment to represent both (Figure 5.5).



Grades	Academic organisation and conventions (for both assignments)
7	A consistently high level of organisation, including coherence and cohesion, demonstrating a high level of written fluency and accuracy. Appropriate academic referencing and adherence to academic conventions (headings, appendices etc.) are followed at all times.
6	A high level of organisation, including coherence and cohesion, demonstrating a high level of written fluency and accuracy, although occasional errors may appear. Appropriate academic referencing and adherence to academic conventions (headings, appendices etc.) are followed at all times.

Figure 5.5. The marking criteria for academic writing conventions, adopted from the Marking Criteria Sheets (2020).

When indicating different elements of academic writing conventions, the lecturer employed different linguistic features that highlighted her demands in terms of adhering to them, such as adverbs and adjectives to indicate the qualities (e.g., *consistent(ly), high, appropriate*) and quantifying determiners (e.g., *all times*) for rates of frequencies. The allocated grades in the assignments would depend on the extent and frequency of their conforming to these conventions. Different levels of adherence resulted in different grades, which showed a conditional relation between a high level of compliance with academic conventions and successful writing.

Despite the clear importance of these conventions in the course, I found minimal elaboration of them in the course assignment guidelines. I therefore sought clarification when speaking with the lecturer of what they referred to and how they could be fulfilled. To provide a focus and a means of gaining clarification, I referred to my analysis of the students' assignments and the lecturer's feedback in relation to academic conventions. Each of these is canvassed in the following sections with reference to the marking criteria, the students' work, the lecturer's feedback, and her responses in the interview. In organising this section, I make use of the classifications of macro- and micro-level properties of texts as presented by Kettle and Ryan (2018). Cross-referencing between these two levels and the course marking criteria, the macro-level includes referencing style and logical text organisation with good cohesion and coherence as an important feature of the academic written genre. The micro-level refers to effective and appropriate language use, such as grammatical and lexical features.

Macro-level properties

In this course the importance of academic integrity was emphasised by the lecturer and identified as crucial to the student writers' credibility (Ethos); it was characterised as including the proper use and acknowledgement of sources. Proper use of sources is considered to be of high significance; and the lecturer made it clear in her instructions that proper acknowledgement of sources constitutes a key element of academic writing. While academic integrity was highlighted in her classes and course materials, it was not always evidenced in the students' work. In Veronica's Assignment One, for example, some in-text references were missing in the reference list, and I questioned the lecturer about her response to this omission. In doing so, I made the mistake of referring to the instance of incomplete referencing as "small points"; the lecturer, without hesitation, corrected me, asserting that it was in fact a major inappropriacy which upset her as she emphasised the seriousness of this academic 'misconduct' (see Extract 5.5).

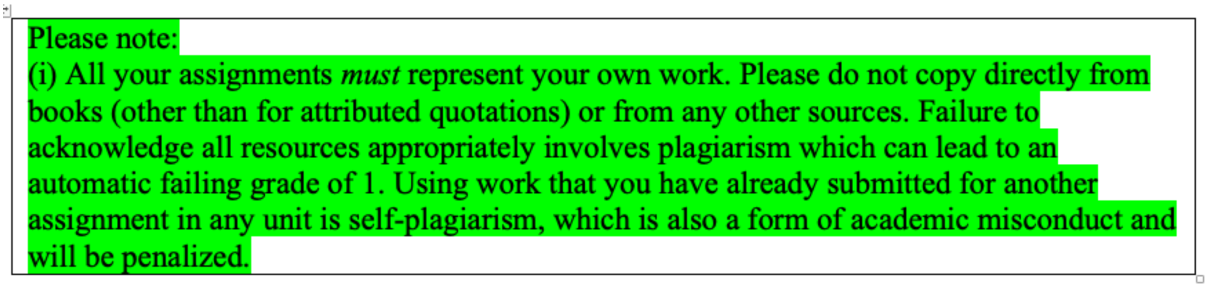
Extract 5.5

Researcher: So, this is some small points [pointing to the works cited in text that were not in the reference list]

Lecturer: These are quite big. That’s disturbing at Master’s level because in a sense of attributing yeah it's all about understanding about the correction of referencing, why do we reference, what reference list does and at Master’s level.

(Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020)

As referencing was seen as a foundational element of writing at Master’s level (Friedman, 2019), the lecturer was clearly uncomfortable not only with the student’s performance but also with their eligibility as a Master’s student (Ethos). She was unsettled by this example of lack of academic integrity in relation to appropriate referencing after the issue had been repeatedly discussed in her classes and was highlighted in green in the original document (see Figure 5.6). The emphasis on this convention was to raise the students' awareness of plagiarism - which was intolerable in this course.



Please note:
(i) All your assignments *must* represent your own work. Please do not copy directly from books (other than for attributed quotations) or from any other sources. Failure to acknowledge all resources appropriately involves plagiarism which can lead to an automatic failing grade of 1. Using work that you have already submitted for another assignment in any unit is self-plagiarism, which is also a form of academic misconduct and will be penalized.

Figure 5.6. A note on plagiarism (Course Outline, 2020, p. 5).

The course document makes it very clear that plagiarism in any form will automatically be penalised and ‘must’ be avoided at all costs. The lecturer defined plagiarism as using others’ works without proper acknowledgement, and/or self-plagiarism as using (part of) one piece of written work for different assignments. The green highlighted section above in Figure 5.6 is understood as a form of paralinguistics, and the italicised emphasis on ‘must’ in the first line as a modality of obligation (Biber, 2006; DeCapua, 2017; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Both these linguistic features signify the need to pay attention. Modality is employed to indicate levels of certainty, authoritativeness, and power relationships between writers and readers (Ivanič & Camps, 2001), and ‘must’ represents a very high - even the highest - level of certainty and obligation (DeCapua, 2017). Examining the course materials, I noted that the linguistic token ‘must’ did not exist elsewhere. Unlike the assignment guidelines, in which ‘will’ and ‘should’ were utilised to communicate a more gentle sense of obligation (see Figures 5.1 and 5.2), the topic of plagiarism needed ‘must’ to communicate its strong prohibition: it is absolutely forbidden in academic writing. The fact this modal form is italicised and highlighted in green in this section on plagiarism tells the reader how strongly the lecturer feels about the issue of plagiarism, and how crucial it is that students understand the implications of its use. Directing the students' attention to this topic suggests the seriousness and intolerance of this form of academic misconduct, for which penalty will be applied.

Another feature of the macro level is that of coherence and cohesion for well-connected and well-structured writing. These two terms refer to how sentences in texts are logically and meaningfully organised and linked to each other for effective communication. Satisfying the requirement of coherence and cohesion demands a thorough understanding of both the genre and the task that the students are to complete, and of how the argument can be logically and meaningfully presented, for example through "advance organisers, topic sentences, and theme-rheme relationships" (Kettle & Ryan, 2018, p. 186). An element that contributes to the persuasiveness of rhetorical discourse (Logos) is that of arrangement; that is, the structuring of internal elements to make the messages comprehensible (Herrick, 2016). From my analysis of the assignment guidelines and marking criteria, I again found that these features were not explicated, but were referred to in Veronica's assignment. For example, the lecturer commented on one paragraph in Veronica's Assignment One: "It's difficult to get as [a] sense of how these different points relate", and "There are issues with coherence and cohesion in the organisation of information in the literature review" (Lecturer's comment, 2020). Implicit in this response is a critique of Veronica's writing in relation to a sense of disconnection between sentences in one of her paragraphs. The lecturer was unable to interpret the message that the paragraph aimed to convey. To tackle this problem, the lecturer suggested that Veronica make use of the academic writing consultation services offered by the university so that similar problems would not occur in the second assignment.

Micro-level properties

As well as mastery of the macro-level conventions, students' professional identity also involves the component of writer credibility (Ethos), the development of a persuasive voice, demonstrated through mastery of the discourse of the field, characterised by accurate disciplinary terminology. It should be noted that the lecturer went beyond noting accurate spelling to include appropriate use of the language of the field. In the first assignment, Veronica wrote 'communicative approach' instead of 'communicative language teaching' in a heading, and 'mediate' language level instead of 'intermediate'; this was noted as lexical inaccuracy. The lecturer talked about accuracy of terminology as being a requisite at postgraduate level, as lexis and terminology constitute the "discourse in the field", which she described as "very basic" and "foundational", as terminology which - when "you are at a master level studying '*Innovations in Education'*, you should know" (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). Discourse socialisation is an important element of the trajectory at postgraduate level of becoming recognised in the field. New members need to learn how to 'speak' the legitimate language of the community; to become disciplinarily literate (Coxhead & Byrd, 2007; Csomay & Prades, 2018; Dressen-Hammouda, 2008; Ivanič & Camps, 2001).

Language is obviously an important element of rhetorical discourse. It contributes to the beauty and aesthetic value of the communication, to assist in attracting and securing agreement by the audience (Pathos) (Herrick, 2016). Each context or community has its own type of language needed to attract the audience as 'dress code' of the field (Dressen-Hammouda, 2008). The appropriate use of disciplinary terms in academic writing is obligatory: students *should* know how to use the discourse of the discipline; they *should*, referencing the obligation to be aware of this element of writing and to be able to perform it properly. '*Masterful" and "critical engagement"* with the disciplinary literature (see Figure 5.3) was one of the principal elements of the course requirements. The literature reflects the appropriate use of the correct terminology and discourse that is required to communicate appropriately and effectively. A failure to acquire and to use appropriate language accurately raises doubts about a student's engagement with and understanding of the literature of the field.

DISCUSSION: WHY ARE THOSE RHETORICAL CONVENTIONS REQUIRED IN THE COURSE?

In this section, I provide a summary of the course conventions identified in previous sections and justify why these conventions are considered necessary for postgraduate-level academic writing. This discussion addresses the first research question. As previously noted, in the *Innovations in Education* course these conventions were found to include critical engagement with the disciplinary literature, an effective proposal relating to pedagogical implications for course design, and adherence to academic writing conventions in respect to successful communication of ideas via written texts. While there is a substantial body of research on academic writing at postgraduate level, different writing contexts - including different levels of education, genres, and disciplines - impose different conventions that need to be complied with (Connor, 2008; Herrick, 2016; Hyland, 2002b, 2013, 2015; Ivanič &

Camps, 2001; Prior, 1998; Swales, 1990; Wette, 2021). It is also relevant to note that the rhetorical conventions in this course resonate with the Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion (Herrick, 2016), the principles of Language Education programs (Richards, 1987, 1990; Wright, 2010), and the Australian Qualifications Framework (2013) for postgraduate level. To illustrate, the issue of resonance relates to the fact that the persuasiveness of an argument is discipline-specific; it needs to be considered, therefore, in relation to readers' expectations relating to both the *content* and the *presentation* of the argument. In her role of gatekeeper to successful completion of the course, the lecturer outlined the dimensions of a ‘quality’ argument that students need to construct. The overall objectives for training graduates from Education-based programs include the students exiting the program as critical, intellectual, problem-solving, and effectively-communicating practitioners.

Firstly, the students had to engage critically with relevant literature to develop their knowledge of the field at postgraduate level. This dimension of quality of postgraduate academic writing requires students to firstly acquire content knowledge of the writing subject; this can only be achieved if they are able to identify relevant sources of knowledge/information, accurately interpret them, and make evaluative judgements on the qualities and relevance of them to their writing topic. While criticality is essential - indeed taken for granted in academic writing (Mirador, 2018) - the findings pointed out another noteworthy feature which testifies to the quality of a critical literature review: the *relevance* of the literature reviewed. As argued previously, successful academic writing at postgraduate level requires broad coverage of literature for demonstrated successful acquisition of knowledge of the field (Guo et al., 2021; Wette, 2021), a critique of the literature for the purposes of argumentation, and the selection of the ‘right’ literature.

Secondly, the rhetorical conventions associated with writing in this *Innovations in Education* course reflect Education-disciplinary rhetoric in the formulation of a proposal relating to effective pedagogical implications. Following the national guidelines for postgraduate level, the students are expected to develop substantial knowledge and skills and to be able to apply these with “autonomy, expert judgement, knowledge adaptability and responsibility as a practitioner or learner” (Australian Qualifications Framework, 2013, p. 59). This expectation also aligns with the Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion principle regarding what constitutes convincing argumentation in a particular context and discipline (Hackney & Newman, 2013; Herrick, 2016; Hyland, 2010, 2013). The lecturer in this course described a successful written assignment in an Education-based course as demonstrating the capacity to apply theoretical knowledge to practical teaching situations and to make appropriate recommendations. Students therefore need to present identified problems in their teaching contexts and use the literature to propose solutions to those problems that suit the conditions of their teaching contexts. This expectation also aligns with the central orientation of Teacher Education programs, which is to “provide opportunities for the novice to acquire the skills and competencies of effective teachers and to discover the working rules that effective teachers use” (Richards, 1987, p. 223). In this way students become “reflective practitioners” (Wright, 2010, p. 267) who are able to identify problems in their teaching contexts, propose solutions, and evaluate the effectiveness of the solutions.

Thirdly, the students ultimately presented a piece of writing for assessment with proper adherence to academic writing conventions and demonstrated the required professional communication skills at both macro- and micro-levels. They needed to organise their texts logically, paying attention to the internal elements of cohesion and coherence (Connor, 1984; Kettle & Ryan, 2018). For evidence-based writing, appropriate referencing and recognition of sources are essential to avoid academic misconduct. Noting extensive discussion of plagiarism, it is clear that the seriousness of this issue is emphasised in this course, which demonstrates that proper citation not only avoids plagiarism, it also contributes to constructing the academic identity of the writers (Ethos), and ensuring the quality of the argument (Logos) (Fazilatfar et al., 2018; Friedman, 2019; Wette, 2021). In this chapter, the inclusion of *accurate* disciplinary terms as the language of the field has also been defined as contributing to establishing students’ credibility as academic writers. The dimension of accuracy needs highlighting, as novice writers may not be familiar with the concept (Dressen-Hammouda, 2008). They may recognise the need to use disciplinary discourse but may fail to make good use of the field-specific terms in their writing. This discourse inaccuracy in turn will lessen the quality of their writing and their credibility as academic writers (Ethos) at postgraduate level (Australian Qualifications Framework, 2013).

To conclude, deciding what to write and how to write is complicated. The decision involves an amalgamation of the writer’s voice and identity as shaped by their socio-historical backgrounds (autobiographical self) and authority (self as author), and the linguistic and rhetorical elements expected in their discourse community (discoursal self) (Ivanič, 1994, 1998; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Assessing a written text includes assessment of the writer’s credibility, as written text carries within it the image and voice of the writer, suggested through different forms of positioning which are then interpreted by the reader (Ivanič, 1994, 1998; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Matsuda, 2001; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007; Morton & Storch, 2019). Following the rhetorical conventions prescribed in the course, the students need to understand (i) what counts as convincing argumentation, and (ii) how that argumentation should be structured and presented in order to convince the reader (the assessor of the text) of the quality of the assignment and of their credibility as community members.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused upon rhetoric in the context of postgraduate academic writing in the *Innovations in Education* course, which is understood as a rhetorical community. The rhetorical expectations in this course, which align with those of postgraduate academic writing more generally, include critical engagement with relevant literature for the purpose of demonstrating disciplinary knowledge which will inform the formulation of contextualised innovative implications, and an adherence to academic writing conventions for successful communication via written texts. Compliance with these conventions is necessary if students are to write successfully and credibly. This compliance does not come easily. It is challenging for novice writers to understand and cope with rhetorical conventions in a new context. In the following chapter, I investigate how Madison and Veronica responded and adapted to the rhetorical conventions requirement when completing their written assignments in the *Innovations in Education* course. While investigating their responses and adaptations, I also consider the issue of their authorial voice in their written texts. The lecturer’s responses to these texts are also examined, to reveal how voice is both understood by the student writers themselves and required and responded to by the lecturer.

Chapter Six. International Postgraduate Students' Authorial Voice in Initial Academic Writing

INTRODUCTION

The primary focus of this study is the students' authorial voice in academic writing. This voice is embedded in their academic writing and is governed by the immediate writing contexts which include rhetorical conventions, and students' socio-historical backgrounds (Connor, 2002, 2008). In this chapter, I explore how the students in this study were observed to gradually understand and apply the rhetorical conventions associated with the course, how they demonstrated authorial voice when responding to the rhetorical requirements of their assignments, and how the lecturer recognised and evaluated this voice in their written assignments in the *Innovations in Education* course. The course involves two assignments, and this chapter focuses on Assignment One as it provides insights to the initial writing stage. I have drawn from my analyses of the students' Assignment One, the first interview with them, and the interview with the lecturer.

This chapter addresses part of the second research question by exploring: (i) how international postgraduate students present their voice in academic writing at the initial stage of writing, (ii) what guides or influences the international postgraduate students' presentation of voice, and (iii) how the lecturer evaluates the international postgraduate students' voice. It was my understanding that the students' ongoing exposure to the discourses of the field would advance their understanding of the required rhetorical conventions and their own intercultural rhetoric competence. The subsequent stage will be the focus of the next chapter, exploring how the students reconstruct and enact their understanding of these conventions in the second assignment after receiving the first assessment with grades and feedback from the lecturer.

This chapter represents, therefore, the findings from part of Phase One of the study, focusing on the *Innovations in Education* course and the initial writing stage. The student participants, Veronica and Madison, selected different topics for the first assignment, and approached their respective tasks in different ways. I report firstly on Veronica's account, as I believe she performed a more complex and unstable act of writing, with demonstration of multiple voices. I then explore Madison's performance in her first assignment and highlight similarities and differences compared to Veronica’s account. The lecturer’s comments on the students will then be reported.

As discussed in the previous chapter, in Assignment One the students were required to identify their specific teaching contexts with significant yet unsolved problems in relation to course design, and to discuss how those problems could potentially be tackled. In investigating the students’ responses to the task and to the expected rhetorical conventions, I was interested in exploring (i) how they demonstrated their criticality in their identification of teaching contexts and associated problems, (ii) how they convinced the lecturer of the necessity to tackle these problems and the effectiveness of their proposed implications, and (iii) how they communicated their ideas to the lecturer via written text. It was also my aim to explore the lecturer’s evaluation of the students’ performances and the influential factors involved in the writing and assessment practices.

While exploring the students’ adherence to rhetorical conventions, I was simultaneously identifying their authorial voice in their written assignments. To explain, in order to track their voice, I drew upon the self-positioning model which accounts for how writers indicate their ideational positioning in presenting their interests, their evaluations of subjects, and their understanding of how knowledge can be constructed (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). In expressing this ideational positioning, writers simultaneously demonstrate authority and their power relationship with the readers. The ideational positioning of writers is mainly formed by their “breadth or depth of knowledge, topic choice, and representation of the field” (Tardy, 2012, p. 45). I therefore investigated the students’ authoritativeness in terms of how they demonstrated their knowledge of, interest in, and stance towards the topic they were writing about, their criticality in reviewing the literature to construct a convincing argument relating to how the problems they identified in their teaching contexts could be addressed, and their overall knowledge construction. I was also observing how their authoritativeness and sense of certainty influenced their power relations with readers - their interpersonal positioning, and the decisions they made in terms of structuring their texts as textual positioning.

The themes presented in this chapter are essentially the outcomes of my analyses of the students’ assignments and interviews about the assignments as talk around texts (see Appendix Six). I believe that textual analysis itself is not sufficient to identify the meaning embedded in the linguistic features in a text; that it needs to be complemented by text-based or talk-around-text interviews (Lillis, 2008; Morton & Storch, 2019). Language and language use are complex phenomena. One illustration of this complexity is the varying meaning attached to the use of the first-person pronoun ‘I’ in Veronica’s writing, which revealed different levels of power and authoritativeness. Veronica’s self-representation through ‘I’ appeared differently in different themes depending on the levels of authoritativeness it represented.

VERONICA – A HETEROGENEOUS AND EMERGING VOICE

Veronica is an international student from China in the *Innovations in Education* course who agreed to participate in my research project. She had obtained a Bachelor’s degree in English Language Education in 2011 from a Chinese provincial university. After graduation, however, she did not go into teaching but worked in the Finance area, where she had not used English; so she had not been using English prior to coming to Australia for her postgraduate program. Veronica did not reach the required English language proficiency level at TCU to directly enter the Master’s, obtaining only 6.0 for her IELTS overall score - TCU requires students whose English is not their first language to achieve IELTS of overall 6.5, with a minimum 6.0 for individual bands. Therefore, she had to take two English Pathway (EP) courses at TCU, EP2 and EP3.

In her two-month EP2 course, Veronica primarily practiced listening and reading skills and grammatical structures. The instructor typically provided a list of topics in the form of questions and required the students to write about these topics. There was no word limit or prescribed format for the writing, and the students would share their writing with their peers for feedback. Veronica commented that she did not think this was useful, “because our peers, our levels, the similar level; sometimes we can’t find any grammar mistakes, and sometimes we can’t understand each other what are you writing about” (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.20).

When entering her EP3 course, Veronica found it to be Nursing discipline-focused, which was another challenge for her due to her lack of medical terminology and background knowledge. However, despite the irrelevance of the course content to her intended academic discipline, she was able to develop her writing skills through completing the two EP courses. What she found particularly useful was the written assignment in EP3 in the form of a literature review which involved at least six references. Through engaging with source-based writing, Veronica recognised the development in her writing by comparing what she had learned in the two EP courses with the teaching she had received in her English-majoring program in China. She explained that she had usually written essays that followed the IELTS Academic Writing format that asked for personal opinions and experience in China and did not include the use of references or evidence from the literature to support her account. The exception had been a 1500-word final essay in her Bachelor's degree program in which she was required to include some references.

After completing the two EP courses, Veronica entered her MEP program as a full-time student, and she was in her second semester at the time of the research project. The nature of this postgraduate program posed challenges for her. It involved what she saw as high-level demands which were unfamiliar to her and incompatible with her current language skills and knowledge. She knew that she needed to engage deeply with the literature to acquire disciplinary knowledge, and she was discouraged when she realised her limited reading ability; she could only read a few articles, which "limited my thought; I can't make report; I don't know how to write at first; I have no idea" (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.20). She identified her inexperience in academic writing as a considerable problem; she had been instructed mostly on how to write short academic essays with a problem-solving focus, which was a very different genre to that required in her Master's program.

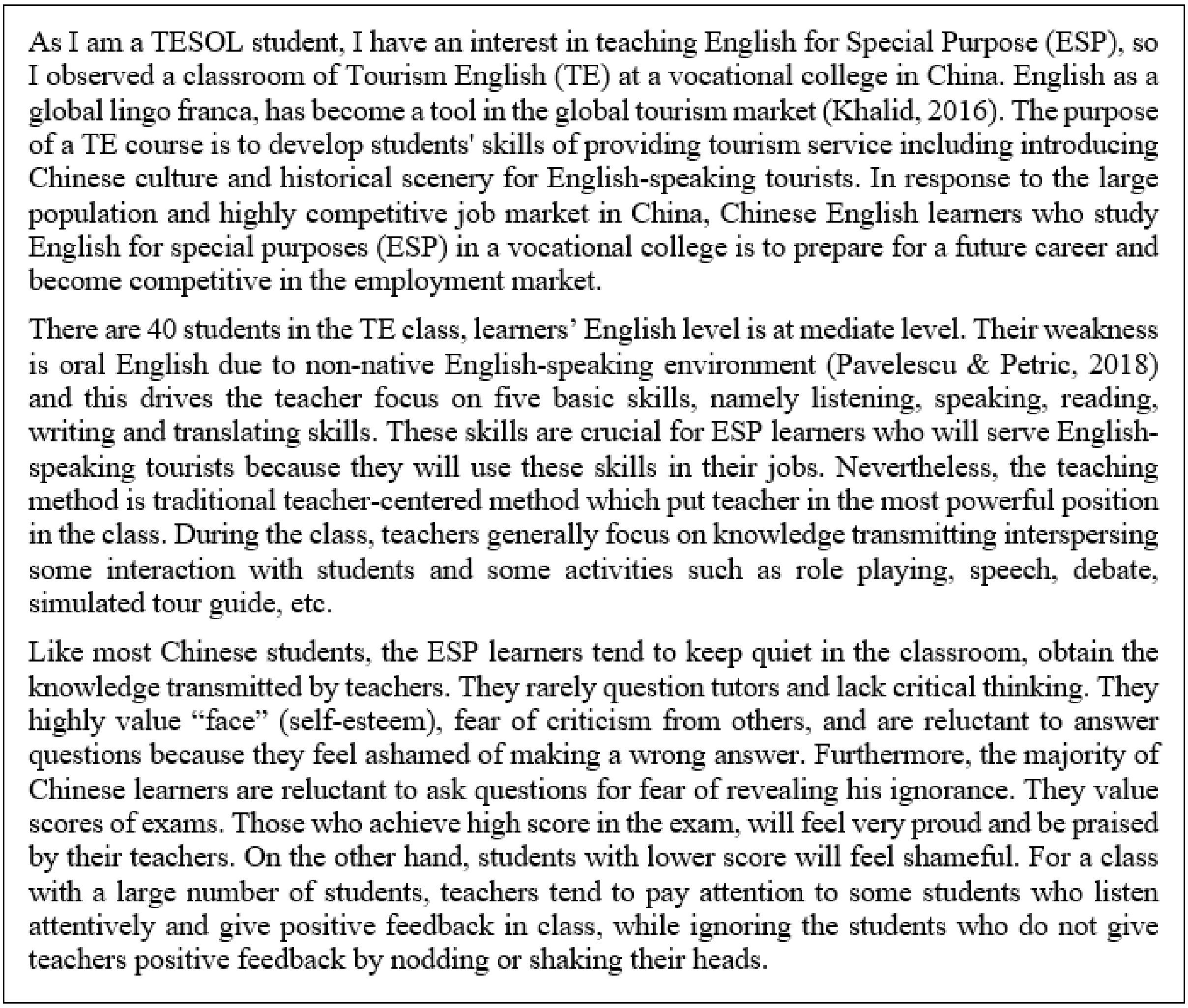
Despite this uncomfortable realisation, Veronica recognised that she could learn many theories from the courses in her MEP program that she could apply to her teaching upon her return to China. Her eagerness to learn new theories and teaching approaches was indicated by her assignments in the *Innovations in Education* course, where she identified and discussed problems related to English language education in China and conceptualised a potential language course design, with new teaching approaches, which might be able to solve these problems. Her passion for reforming English language education in China became a strong motivator for her thinking about different teaching approaches that would potentially increase Chinese EFL learners' language competencies and learning interests.

In the following sections, I report on Veronica's *heterogeneous and emerging* voice as evidenced in the first assignment. I call it 'heterogeneous and emerging' as I noted a shift from being authoritative to tentative and confused in her voice as she demonstrated her knowledge and stances on the topics she was writing about and her proposed innovative implications to solve the problems she had identified in her teaching context. This shift was discernible in the linguistic features she employed in her writing and the perceived perspectives underpinning her language use.

Veronica’s authoritative voice as a legitimate knowledge provider

In the first assignment, Veronica started with an introduction to her socio-historical background in which she indicated her ideational positioning by expressing her interest and stance towards the writing topic and by her demonstration of knowledge construction. She also demonstrated her interpersonal positioning with the sense of power and authoritativeness she established towards her readers, as she considered herself - her personal experience - as a legitimate source of knowledge which she could communicate to them. She established a specific focus at the beginning of the assignment, indicating her research interest in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) education in China. Guided by the supplementary materials for the first section of her assignment, Veronica narrowed her focus to a specific group of EFL/ESP learners in China. This decision was attributed to her first-hand observation of how *English for Tourism* courses at a vocational college, an example of ESP education in China, prepared learners for the competitive job markets.

From her experience, Veronica concluded that communicative competence was a problem in these courses, and she advocated for the Communicative Approach in ESP education, which she believed would improve learners’ communicative skills. She saw this approach as being insufficiently adopted in China. Through working on this assignment, she believed that she would be more confident to teach English in a communicative way to Chinese EFL learners in the future. The decision to select the Communicative Approach for ESP education in China stemmed from her experience as a former TESOL student and from her observation of how ESP education was conducted in one ESP classroom in China. Due to this experience with ESP education in China, Veronica positioned herself as a legitimate knowledge provider to her readers. Different affordances in her assignment allowed her to establish this position in her Introduction section, such as the use of self-reference, disciplinary language, evaluative lexis and tenses to indicate her interests, stances, and knowledge construction - all of which are elements of the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) (Figure 6.1).



As I am a TESOL student, I have an interest in teaching English for Special Purpose (ESP), so I observed a classroom of Tourism English (TE) at a vocational college in China. English as a global lingo franca, has become a tool in the global tourism market (Khalid, 2016). The purpose of a TE course is to develop students' skills of providing tourism service including introducing Chinese culture and historical scenery for English-speaking tourists. In response to the large population and highly competitive job market in China, Chinese English learners who study English for special purposes (ESP) in a vocational college is to prepare for a future career and become competitive in the employment market.

There are 40 students in the TE class, learners’ English level is at mediate level. Their weakness is oral English due to non-native English-speaking environment (Pavelescu & Petric, 2018) and this drives the teacher focus on five basic skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating skills. These skills are crucial for ESP learners who will serve English-speaking tourists because they will use these skills in their jobs. Nevertheless, the teaching method is traditional teacher-centered method which put teacher in the most powerful position in the class. During the class, teachers generally focus on knowledge transmitting interspersing some interaction with students and some activities such as role playing, speech, debate, simulated tour guide, etc.

Like most Chinese students, the ESP learners tend to keep quiet in the classroom, obtain the knowledge transmitted by teachers. They rarely question tutors and lack critical thinking. They highly value “face” (self-esteem), fear of criticism from others, and are reluctant to answer questions because they feel ashamed of making a wrong answer. Furthermore, the majority of Chinese learners are reluctant to ask questions for fear of revealing his ignorance. They value scores of exams. Those who achieve high score in the exam, will feel very proud and be praised by their teachers. On the other hand, students with lower score will feel shameful. For a class with a large number of students, teachers tend to pay attention to some students who listen attentively and give positive feedback in class, while ignoring the students who do not give teachers positive feedback by nodding or shaking their heads.

Figure 6.1. An extract from Veronica’s Introduction section.

In the Introduction section of this assignment (Figure 6.1), Veronica explicitly introduced herself and established her knowledge of, interest in, and stance towards the topic she was writing about: ‘I am a TESOL student’ and ‘I have an interest in teaching English for Special Purposes (ESP)’. She continued to report on her experience of observing an English class in China. The self-introduction with the personal pronoun “I” immediately portrayed Veronica as a member and representative of the TESOL community with a particular interest in ESP education. This self-reference could be misinterpreted as indicating a low level of authority in academic writing - suggesting the writer as being only *a representative* of a TESOL community (Tang & John, 1999). In their work, Tang and John (1999) refer to *being a representative* as the lowest level of power and authority, as it yields only minimal information about the writer (e.g., knowledge, stance). However, after introducing herself as a student in the TESOL area with a specific interest in ESP, Veronica utilised numerous TESOL-disciplinary words to compensate for this low level of authority and further claim credibility as a knowledgeable insider of TESOL and ESP education in China. Examples include: ‘TESOL’, the acronym for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, “ESP” for English for Specific Purposes, ‘English for Tourism’, ‘English as a global lingo [lingua] franca’, and an ‘English-speaking environment’. These are common terms and ‘dress codes’ in the TESOL-related area that are recognisable to readers and identify Veronica with TESOL community members, with relevant knowledge and interests (Dressen-Hammouda, 2008; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Sanchez-Perez, 2021; Wang, 2011). According to Veronica, “our teachers they already know the terms very well and use other expressions not professional that will show you have not read a lot of articles” (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020). Her use of these “professional” terms provides evidence of her sufficient level of engagement with the literature to qualify for content proficiency (Dressen-Hammouda, 2008; Sanchez-Perez, 2021).

While using disciplinary language in part established Veronica’s credibility as a knowledgeable insider of TESOL and of the ESP community in China, she also evaluated with confidence the teaching and learning practices in ESP education in China and identified characteristics of Chinese EFL/ESP learners. Evaluative judgements refer to the capacity to evaluate the quality of the writing subjects (Bruce, 2014, 2016; Tai et al., 2018), such as relevant participants’ language performance or experience as indicated in her assignment. The ability to make judgements is essential in academic writing at postgraduate level, to demonstrate understanding of and stances towards the topics, authoritativeness and criticality (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Mirador, 2018). Figure 6.1 indicates Veronica’s use of adjectives (e.g., *competitive, non-native, traditional, teacher-centered, powerful, quiet, reluctant, ashamed*), adverbs (e.g., *highly, generally, rarely, attentively*), nouns (e.g., *weakness, key, fear*), and verbs (e.g., *fear, value, lack*), which indicate her stance towards the topic she was writing about (e.g., ESP education in China, Chinese learners’ characteristics). Her use of a range of multi-syllabic evaluative lexis (textual positioning) embedded in complex sentence structures indicated her understanding of language forms, representing linguistic competence (Biber, 2006; Chen, 2020; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Sanchez-Perez, 2021). She also made generic reference to ‘most’ Chinese learners, generalising the characteristics of a larger population of Chinese students. Presenting all of these evaluative judgements in the Simple Present tense and declarative verb mood, Veronica was marking the information she presented in this section as facts (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Walková, 2019), which contributed to the trustworthiness of the statements.

When being asked about her decision to start the Introduction with the account of her personal experience, Veronica referred to the rationale of the assignment: it was about her teaching context, so the use of her personal experience would “strengthen the reliability, validity” in correspondence with “the purpose you write the essay” (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020). She wanted to transmit her knowledge of this context to her readers: “The readers they are not Chinese, they want to know what happens in this classroom” (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020). She was very clear about her objective: to “let the readers know why I choose the target group because my personal interest, I am interested, I want to teach them, I want to help them” (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020). She believed that sharing her personal experience would increase the reliability and validity of her writing. She was confident: “I’m graduated Chinese international student; I know learning style”; and the lack of English communicative skill in Chinese learners “[is] a big problem, it’s very urgent so I have to solve this problem” (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020). The repeated use of the pronoun ‘I’ in both the assignment and the interview established Veronica as the central agent in the process of knowledge construction demonstrated in the assignment. She was positioning herself superiorly, as the *know-more* person, offering knowledge to her readers as the *know-less.* She was occupying this position not only to comply with the assignment requirements, but also to align with her perception of her responsibility and credibility in relation to being reader-considerate and shaping knowledge for her readers (Hackney & Newman, 2013; Hinds, 1987; Wang, 2011).

While being assertive and confident in communicating her knowledge of Chinese EFL education for her readers, Veronica had not been used to this form of self-reference and self-introduction in writing. As she reported, she was inspired by one of the articles on the course reading list in which the author introduced herself in the paper.

Extract 6.1

1. Researcher: In the past, did you usually introduce yourself when you wrote?
2. Veronica: No. this is the first time I try this style because I read the articles that is [name of the author] that is literacy in Australia. Yeah, I read her articles and in which part she gave the the reason why she did this research because she has personal interest to know what is the multiliteracy pedagogy. I think I can use this style. I follow her strategies. I think it’s a good opening.
3. Researcher: Why? In the past you didn’t write like this?
4. Veronica: In the past, I think we should give a broader background, but the teacher told us to do give a broader background and narrow the

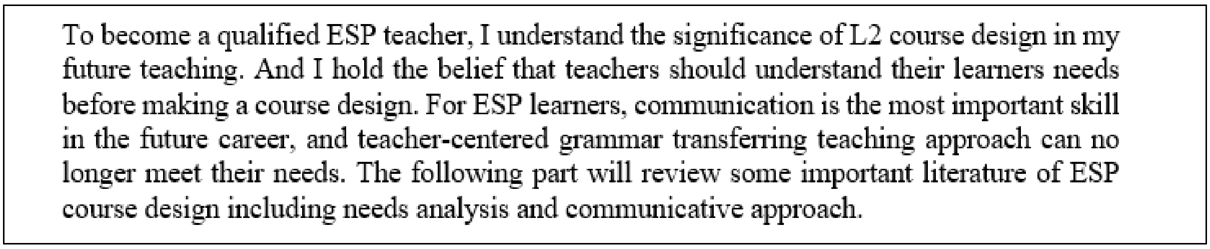
> background and go to your topic just a very natural way. But in this essay, I think I can use some opening just because [the lecturer] want us to introduce our context. Maybe I have two options; one is just tell them what is my target group, and another way is give a broader background like English course design is very important in China. So what what yeah I don't like this style like give a broader background because everyone follow this style, I think it's not very special.
>
> (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020)

These notions of self-introduction and self-reference in academic writing were initially alienating to Veronica and in fact contradictory to her existing beliefs and practices in academic writing in China, where a broader focus in the Introduction was preferred. However, Veronica indicated her adaptation to another writing style in the new context, influenced by the disciplinary discourses now available to her. For example, she was able to recognise how an academic writer in Australia wrote the Introduction in an article that Veronica had read. She also followed to use a personal teaching context in this first assignment. Overall, Veronica was inspired and interested in making the decision to shape her writing style in a way that would be interesting to herself and persuasive to her readers. Her exposure to discourses of the field in a new context offered new insights, challenged her existing beliefs about academic writing, and offered opportunities to re-construct her understanding of how written assignments could be written (Zhang & Zhan, 2020). One result of these different ways was to make herself more visible to her readers. To illustrate, in Extract 6.1 (Turn 4), she evaluated both ways of opening the written paper and then made a decision about how to begin. She was seen here to be exercising agency and authoritativeness in deciding how her writing should be structured and presented.

So far, in the Introduction section, Veronica presented her authoritative voice as a legitimate knowledge provider about ESP education in China and the characteristics of Chinese EFL/ESP learners. She referred extensively to her own educational experience and beliefs in constructing knowledge of ESP education in China. This form of knowledge construction based on personal experience rarely occurs in postgraduate academic writing which is believed to be evidence-based and include reference to previous research for supporting evidence (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Mirador, 2018; Wingate & Harper, 2021). However, given her self-reflection as an insider of the TESOL community in China, Veronica considered herself to be a legitimate source of knowledge (Ethos) about EFL education in this context. She was therefore confident and authoritative in using TESOL disciplinary language, in identifying herself as a member of the field, and in using evaluative language to demonstrate her judgements in relation to the quality of ESP education in China and the characteristics of Chinese learners. She was showing her knowledge and criticality in making these evaluations. Interestingly, while using the first-person pronoun for self-representation, which is considered as representing a very low level of authority (Tang & John, 1999), Veronica escalated this pronominal use to a higher level of authority. This pronoun represents the voice of someone who has experienced ESP education in China and is therefore to be trusted when giving information about this teaching context to her readers.

Veronica's tentative and hesitant voice as a modest practitioner

After asserting her authoritativeness in her voice in the Introduction, I noted a shift in Veronica's voice from authoritative to tentative and hesitant when she discussed possible pedagogical implications. An example of the shift in her voice is provided below when she made a final claim in the Introduction section regarding the qualities of ESP teachers (Figure 6.2). Her voice marked her authority and her conformity to the assignment's rhetorical conventions regarding identifying the focus of her writing and its potential pedagogical implications.



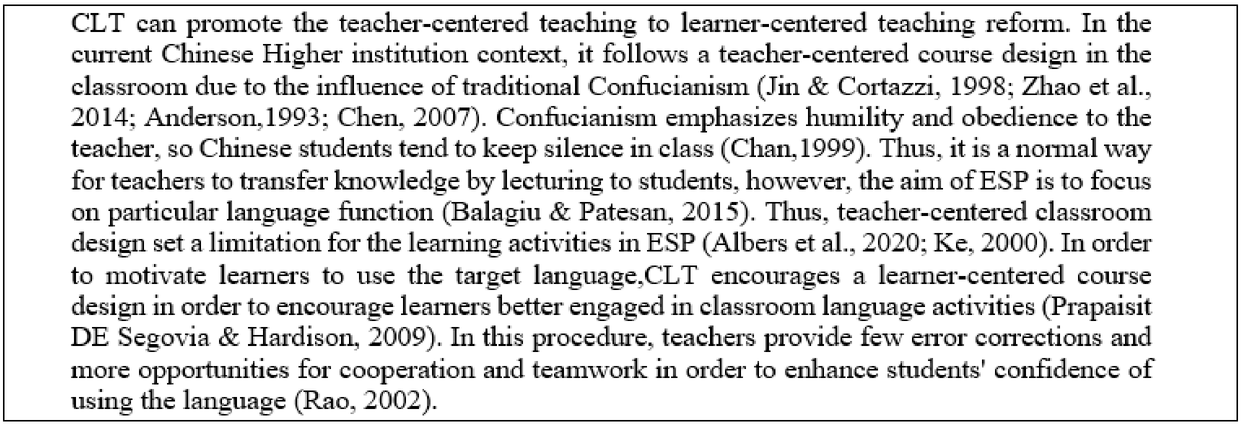
To become a qualified ESP teacher, I understand the significance of L2 course design in my future teaching. And I hold the belief that teachers should understand their learners needs before making a course design. For ESP learners, communication is the most important skill in the future career, and teacher-centered grammar transferring teaching approach can no longer meet their needs. The following part will review some important literature of ESP course design including needs analysis and communicative approach.

Figure 6.2. The concluding paragraph in Veronica's Introduction section.

Veronica repeated the use of the first-person pronoun, stance-related verbs such as 'understand' and 'hold the belief', and the use of modality (*should*) as an expression of obligation as she spoke to what constituted 'a qualified ESP teacher' (DeCapua, 2017). This use of self-reference, modality, and epistemic verbs asserted her confident intention to integrate some level of obligation and professional requirements for ESP teachers in China (Biber, 2006; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Tang & John, 1999; Walková, 2019). However, when being asked whether this statement would apply to other ESP teachers in China, Veronica showed uncertainty or ambivalence in relation to her authority to guide other ESP teachers. She admitted: "I think they [ESP teachers in China] know but they have no choice; this is because for a lecturer or a tutor, their course design are by higher some experts, educators not by them" (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020). Due to the existing top-down system of pre-determined policies, Veronica lost her sense of authority: "I am just a lecturer; I can do nothing; I follow the curriculum design they make for me" (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020). The use of first-person pronoun in this case limited the applicability of the messages to only the writer herself, as *a follower,* rather than as *an originator,* who initiated actions (Tang & John, 1999; Zareva, 2013). Therefore, this tentative and hesitant voice indicated a low level of certainty in her claims, a less superior position towards her readers which was related to her interpersonal positioning in writing at this stage (Ivanič & Camps, 2001).

Veronica continued this sense of lower authority at the end of the paragraph when introducing the focus of her assignment. At this point she 'disguises' herself, replacing her agency in writing with the inanimate subject: 'The following part', rather than continuing her self-reference with the use of the first-person pronoun. The use of a non-human subject ('the following part..') takes the authority away from herself - deferring from making an assertive claim (Chen, 2020). Her identity at this point becomes that of the *architect* of the writing, whose role is only to introduce what would happen in the subsequent sections (Tang & John, 1999). Veronica could not sustain her authority to construct knowledge for others, given the political constraints operating in her context, which placed limits around her authority (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). At first, in previous paragraphs, she had been relatively confident in evaluating the quality of ESP education in China and describing the characteristics of Chinese learners. She then transitioned to being tentative, knowing the constraints involved in applying innovations to other ESP teachers in China.

The same hesitancy and tentativeness was also found in the Literature Review section of her paper. In the Literature Review, she made a significant transition in her writing by referring extensively to other human agencies, citing numerous researchers in the field to evidence the necessity for needs analysis when designing an ESP course (Figure 6.3).



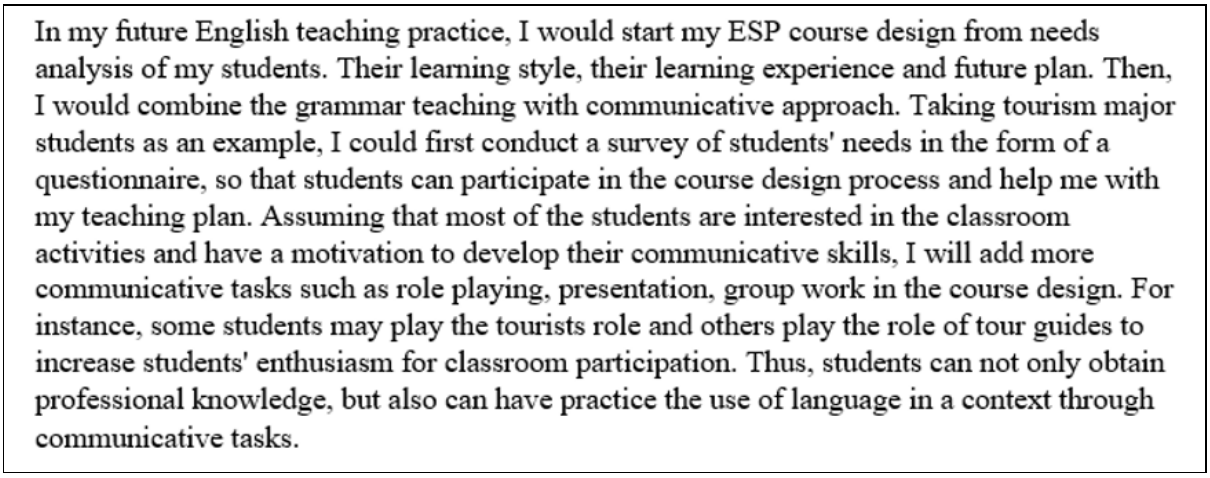
CLT can promote the teacher-centered teaching to learner-centered teaching reform. In the current Chinese Higher institution context, it follows a teacher-centered course design in the classroom due to the influence of traditional Confucianism (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998; Zhao et al., 2014; Anderson,1993; Chen, 2007). Confucianism emphasizes humility and obedience to the teacher, so Chinese students tend to keep silence in class (Chan,1999). Thus, it is a normal way for teachers to transfer knowledge by lecturing to students, however, the aim of ESP is to focus on particular language function (Balagiu & Patesan, 2015). Thus, teacher-centered classroom design set a limitation for the learning activities in ESP (Albers et al., 2020; Ke, 2000). In order to motivate learners to use the target language,CLT encourages a learner-centered course design in order to encourage learners better engaged in classroom language activities (Prapaisit DE Segovia & Hardison, 2009). In this procedure, teachers provide few error corrections and more opportunities for cooperation and teamwork in order to enhance students' confidence of using the language (Rao, 2002).

Figure 6.3. Examples of Veronica's evaluative judgements in Assignment One.

As was the case in the Introduction section, her evaluations in the Literature Review were communicated by the use of different language forms such as adjectives (*teacher-centred, learner-centred, traditional, normal, better,*), nouns (*influence, humility, aim, obedience, silence, limitation, confidence*), verbs (*follow, emphasize, focus, motivate, encourage, enhance*), determiners (*few, more*), and subordinating conjunctions for opposition structure (*thus, however*). This Literature Review section included extensive reference to previous research. When questioned about her decision to include these sources, Veronica stated that the nature of a literature review was to exclude any personal views, so she "always need[s] other researchers' point of view to support" (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020). Veronica characterised this mode of referencing as the indispensable element in academic writing by using the word 'always' when emphasising the need to refer to previous research. She was aware that academic writing required references to previous research as supporting evidence to convince readers, and she had translated this understanding into her writing.

Veronica also understood that a literature review required critiques of previous research; however, she was hesitant to do this, positioning herself as a novice writer. She recalled her encounter with critique of literature: "…last semester, in [name of one course] our teacher showed us articles then she asked us to try to critique uh to critique a grammar coursebook" (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020). This valuable opportunity helped her recognise how critique worked, as "the author [of the article] gave his evaluation; yeah he didn't put everyone's opinion together; uh he evaluate[d] very critically like '*However in his study there is very little evidence to show what…'"* (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020). She had then been instructed that "no research is perfect; you must find something not perfect, then I think I can critique" (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020). Given her identity as a novice writer who was learning how to make effective evaluations in her writing, Veronica questioned herself, "how can I critique them because I do not have enough knowledge to critique others?" (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020). Veronica saw that previous research was written by recognised scholars in the field; as a student she was doubtful about her authority, knowledge or capability to evaluate the claims of such scholars. What she could consider was to "accept all the theory together into my brain" (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020), which marked her as a follower rather than someone in a position to critique research or theories claimed by renowned researchers. Adopting a critical perspective in relation to published research was a rhetorical convention and requirement of the course, but did not feel feasible or appropriate to this student.

Having shifted to a more inferior self-positioning, Veronica continued her hesitant and tentative voice in the Implications section of the assignment. She again employed self-mention features but with a lower level of authoritativeness compared to that of the Introduction section.



In my future English teaching practice, I would start my ESP course design from needs analysis of my students. Their learning style, their learning experience and future plan. Then, I would combine the grammar teaching with communicative approach. Taking tourism major students as an example, I could first conduct a survey of students' needs in the form of a questionnaire, so that students can participate in the course design process and help me with my teaching plan. Assuming that most of the students are interested in the classroom activities and have a motivation to develop their communicative skills, I will add more communicative tasks such as role playing, presentation, group work in the course design. For instance, some students may play the tourists role and others play the role of tour guides to increase students' enthusiasm for classroom participation. Thus, students can not only obtain professional knowledge, but also can have practice the use of language in a context through communicative tasks.

Figure 6.4. Veronica’s Implications section in Assignment One.

When presenting the implications, Veronica accompanied her self-reference with verbs of actions (*start*, *combine, conduct, add*) when referring to how the implications can be translated into actions in a specific classroom context, shaping her identity as *an originator* of actions (Tang & John, 1999). An originator - as one who initiates and undertakes actions – is seen as representing a very high level of authority, embodied in the pronoun (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Tang & John, 1999; Zareva, 2013); however the concept may be threatening to the writer, due to the responsibility that it implies and the potential criticism that writers may encounter when initiating actions (Hyland, 2001, 2002c). However, these action verbs were attached to modality (*would, could, will*), which introduced some level of uncertainty and hesitation around making recommendations (Biber, 2006; DeCapua, 2017; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Parkinson, 2020). These modality features were noticeably infrequently used in other sections of the assignments, which raised my concern about Veronica’s intention. From the interview, it appeared that she did not intend or was not confident that she would be able to apply or to obligate the principles of ESP course design and teaching in the broad Chinese context. This hesitance was attributed to her perspectives on what she perceived as the constant change in respect to knowledge and to her own limited authority to mandate implications in relation to other teachers (Extract 6.2). Therefore, her power and authoritativeness as *an originator* (Tang & John, 1999) was again challenged.

> Extract 6.2
>
> Maybe one year after your knowledge gain to, your thought develops, some new theories come out, finally you think I'm so stupid. Why I'm so right at that moment? So I give some space to go back to reflect on ourselves then make some new ideas. (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020)

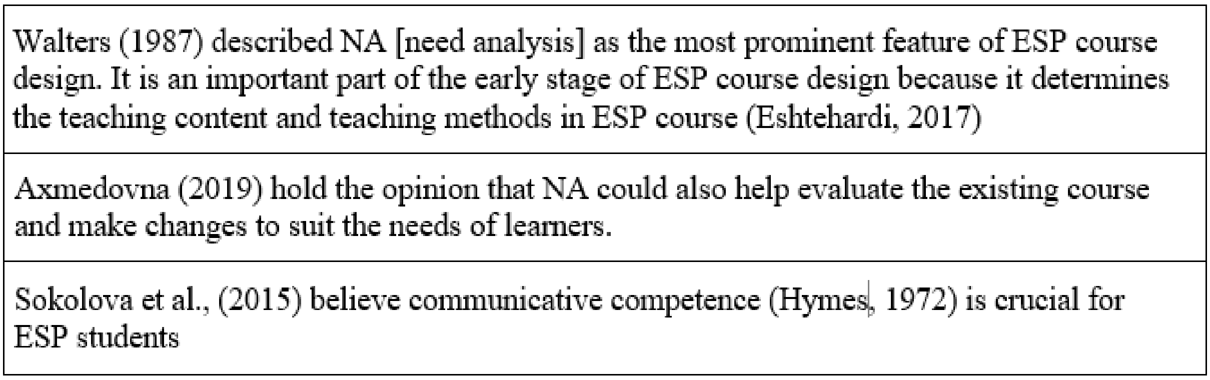
In this response, Veronica was not confident that her claims would be like permanent truths or that her suggestions for teaching approaches would be applicable in all contexts. She commented: "We want to be sure, but we can't say I'm right I'm definitely right" (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020). Veronica was clearly aware of how knowledge is constantly modified and is contextually dependent, which was also her ideational positioning towards knowledge construction (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Therefore, it was more reasonable to maintain a lower level of certainty or sense of obligation; in this way she could still advocate for strategies that ESP teachers in China should be aware of, but it afforded her "some space" for other proposals or counter-arguments, to avoid criticism (Hyland, 2002c; Parkinson, 2020).

Furthermore, we might argue that Veronica's ideas about higher education and institutional rankings constitute a form of power that affords a student a voice. She refers to the importance of having a "PhD [Doctor of Philosophy] degree" "from a very famous reputated university", and the benefits of "a lot of published journal articles" (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020). Within the context of her statements, it appears that Veronica is naming these forms of achievement as providing the capital (Bourdieu, 1991) that will enable her to be definitive in her voice and positioning about the implications of her investigation in her assignment. As Veronica had no access to any of these perceived forms of capital, she argued that she should only present her implications as suggestions, characterised by high levels of modality to achieve this effect (Parkinson, 2020). In addition, she maintained that the suggestions as implications would be appropriate for her to implement, but not a requirement for everyone else: "it's more trustworthy more reliable because you can't use one essay to to summarise all Chinese classroom", and "I don't say everyone should do this, I just do for myself" (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020). For her, this self-representation and self-implementation were the most appropriate ways for her to recommend implications, given her view that she had limited authority and capital to make claims for all Chinese learners and classrooms.

Veronica’s confused voice in knowledge construction

While Veronica presented a shift from authoritativeness to uncertainty and hesitancy in her voice, she also demonstrated confusion in relation to knowledge construction, which is an element of writers’ ideational positioning, which also represents their interpretation and reconstruction of knowledge in the field (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). This act is important in relation to constructing the academic identities of writers, particularly at postgraduate level, as they move towards becoming scholars and originators in their disciplines. However, for Veronica, as a novice writer and a modest practitioner, she was uncertain in presenting her interpretation and reconstruction of knowledge.

Writers’ interpretation of how knowledge is constructed can be seen in their use of reporting verbs. The lecturer in this study had also reported that she was highly attentive to reporting verbs in academic writing as these verbs introduce or represent the process of knowledge making (Lecturer: Interview: 14.10.2020). For example, she would expect to see how existing knowledge was re-constructed as being *argued, maintained*, or simply *stated.* Students’ use of reporting verbs effectively highlights their propositions towards how knowledge is constructed (Biber, 2006; Bloch, 2010; Charles, 2006; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Wette, 2021). As Veronica frequently referred to previous research in her Literature Review, she also used reporting verbs in her writing (Figure 6.5).



Walters (1987) described NA [need analysis] as the most prominent feature of ESP course design. It is an important part of the early stage of ESP course design because it determines the teaching content and teaching methods in ESP course (Eshtehardi, 2017)
Axmedovna (2019) hold the opinion that NA could also help evaluate the existing course and make changes to suit the needs of learners.
Sokolova et al., (2015) believe communicative competence (Hymes, 1972) is crucial for ESP students

Figure 6.5. Examples of reporting verbs in Veronica’s Assignment One.

In Figure 6.5, Veronica used different reporting verbs (*describe, hold the opinion, believe*). By using these verbs, she was committed to her view of how knowledge in the field was constructed. To explain, the rhetorical functions of these reporting verbs indicated that the claims in Figure 6.5 were respectively descriptions, opinions, and the beliefs of other researchers (Bloch, 2010). This could be a strong indication of her ideational positioning and also of her credibility as a disciplinary expert in that she was able to realise the relevant construction of knowledge (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). However, when being questioned about her reasons for using these reporting verbs, it was surprising to discover that she was not noticeably aware of their rhetorical functions. She claimed that she primary selected these verbs from *a wordlist* to avoid repetition, because "we don't use just one word all the time" (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020). Her acquisition of the verbs could also be attributed to her exposure to discourses of the field: "[i]n one literature review they will say 'who argues', 'who believe', and then I just copy paste; I never thought about why they use that" (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020). This random selection reflects how these verbs are commonly perceived by student writers as grammatical and lexical choices, with no awareness of their rhetorical function in forming the writer's stances in relation to previous claims (Bloch, 2010; Charles, 2006; Ma, 2013; Wang, 2011).

The talk-around-text interview also brought up Veronica's perspective on the verb tenses used in the act of knowledge construction. She used both Simple Present (*hold the opinion, believe*) and Simple Past tenses (*described*) to indicate how knowledge was constructed. When this was raised in the interview, she firstly explained these variations in tenses as possibly typographical errors: "If I can notice, if I have time to review, I will notice the tense is not the same style, then I will change; but this time I think I want to submit as soon as possible" (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020). However, she continued to demonstrate confusion about the rhetorical functions of different tenses when reporting on the literature. Although she claimed her primary use was of the Simple Present tense, she also mentioned reasons for her shift in tenses as being taught by her EP instructor. She explained that:

> Extract 6.3
>
> Yeah if they [the researchers] are alive, and they didn't change their point of view, now they still believe that then you believe or not believe. But if they have passed away, then we should use 'believed'. But sometimes we don't check if they are alive. And in the past they have believed something something, and now they change they change to another point of view, then we can use 'believed' or 'used to believe that', but I don't know uh it's different. But sometimes I just put Simple Present. (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020)

Different attributes to tenses were provided in association with how knowledge was constructed. For example, the use of Simple Present tense refers to the information as facts, universal truth (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Veronica herself elaborated on some differences in her views of how knowledge is constructed. If authors were still alive and maintained the same view, she believed the Simple Present tense was appropriate. However, either the passing of the authors or changes in their views would move the knowledge to being a past event, and in this case, the Simple Past tense would be used. Although these different views of knowledge-making being enacted through verb tenses were inconsistent, Veronica presented both alignments and misalignments between her conceptualisation of tenses and the common understanding about the use of tenses (DeCapua, 2017; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). What can be concluded is that Veronica displayed a distinctive and creative personal voice in relation to knowledge construction and validity at the time of the report. However, the interview also showed the possibility of typing and grammatical mistakes being involved when different tenses were unconsciously used, rather than their selection always being an intellectual and cognitive act. In this illustration of Veronica's elaboration in the interview on the use of tenses, she revealed the complexity of ideational positioning in academic writing. Linguistic features such as those related to knowledge construction (e.g., reporting verbs and tenses) might not have stable meaning. Without talk around texts, such complexity in the linguistic making of meaning in texts may not be fully understood or accurately interpreted.

Discussion of Veronica's initial performance

Researchers have recognised instability in the voice of postgraduate student writers, given that they are in the transition between the position of novice writer and a professional in the field, and also given the influence of their socio-historical backgrounds (Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Wette, 2021). The case of Veronica is illustrative of how postgraduate students typically commute between being humble, as learners, and being more assertive and authoritative as disciplinary experts. Veronica revealed the complexity of the multilingual writer's voice, which involves certain ambivalence in relation to its level of authority. To illustrate, she firstly increased her level of power as a legitimate source of knowledge about ESP education in China; but she subsequently referred to herself as 'only' a representative of TESOL practitioners, with a low level of authority. She continued in this inferior position towards other TESOL members and scholars, indicating perhaps fear associated with possible threats if she were to be too authoritative.

Tracking Veronica's performance in the first assignment, I recognised the heterogeneity of her writing voice, constructing her multiple identities (Chen, 2020; Ivanič, 1994; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Tang & John, 1999; Zareva, 2013). This is a common phenomenon in multilingual postgraduate student writers, whose voice has been constructed from their individual socio-historical backgrounds, which it is impossible to completely eradicate on entry to a new rhetorical context (Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Ivanič, 1994; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Phan, 2011; Wette, 2021). The writing context was that of the Australian university, which had distinctive rhetorical expectations, and Veronica had been sufficiently exposed to the discourses of the field to constitute her understanding of these conventions. However, she did not completely discard the influences of her home culture, or ignore the political consequences of voicing one's opinion (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). From that point, I found it interesting to note that Veronica's heterogeneous voice was socio-historically and politically governed. In addition, her trajectory to becoming a disciplinary expert had been impeded, and remained uncompleted, due to her perceived lack of symbolic power in relation to having a voice in the community. As she explained, without higher educational qualifications - the token of symbolic power in her field – and with the influence of national top-down policies in curriculum design, she felt that her voice was marginalised (Ayling, 2019; Bourdieu, 1991; Wette, 2021). Under these political constraints, Veronica positioned herself as a *follower* of policies in her context rather than as an *originator* to propose changes. Again, her socio-historical background had a strong influence on her perceptions of writing and voice as she engaged in rhetorical negotiation and adaptation in this assignment (Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Park, 2013; Shen, 1989; Viete & Phan, 2007; Wette, 2021).

A further interesting finding in respect to Veronica's performance was a dialogic act at some points when she was building and strengthening her voice as she referred to other research studies in the literature review (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986). Yet Veronica also talked about *writing for herself* which I considered as evidence of her being *self-dialogic*. This self-dialogic voice connected to, drew upon, and responded to her own experience (in the Introduction), and was kept for herself (in the Implications). The complexity and ambiguity in the level of power reflected in Veronica's self-reference called into question the boundaries of different levels of power of self-reference referred to in academic writing that previous research had established in its typologies (Tang & John, 1999; Walková, 2019). The talk-round-text interview with the student revealed contradictions between her language use, its meaning as discerned through text analysis, and the actual perspectives on this language use reflected on by the student writer.

This variation in voice also proved that her voice was not monolithic but situational, affected by her rhetorical negotiation and adaptation in writing. It depended on Veronica's interpretation of the characteristic of each part of the assignment. Her epistemic belief in relation to what is counted as legitimate knowledge in the assignment governed her decision as regards power and authoritativeness in her voice in academic writing (Chen, 2020; Hyland, 2002c; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Tang & John, 1999); so, as previously noted, the Introduction section in which she wrote about her teaching context allowed her to be authoritative and confident, as her personal experience was a legitimate source of knowledge; the sections on the Literature Review and Implications showed up her contradictory feelings. This provides further evidence that the nature of tasks and the requirements of discourses influence students' expression of voice (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Matsuda, 2001; Zhang & Zhan, 2020). However, this negotiation also exposes the discomfort and confusion to students who are positioned at the intersection of different writing norms (Phan, 2011; Viete & Phan, 2007), and who are accustomed to valuing collectivism and modesty when evaluating others, particularly renowned scholars (Chen, 2020; Phan, 2011; Phan & Li, 2014; Tran, 2011a, 2013).

MADISON – AN ESTABLISHED AND OBJECTIVE VOICE

Originally from China, Madison had obtained a Bachelor's degree in Engineering and had entered a six-year Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program in Business Management. Both programs were conducted in China with Chinese as the medium of instruction. After completing her PhD program, Madison worked in the Iron and Steel industry in a state-owned organisation for five years in one of the largest cities in China. She did not have many opportunities to use English as she was mainly in charge of producing reports in Chinese, with occasional opportunities to translate official documents from Chinese to English. Madison had decided to apply for the MEP program at TCU as she wanted to shift to teaching English. She chose TCU as she had cousins who lived in the city where TCU was located.

Like Veronica, Madison did not achieve the required English language level to enter her MEP program directly as a full-time student. Instead, she gained 6.5 overall, with 6.0 for Listening, 6.0 for Speaking, 8.0 for Reading, and 5.5 for Writing. As her Writing component was not compatible with the institution's requirements, she had to take a 13-week EP course at TCU Language Centre. In this course, she was instructed on how to search for information from a database and to write academic essays for her later studies. However, she admitted that the comments from her instructor were relatively general, such as "good" or "well-done", rather than providing specific commentary on her work. What she found “the most important thing” from this EP course was having learned how to structure a written text in English (Madison: Interview One: 24.09.2020). As she commented, Chinese writing style is unfocused, with the typical introduction of “the policy of our government”, while the English style of writing focuses on what is “necessary and closely related with our research, not too much about policy” (Madison: Interview One: 24.09.2020). Having defined the differences between the two writing styles, Madison admitted that what she was most worried about was how to write in English, although she felt herself to be relatively competent in doing research. Her previous PhD research-intensive program and the professional demands of reporting on the productivity of her organisation had required her to undertake research and to conduct statistical analysis; therefore, she felt competent and confident in relation to the research process itself. However, this research and writing experience was undertaken mainly in the Chinese language, so Madison had had little experience of academic writing in English.

At TCU, Madison selected courses related to Language Teaching/Literacy and Early Childhood Education. She wanted to work with children as she believed that she was good at communicating with them. At the time of this study, she was in her second semester and needed to complete two additional semesters to be awarded a double degree.

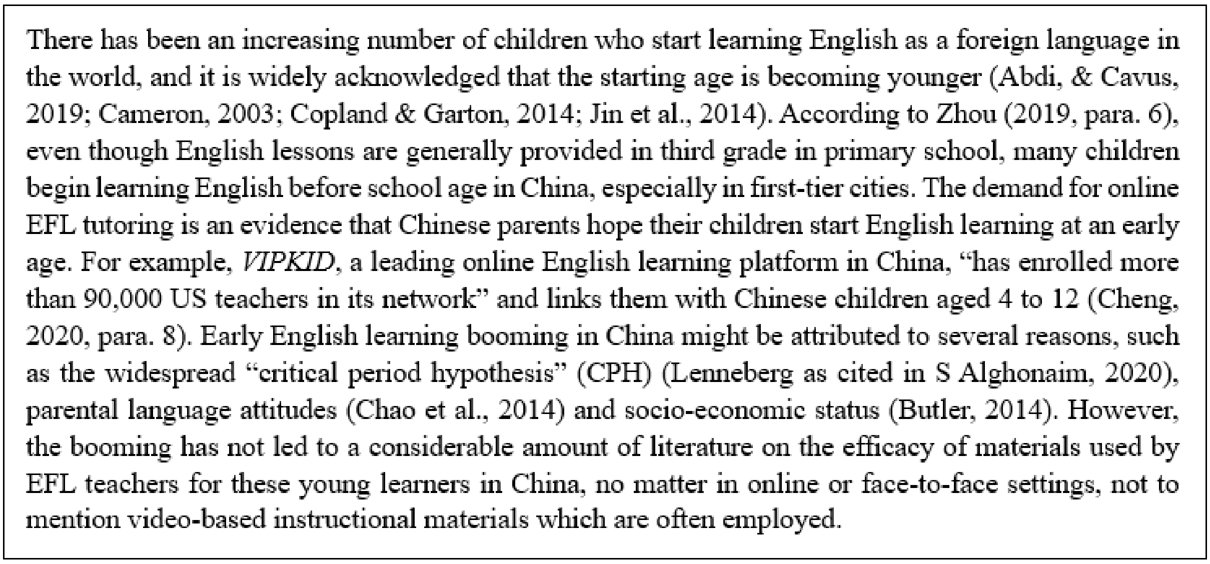
In this section relating to Madison’s performance in Assignment One, I examine how she proposed and justified the necessity and relevance of her topic through her critical review of the literature. I also explore how she convinced the lecturer of her proposed innovative implications to indicate her knowledge of the topic and her authoritativeness to make the proposal. Of interest also is the authorial voice that Madison projected in her writing and the lecturer’s comments on her work. Unlike Veronica, who presented heterogeneity in her voice, Madison produced a relatively consistent writing style. For example, she mainly drew from previous research rather than from her own experience to identify the area in her context that needed further exploration. Only in the Implications section did she briefly distance herself from previous research and shift towards a more personal voice. In the following section, I report on how Madison demonstrated her knowledge of the topic she was writing on through her criticality and credibility in reviewing the literature to identify problems in her own teaching context and to offer possible solutions, and on how her authorial voice was presented in response to the task demands.

Madison's critical and literature-informed voice

In Assignment One, Madison was interested in applying technology in English language education for children in China. As she reported, the motivation for this topic stemmed from her personal experience after observing her friends' children and the ways they learned English. Specifically, Madison identified an ineffective selection and use of materials to teach children English. Drawing on what she knew about children's distinctive biological and psychological characteristics, Madison concluded that current materials she was familiar with in her context were unlikely to motivate children. Her offered solution was to initiate the use of video-based materials in language courses for children.

> Extract 6.4
>
> Last semester, I heard a story by a colleague. She came from I think I remember she came from Asia. Her nephew started studying English from watching cartoon like The Pink Pigs. And I also I have friends, their children also watch cartoons in English, but the content is so boring. I think so boring not as interesting as I watch on YouTube. Maybe most some of cartoon are developed by Chinese educators. I didn't know, so I think the content of videos are important for for children. And another reason for me to choose video-based materials is I think the language learning is easier for children (Madison: Interview One: 24.09.2020)

Madison collected information from her network to develop and inform her interest for this assignment (Extract 6.4). The information was described as stemming from an experience which she 'heard' from her friends' comments on the videos. However, Madison shifted to the Simple Present tense when making evaluations of the value of the videos that her friends had mentioned and of the characteristics of children. In Extract 6.4, for example, she introduced her own personal experience and perspective on how English language was being taught to Chinese children using the first-person pronoun and state verbs (*be, think, know*). She also regarded the videos used to teach English to children as 'boring' and children as 'easier' language learners. This demonstration of personal perspectives constitutes a personalised form of knowledge construction in which she plays an active role in providing the rationale for her assignment and knowledge for her readers (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). This is a starting point that both Veronica and Madison took in completing the assignment - that they had been informed by their personal experience in selecting their respective research topics for further investigation. However, despite her starting point of personal experience, Madison had then decided to withdraw from the personal position and draw extensively from the literature, as evidenced in her text (Figure 6.6).

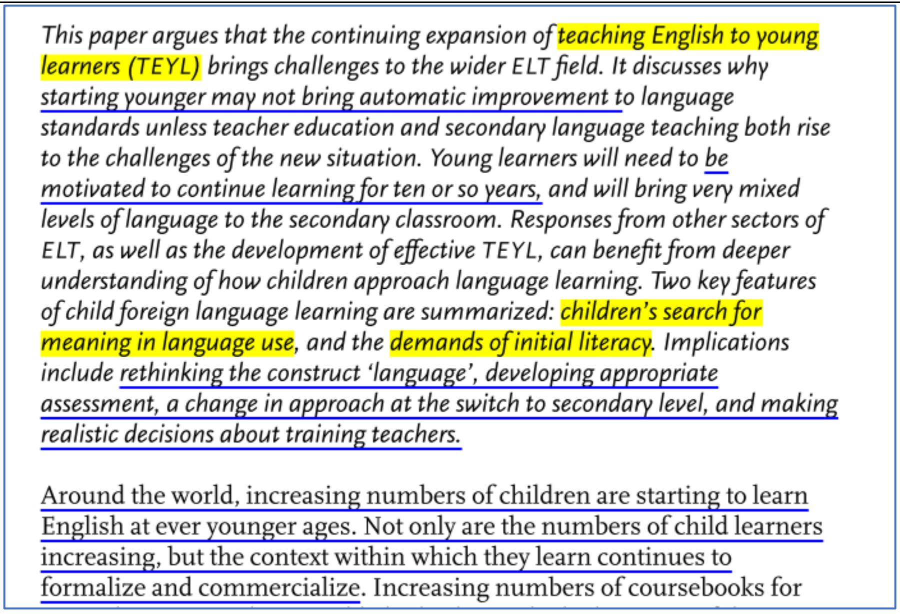


There has been an increasing number of children who start learning English as a foreign language in the world, and it is widely acknowledged that the starting age is becoming younger (Abdi, & Cavus, 2019; Cameron, 2003; Copland & Garton, 2014; Jin et al., 2014). According to Zhou (2019, para. 6), even though English lessons are generally provided in third grade in primary school, many children begin learning English before school age in China, especially in first-tier cities. The demand for online EFL tutoring is an evidence that Chinese parents hope their children start English learning at an early age. For example, *VIPKID*, a leading online English learning platform in China, "has enrolled more than 90,000 US teachers in its network" and links them with Chinese children aged 4 to 12 (Cheng, 2020, para. 8). Early English learning booming in China might be attributed to several reasons, such as the widespread "critical period hypothesis" (CPH) (Lenneberg as cited in S Alghonaim, 2020), parental language attitudes (Chao et al., 2014) and socio-economic status (Butler, 2014). However, the booming has not led to a considerable amount of literature on the efficacy of materials used by EFL teachers for these young learners in China, no matter in online or face-to-face settings, not to mention video-based instructional materials which are often employed.

Figure 6.6. An extracted paragraph from Madison's Introduction in Assignment One.

In the Introduction section, Madison introduced her teaching context, which was hypothetical due to her lack of teaching experience. In Figure 6.6, she was seen to employ many discipline-related terms (*online English learning platform, language attitudes, critical period hypothesis, video-based instructional materials).* She also used multi-syllabic language features to present her evaluations, such as adjectives (*increasing, younger, leading, booming, widespread, considerable*), adverbs (*generally, widely, often*), nouns (*evidence, booming, efficacy*), verbs (*acknowledge*), and opposition structures (*even though, no matter*). Being informed by the literature, she provided her supporting evidence with authoritativeness, using the Simple Present tense and the indicative mood for factual statements (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Such referencing of previous research as evidence to convince readers is a key characteristic of advanced academic writing (Friedman, 2019; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Wette, 2021). Her ability both to use disciplinary language and to make judgements using appropriate linguistic categories demonstrated Madison's competence as an academic writer at an advanced level, showing her as aligning herself with the practices of her discourse community (Chen, 2020; Dressen-Hammouda, 2008; Ivanič & Camps, 2001).

Notably, Madison did not form these judgements in earlier drafts, which was explained by her lack of knowledge in the early writing stage. She explained that "at the beginning in the first draft, I'm not sure about the points that I wrote, and after I read and after reading, I'm sure about" (Madison: Interview One: 24.09.2020). She reflected on the importance of reading: "70% of time reading, I feel reading is very important" and "reading and the ideas will come" (Madison: Interview One: 24.09.2020); she believed that engagement with the literature constructed her knowledge of the writing topic. She explained how the materials that supported her claims needed a rigorous review process: “I scan the abstracts of the articles, the results and discussion the articles, to see if the articles will be useful” (Madison: Interview One: 24.09.2020). To do this, she identified linguistic features and ideas by underlining and highlighting as paralinguistic features (Biber, 2006) when she evaluated the qualities of the materials, selecting which segments could be used in the final report (Figure 6.7). This process of evaluative judgements on the qualities of the reading materials was identified as one of the rhetorical conventions of the course, associated with the element that I identified in Chapter Five. While Madison presented her critical engagement with the literature and her development of knowledge of the field in different writing drafts, this aspect was less visible in Veronica’s case as her drafts did not reveal differences with the submitted version. It should be noted that the limited changes in Veronica’s drafts were claimed to be attributed to “the word limitation [that] make me can’t change a lot. If I change a lot I can’t go on” (Veronica: Interview One: 22.09.2020).

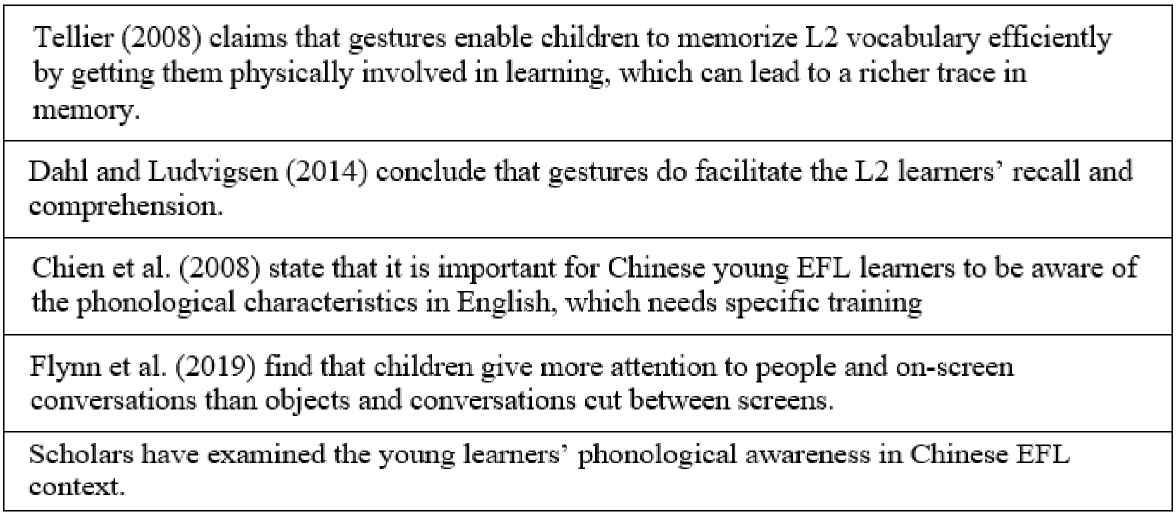


This paper argues that the continuing expansion of teaching English to young learners (TEYL) brings challenges to the wider ELT field. It discusses why starting younger may not bring automatic improvement to language standards unless teacher education and secondary language teaching both rise to the challenges of the new situation. Young learners will need to be motivated to continue learning for ten or so years, and will bring very mixed levels of language to the secondary classroom. Responses from other sectors of ELT, as well as the development of effective TEYL, can benefit from deeper understanding of how children approach language learning. Two key features of child foreign language learning are summarized: children’s search for meaning in language use, and the demands of initial literacy. Implications include rethinking the construct ‘language’, developing appropriate assessment, a change in approach at the switch to secondary level, and making realistic decisions about training teachers.

Around the world, increasing numbers of children are starting to learn English at ever younger ages. Not only are the numbers of child learners increasing, but the context within which they learn continues to formalize and commercialize. Increasing numbers of coursebooks for

Figure 6.7. Madison’s paralinguistic features in an early draft.

Through this form of critical engagement with the literature Madison was able to interpret and restate what other researchers had claimed in previous studies. I had recognised the importance to the lecturer of the reformulation of quotes and the proper use of reporting verbs to communicate what the students had understood. This was another difference between Madison and Veronica. Madison used different reporting verbs not only as lexical and grammatical tokens but also as rhetorical devices to communicate her interpretation of previous research, as an act of knowledge construction.



Tellier (2008) claims that gestures enable children to memorize L2 vocabulary efficiently by getting them physically involved in learning, which can lead to a richer trace in memory.
Dahl and Ludvigsen (2014) conclude that gestures do facilitate the L2 learners' recall and comprehension.
Chien et al. (2008) state that it is important for Chinese young EFL learners to be aware of the phonological characteristics in English, which needs specific training
Flynn et al. (2019) find that children give more attention to people and on-screen conversations than objects and conversations cut between screens.
Scholars have examined the young learners' phonological awareness in Chinese EFL context.

Figure 6.8. Examples of Madison's reporting verbs in Assignment One.

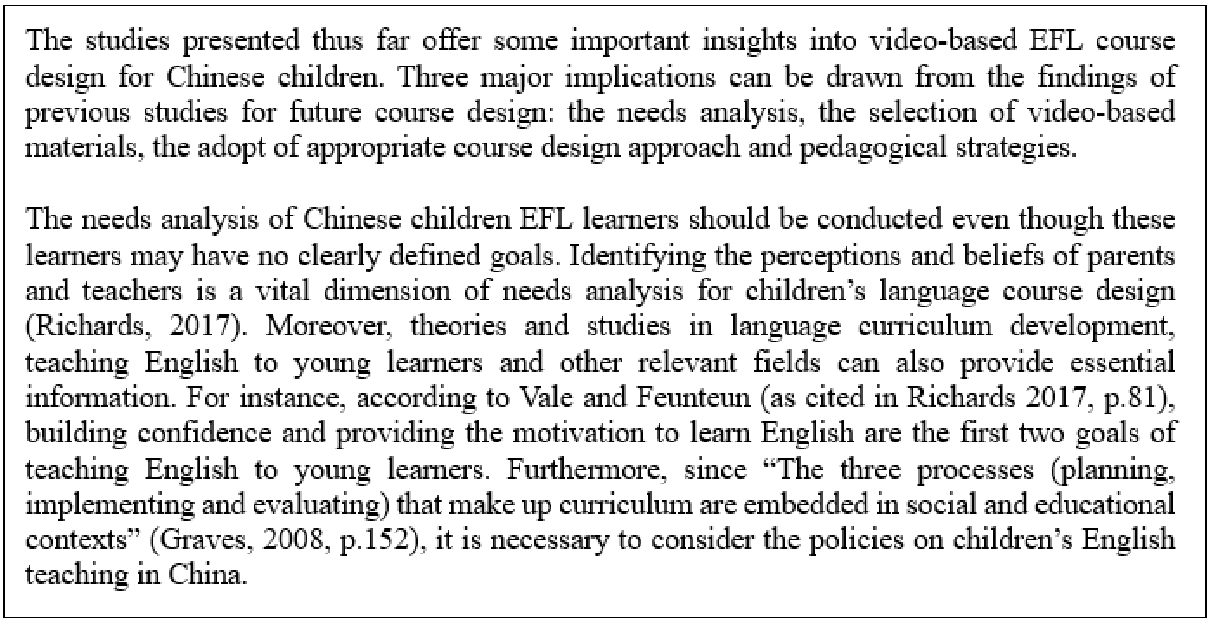
In the above segment from Madison's work, she used different reporting verbs (*claim, conclude, state, find, examine*) to communicate her understanding of previous research. This practice is also an element of the ideational positioning of writers in terms of how knowledge is constructed (Bloch, 2010; Charles, 2006; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Although Madison preferred using this mode of other-source reporting, referencing previous research rather than offering her personal experience as the source of knowledge, she was still able to indicate her personal voice, as she presented a proposition on how knowledge had been constructed in her research area (Charles, 2006). Unlike Veronica, who tended to randomly select reporting verbs from a wordlist, to avoid repetition, Madison showed that she consciously selected reporting verbs, demonstrating a higher level of competence in academic writing and language use (Ma, 2013).

> Extract 6.5
>
> Sometimes it's a citation in findings part from previous researches, then I use *find*. It's from conclusion or discussion or implications oh I will use... it's implications I will use *suggest,* and it's conclusion I use *state* and *maintain.* (Madison: Interview One: 24.09.2020)

In addition to her careful selection of reporting verbs, Madison also varied her use of verb tenses. In most cases, she used the Simple Present tense (*claims, find, conclude*), which presents her claims as truth. However, there were also instances where she shifted tenses to the Present Perfect (*have examined*) when reporting the literature, although this variation was not common in her work. I spoke to her about the scarcity of her tense variation, and her response was: “I didn’t pay specific attention to them, maybe I in some reading they use these words, and I can use them as well” (Madison: Interview One: 24.09.2020). Madison acknowledged that her use of verbs and tenses came through her exposure to the discourses of the field. Verb tenses are important features in academic writing, as they demonstrate the writer’s view of how knowledge is developed (Ivanič & Camps, 2001); however neither Madison nor Veronica paid particular attention to them – in spite of the fact that their texts contained tense variations.

Madison’s objective voice

Madison’s advocacy of evidence-based writing could be seen when she concluded the focus of her assignment in the Implications section. In this section, she started with an introductory paragraph which she combined with a literature-informed conclusion.



The studies presented thus far offer some important insights into video-based EFL course design for Chinese children. Three major implications can be drawn from the findings of previous studies for future course design: the needs analysis, the selection of video-based materials, the adopt of appropriate course design approach and pedagogical strategies.

The needs analysis of Chinese children EFL learners should be conducted even though these learners may have no clearly defined goals. Identifying the perceptions and beliefs of parents and teachers is a vital dimension of needs analysis for children’s language course design (Richards, 2017). Moreover, theories and studies in language curriculum development, teaching English to young learners and other relevant fields can also provide essential information. For instance, according to Vale and Feunteun (as cited in Richards 2017, p.81), building confidence and providing the motivation to learn English are the first two goals of teaching English to young learners. Furthermore, since “The three processes (planning, implementing and evaluating) that make up curriculum are embedded in social and educational contexts” (Graves, 2008, p.152), it is necessary to consider the policies on children’s English teaching in China.

Figure 6.9. An example of Madison’s literature-Informed conclusions in Assignment One.

In Figure 6.9, Madison was seen to present an introductory paragraph and a topic sentence in the second paragraph, with no references to the literature in her Implications section. Despite the absence of references, Madison did imply that these conclusions were in fact literature-informed statements. Having “my conclusion” was necessary to her because “it’s about critique, critical thinking and literature review, you have to give your own opinion or critical thinking about a previous research” (Madison: Interview One: 24.09.2020). In Madison’s words, critical thinking referred to the writer’s views of previous research and was literature-informed. That is, she undertook an extensive and critical review of the literature in order to assemble her content knowledge. She then evaluated it and restated the information in her own way to indicate her generalised ideas, gathered from multiple sources (Petrić, 2012). This paragraph structure starting with her conclusion was foregrounded “several years ago uhm my writing when I wrote dissertation for PhD degree, I used this” (Madison: Interview One: 24.09.2020). She aligned herself with this rhetorical expectation in this course, due to the lecturer’s preferred idea-led writing style, in which students critically review the literature to establish a strong argument. This approach was less visible in Veronica’s writing due to her insufficient knowledge on how to make such arguments. Later in this chapter I discuss the lecturer’s comment on Veronica’s ineffective use of direct and lengthy quotes as topic sentences.

Although Madison referred to these statements as *her* literature-informed conclusion, she still deferred from self-referencing in order to maintain objectivity, reliability, and the trustworthiness of her claims. She avoided the use of first-person pronouns, using rather an inanimate subject (*the studies, the findings*) and the passive voice (*can be drawn*) to communicate her authorship. She believed that “‘I’ or ‘We’ are subjective and will reduce reliability or validity” (Madison: Interview One: 24.09.2020). This form of writing therefore represented her advocacy of objective voice and depersonalised knowledge construction in academic writing (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Her effort to maintain objectivity in writing and in her voice was influenced and supported by the evidence-based reports that she had been familiar with. This too is an indication of her linguistic and pragmatic competence in academic writing (Chen, 2020). In terms of linguistic competence, she was aware of the level of subjectivity that first-person pronouns carry; in terms of pragmatic competence, she understood how academic writing at postgraduate level should be presented and the need for objectivity in this writing genre. There is evidence of this competence in Madison’s decision regarding the most appropriate approach to indicating her critical voice and simultaneously maintaining objectivity in her writing.

Her commitment to objectivity was further evidenced in her use of modality. There were several instances in this assignment when Madison employed modal verbs to signify her level of certainty of the claims. I have synthesised the modal verbs used in her assignment. While Figure 6.9 presents her use of ‘can’ and ‘should’, other forms of modality in her assignment include ‘might’, ‘may’, and ‘could’, which are common modalities in academic writing (Biber, 2006). Although different modal verbs were used in the assignment, Madison responded that those verbs were similar in terms of their “objective” meanings; what differentiated them was the level of certainty that they carried. She quantified the difference as different percentages of certainty, establishing a scale of certainty for these modalities, in which “*maybe* is ..it’s not absolutely true, but it is one reason for more than 30%”, “more than 30%” is *might*, and “50% is *may”* (Madison: Interview One: 24.09.2020). The reliability of this scale was not the focus of the study, and it was difficult for Madison to explain or define the boundaries for the modal verbs in her measurement scale. However, the scale indicated Madison’s active role in constructing her discourse of certainty and objectivity and recognition of the complexity in meanings of modality in terms of her own writing standards. She also understood that a written text might not be interesting to an entire readership. She believed her writing would mainly suit those “who are interested in this topic, this kind of topic, instead of all teachers” (Madison: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). Unlike Veronica, who was hesitant in mandating or imposing her implications due to lacking a powerful voice, Madison was relatively confident to raise these implications with other teachers. Any constraint relating to the applicability of Madison’s implications lay with the interest of potential readers rather than with any lack of power or authority in her voice.

Discussion of Madison’s initial performance

Holding a doctoral degree, Madison seemed to be more experienced in academic writing, given her critical review of the literature and her evidence-based writing style. When framing her voice in the assignment, Madison was consistent in her belief that academic writing needs to be objective. She therefore used an objectivity-oriented voice, avoiding personalised knowledge construction by referring extensively to previous research, which enhanced the objectivity and persuasiveness of her claims. Clearly Madison’s educational and professional experience strongly influenced her way of writing. She herself referred to her academic and professional experience (e.g., in relation to paragraph structure, statistical evidence, references to literature) as being very influential on how she wrote. Holding a research degree and working in the Iron and Steel industry, she was strongly influenced by the concept of impersonal writing which is typical in Hard Sciences (Abdi & Farrokhi, 2015). Therefore, although she claimed that her personal account also contributed to the decision on her writing topic, she distanced herself from personalisation in knowledge construction. Self-reference therefore was visibly absent in her assignment, disguised under a more abstract form of writing characterised by the use of inanimate subjects and an avoidance of first person pronouns (Abdi & Farrokhi, 2015; Chen, 2020). It was her intention to adopt an objective literature-informed voice to ensure objectivity and reliability.

It also needs to be noted that her exposure to the discourses in the current context might shift her understanding of writing. For example, despite her existing belief about academic writing being objective, she had anticipated a different writing style in the Language Education area in Australia when she entered the MEP program. She claimed that writing in this new context typically focused less on policies and more on personal experience. This anticipation of a different type of discourse advanced Madison's knowledge about academic writing. It provided something like a transition, during which she engaged in a kind of hybridity, drawing on personal experience but also referencing literature for trustworthiness, objectivity, and reliability. Her construction of this objective and literature-informed voice was "the amalgamative effect of the use of discursive and non-discursive features that language users choose, deliberately or otherwise, from socially available yet ever-changing repertoire" (Matsuda, 2001, p. 40). To explain, in her educational and professional writing experience, Madison had understood and promoted writing as being objective and evidence-based; this formed the basis of her 'repertoire' of academic writing knowledge. When entering the new context with different rhetorical conventions, Madison *deliberately* and *agentively* employed the discursive practices that she decided were needed to write in ways that satisfied her readers' expectations, and she decided also to maintain objectivity as her preferred writing style. This formed her in-between writing style (Starks & Nicholas, 2020) as evidence of her rhetorical negotiation in the new context.

THE LECTURER'S RESPONSES TO THE STUDENTS' PERFORMANCES

Playing the role of gatekeeper, the lecturer demonstrated her authority by assessing the students' performances in this course. She was very aware of the students' linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds, which influenced their writing. However, the students needed to "try to understand in a new educational context what constitutes effective academic writing" (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). Although the students had attentively addressed the identified and prescribed rhetorical conventions of the course, there were issues that the lecturer was dissatisfied with. In this section, I focus on the lecturer's comments that were critical of the students' construction of their academic identity and credibility (Ethos), and of the quality of their arguments (Logos) to convince the lecturer (Pathos). In this section, I draw on the rhetorical conventions of the course to identify the extent to which the lecturer indicated dissatisfaction with the students' adherence to these conventions.

Critical engagement with the literature

Critical engagement with the literature had been identified as crucial to understanding the field and establishing a strong argument (Logos). The students attempted to indicate their academic and professional identities by showing the lecturer their knowledge of the field and their credibility (Ethos). However, they were unable to convince her of their substantial and critical engagement and disciplinary accountability due to inappropriateness of their language use, knowledge construction, and use of reading sources - for which they failed to construct their credibility (Ethos) sufficiently to convince the lecturer (Pathos).

The lecturer was dissatisfied with the students' language use due to their lack of understanding of the disciplinary terms as evidenced in their writing. In her assignment, Veronica had presented a deficit model through her use of the terms 'native' and 'non-native speakers' of English. For the lecturer, these terms were tremendously contested in the field, but taken for granted in Veronica's assignment, with no acknowledgement of this contestability. For the lecturer, this signifies "the lack of knowledge in the field" (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). For Madison, the lecturer suggested changing 'children EFL learners' to 'young EFL learners', for a better understanding of the targeted subjects in her writing. According to the lecturer, these disciplinary terms needed to be used accurately to demonstrate the students' credibility, as evidence that they have substantively engaged with the disciplinary literature and were consequently able to use appropriate recognised language as the 'dress code' of their relevant field.

The lecturer was also uncomfortable with Veronica's knowledge construction of Chinese learners' characteristics that were solely based on her personal experience. In Figure 6.1, Veronica wrote that "Like most Chinese students, the ESP learners tend to keep quiet in the classroom, obtain the knowledge transmitted by teachers" (Veronica's Assignment One, 2020). These were Veronica' evaluations of Chinese ESP learners, articulated in an authoritative voice as discussed earlier in the chapter. However, for such evaluative claims, the lecturer questioned the trustworthiness of those claims, commenting that "Could these be overgeneralisations? Can you support these points with recent literature?" (Lecturer's comment, 2020). Additionally, in the interview, the lecturer described this as a generalisation, explaining that "it troubles me because it seems to be a stereotype", "it makes me uncomfortable, these sort of what I think is stereotypes", and "it disturbs me particularly if it's a stereotype, a negative stereotype" (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). Hence, Veronica's personal experience and authoritativeness as a legitimate source of knowledge was unconvincing to the lecturer - unless Veronica could "at least provide some research that backs it up", but the lecturer did not think there would be supporting evidence for such a negative stereotype (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). This caution references the need to attend carefully to "communal ideology or value system concerning what is taken to be normal, interesting, relevant, novel, useful, good, bad, and so on" (Hyland, 2005, p. 175), to what is counted as legitimate knowledge - in this course as a rhetorical community.

Veronica's credibility as an academic writer was also questioned in many instances when she was unable to communicate her understanding of the literature. The lecturer highlighted the weakness of Veronica's voice in her writing when she employed a lengthy quote, without any interpretation of its meaning or function. The lecturer was concerned: "how can I communicate my understanding of this idea [the quote] in relation to building up a literature review and an argument about teaching speaking in ESP" (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). The lack of interpretation confused the lecturer about Veronica's critical thinking at Master's level. She added that what was more effective was paraphrasing, which "lends itself much more strength than a quote" (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020) and shows a higher level of student's understanding and a more idea-led writing form.

While the above points were detrimental to Veronica's credibility, Madison seemed to be more convincing to the lecturer in terms of her engagement with the literature. She was commended for providing impressive statistical evidence with 900,000 teachers on these online educational platforms (see Figure 6.7). The lecturer admitted: "That's phenomenal, I guess there is the understanding of the context" and "you know it's been established here" (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). With such statistical evidence, the lecturer was content that the assignment had "Clear flagging of the focus of the literature review and effective use of statistics to establish aspects of the overall context" (Lecturer's comment, 2020). However, while Madison advocated and enacted a literature-informed voice in academic writing, her voice was not convincing to the lecturer due to her selection of irrelevant literature to support her argument. Although this irrelevance only occurred occasionally - "hit-and-miss" (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020) - the lecturer found it noteworthily harmful to the quality of Madison's argument. The lecturer, after going through the assignment, was concerned that

"A wide range of literature has been accessed, but some of it is of questionable relevance to young L2 learners" (Lecturer's comment, 2020). Chapter Five discussed the fact that one of the factors that decides relevance is a close relationship between the topic and the reading sources. The lecturer provided a list of readings and journals deemed useful and relevant to the course content. Madison, however, had decided to move beyond this list to include articles from different sources. While the course focused on designing language teaching courses, Madison included references that were unrelated to language education. Due to the use of this irrelevant literature, Madison was evaluated as being unable to provide a "coherent argument", and "that really goes against the whole point of the literature review" (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). Veronica's selection of literature was assessed as not having included recent publications - the recency of literature being an indicator of students' engagement with advancements in the field. This point was discussed in Chapter Five when I elaborated on the meaning of *relevant* literature. Selecting the 'right' literature is necessary to demonstrate critical engagement with the current knowledge of the field.

Proposal of implications

Neither of the students were highly successful in convincing the lecturer of the effectiveness of their proposed implications. In this course, one of the crucial conditions for effective and meaningful course design is understanding of context. Also, the literature review has to foreground the students' knowledge about course design to support their proposal and justify the implications to address the problems they had identified in their teaching contexts.

The lecturer required the implications to be explicated in-depth, which both students did not do successfully. To explain, Veronica failed to explicate her implications in enough detail so that readers could follow them, nor did she adequately explain why they would be effective. The lecturer was dissatisfied with Veronica's performance in the Implications section, mentioning that "Some implications have been noted, but this section lacks depth" (Lecturer's comment, 2020). This refers to Veronica's practice of listing *what* actions should be taken to improve the qualities of EFL education in China without elaborations on *how* and *why* they should be taken. Meanwhile, literature judged to be irrelevant did not effectively support Madison's proposed implications. The lecturer questioned: "what is the focus of the use of videos, which should have come through in the literature review, that really didn't, and that's what the implications need to speak to" (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). As Madison was seen to have selected irrelevant sources, it was possible that she did not gain useful information that could guide how her solutions should be implemented in the context. According to the lecturer's evaluation, the lack of depth in the proposed implications was attributed to the lack of specification of either the teaching context or the issues. She then required that Madison "try to establish what video could most effectively be use[d] for-developing listening, vocabulary, providing message abundance, or ...?" (Lecturer's comment, 2020).

Academic writing conventions

Several features of academic writing conventions were identified in Chapter Five, such as referencing practices, cohesion and coherence, lexical and grammatical features. In this section, I mainly focus on Veronica's case as she received a Marginally Fail grade, and the lecturer explicitly suggested that she seek assistance from the University's writing consultation service. She commented on Veronica's lack of cohesion and coherence as "It's difficult to get as sense of how these different points relate" and "There are issues with coherence and cohesion in the organisation of information in the literature review" (Lecturer's comment, 2020, p. 6). Given the lack of cohesion and coherence in Veronica's writing, the lecturer regarded as making it "difficult to get a sense" of her intended meaning (Lecturer's comment, 2020, p. 6). Several grammatical and lexical errors were also highlighted in her work.

I paid particular attention to Veronica's improper referencing. Although Veronica had paid good attention to how sources were used in her assignment, the lecturer pointed out that "Many authors whose work was cited in the review are not included in this list" (Lecturer's comment, 2020). In Veronica's assignment, there were absences of some cited works in the reference list, which was regarded as a "big" problem by the lecturer (see Extract 5.5). While this was not the case in Madison's paper, there were several instances of missing references in Veronica's assignment, which dissatisfied the lecturer: "That's disturbing at master's level …it's a foundation of academic writing is to understand referencing and to adhere to referencing convention… it's unacceptable at a master's level" (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). Referencing sources is essential practice in academic writing and is seen as a key element of knowledge construction (Friedman, 2019; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Wette, 2021). The omission of references in the reference list created doubt in the lecturer. She explained her uncertainty in relation to the quality of arguments supported by unlisted references, and her concern that being unaware of fundamental principles at postgraduate level would negatively impact the construction of the student's academic identity and credibility.

Interestingly, the students' different perspectives on the use of tenses, modality, and pronouns in their assignments did not seem to be problematic to the lecturer. Inconsistency in the use of Simple Present, Simple Past, and Present Perfect tenses, and of first-person pronouns, modality and the passive voice was not considered a detriment. From the lecturer's point of view, if the students been clearly instructed, they could have consistently adhered to specific tenses in their writing. She therefore considered variations in the use of first person pronouns, modality and the passive voice as being "a different writing style" (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). A reason for her not penalising the students for inconsistent tenses and variations in language use was the students' current status as students in a "Master's by coursework" program (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). She believed these language and textual features to be more attended to at a higher educational level; that they need to be explicitly taught to students.

Discussion of the lecturer's assessment practice

Examining the assessment practice of the lecturer, I found that different discourse communities hold different rhetorical values, and those attempting to enter the communities need to be able to demonstrate their alignment with these conventions. This finding emphasises the need to consider texts in relation to contexts and to be aware of contextual influences in the production of texts (Connor, 2002, 2008; Hyland, 2005; Wingate, 2012). In other words, wanting to be heard by other members of any community necessarily involves adhering to its dominant conventions or ideologies (Hyland, 2005; Miller, 1999).

What counts as legitimate knowledge and a convincing argument was seen to be differently understood by the lecturer and the students in relation to the assignments in this study. This is clear from the lecturer's dissatisfaction with the students' performances at some points; however, as noted previously, students as novice writers are strongly influenced by their individual socio-historical backgrounds (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Kettle & Ryan, 2018; Wingate, 2012) and how these define their views of how academic writing should be presented. They may not have been familiar with or able to acquire and cope with the rhetorical conventions operating in the new context. For example, the lecturer challenged Veronica's excessive use of personal experience as legitimate evidence and Madison's perception of relevant materials. Also, for the lecturer the inclusion of accurate disciplinary language (Dressen-Hammouda, 2008; Ivanič & Camps, 2001), reporting verbs (Biber, 2006; Bloch, 2010; Charles, 2006; Friedman, 2019; Ivanič & Camps, 2001), reformulation of quotes (Fazilatfar et al., 2018; Friedman, 2019; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Wette, 2021), and proper referencing practices (Friedman, 2019; Wette, 2021) constitute the quality of writing and the credibility of writers. I conclude therefore that readers and writers may make different epistemological assumptions in terms of what is expected in academic writing at the postgraduate level. It is certainly problematic for students if they are unaware of or resist the dominant conventions of their new discourse community (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). The misalignment between the students and the lecturer evidenced in this chapter indicates that while rhetorical negotiation is required (Connor, 2002, 2008), it is not always successfully undertaken (Kettle & Ryan, 2018), most obviously in the first assignment at the initial writing stage.

I also recognised the lecturer's authority in her different perspectives on how students' voice could be linguistically recognised. This included noting the use of tenses, first-person pronouns, active and passive voice, and modality. The use of these linguistic features reflects writers' ideational and interpersonal positionings as an element of their voice in texts (Hyland, 2005; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Tang & John, 1999). However, the lecturer had proposed different views, following the characteristics of the course as part of the Master's by Coursework program. It is recognised that students in Master's programs are still in the process of learning to become disciplinary experts (Ivanič & Camps, 2001), while students at higher levels (e.g., doctoral programs) are seen as scholars, who are capable of creating knowledge in the field (Morton & Storch, 2019). Following the lecturer's authoritative and complex view of how writing needs to be presented, I raise the issue of readers' complex and diverse perspectives in realising writers' voices, and the need, as writers, to understand readers' perspectives to select appropriate ways to express their voice.

DISCUSSION: HOW IS AUTHORIAL VOICE DEMONSTRATED AND EVALUATED IN INITIAL ACADEMIC WRITING?

In this chapter, I have examined the students' responses to the required rhetorical conventions in Assignment One, their authorial voice, and the lecturer's responses. The findings have shown that the students were aware of rhetorical differences in their different writing contexts and were agentive in making rhetorical negotiations and adaptations.

However, their responses to the task and their authorial voice were seen to be heterogeneous due to different interpretations of the task demands and different conceptualisations of what counted as knowledge.

Coming from different socio-historical backgrounds that influenced their writing practices, the students responded differently to the task and simultaneously presented different forms of their authorial voice. Both students presented their voice as 'having something to say' but embedded it in different forms of 'self-representation' (Ivanič, 1998; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Veronica favoured a self-dialogic and personalised voice, which constantly moved between being authoritative, tentative, and confused. Madison, meanwhile, opted for an objective voice which was dialogically built on other voices available to her in the literature. She did have her personal voice but decided to avoid presenting this in her writing to achieve objectivity, as a key principle of academic writing. The students have been seen, therefore, as providing further evidence of the concept of multiple voices, which challenges the notion of writing being monolithic and the essentialist view that writers of the same culture all write in the same way (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Ryan & Viete, 2011; Wang, 2011).

The heterogeneity reflected in their responses to the task and in their authorial voices was governed by either or both their cultural values and their academic and professional experience, which together formed their epistemic beliefs about what counts as knowledge. The students held within themselves different cultural values, such as those of an English language learner, a practitioner, a doctoral graduate, and a postgraduate student (Connor, 2008; Holliday, 1999, 2010). Coupling with these identities were different perspectives relating to the appropriate level of authoritativeness when constructing knowledge for their readers. Veronica, for example, was confident to present knowledge to non-Chinese readers but was not authoritative towards scholars or other Chinese ESP teachers. There were perceived political constraints to how one's voice and level of authoritativeness and power could be articulated in their writing. This complexity of cultural-political beliefs constructed the students as "complex subjects" (Grimshaw, 2007, p. 302) rather than monotonous writers. Meanwhile, Madison reported the significant influences of her educational and professional experience on her writing in the current context. Her impersonal writing experience in *Hard Sciences* (e.g., Engineering) was brought with her to the assignment which was in a *Soft Sciences* (e.g., Education) area (Abdi & Farrokhi, 2015; Hyland, 2010).

From analysing the lecturer's assessment practice, I argue that there were some misalignments between the students' efforts in rhetorical negotiation and adaptation and the gatekeeping lecturer's expectations. This variation indicates different interpretations of the writing requirements and conceptualisations of legitimate knowledge (Hyland, 2005). This variation also indicates the complexity involved in considering how different individuals perceive a writing task in context (Clark & Ivanič, 1997; Ivanič, 2004). This complexity raises the issue of consequences to resisting or not aligning with the predominant conventions in a given discourse community. The lecturer admitted that the students had different writing experiences from "different socio-cultural contexts" and "educational systems" (Lecturer: Interview: 14.11.2020). However, there are un-negotiable social-cultural-political norms to adhere to in a discourse community in terms of how academic writing should be presented to convince the lecturer of the students' credibility (Eggington, 2015; Purves, 1986; Shen, 1989). For novice writers as newcomers, rhetorical negotiation and adaptation is necessary but not always feasible, especially in their early writing stage.

I also identified different perspectives on how students' voice as self-representation is linguistically presented in writing. The data provided evidence of both alignments and misalignments between the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) and the performances of the students and the assessment of the lecturer. While many linguistic categories of the self-positioning model were identified in this study, language features referring to ideational (reporting verbs, tenses) and interpersonal (modality, first person pronoun) positions were only more or less attended to. The lecturer further emphasised additional indicators of critical voice (reformulated quotes, selection and use of sources). This variation in the meaning of linguistic features for positioning perceived by the students and the lecturer and described by the self-positioning model proposes that both the demonstration and the recognition of voice are complicated, and that different rhetorical communities have different writing norms that members need to recognise and comply with.

The nuances observed in the students' voices challenge the misconceptualisation of student writers as being unable to employ different rhetorical conventions in different writing contexts and as being voiceless in writing. I acknowledge that when situated in a new rhetorical community, students unquestionably encounter challenges in interpreting task demands and making a decision on how the task should be completed (Kettle & Ryan, 2018; Shen, 1989). This acknowledgement of the challenges that the students face resonates with the model of Contrastive Rhetoric (Kaplan, 1966) which associates differences with *difficulties* (Connor, 2008). This was evident in the way that the lecturer disqualified some aspects of the students' writing. However, I also found that the students were agentive in their writing process, as they were able to explore the rhetoric of academic writing in their current context and find ways to meet the rhetorical demands of their task. Both Madison and Veronica admitted to their common opening to an academic writing task with an introduction to policies in China; however, they had developed new ways to start their essays, with a self-introduction and a topic-focused discussion. This developed understanding was the outcome of their exposure to different discourses of the field - such as the reading materials and the instructions of the course lecturer and EP instructors, which helped to advance their linguistic and pragmatic competence (Chen, 2020; Zhang & Zhan, 2020). The students were able to adopt the new discourse in their current context and to agentively decide how their voice, as their means of self-representation, appeared in their texts. This could be seen in Madison's case where she started with her personal motivation but avoided personalised writing to maintain objectivity. Veronica alternated between different levels of authoritativeness according to her interpretation of the nature of the task and her position towards other agents involved, such as her potential readers or scholars in the field.

Focusing on authorial voice, the chapter has identified how Madison developed her authorial voice during the completion of her assignment. Her acquisition of content knowledge from review of readings constituted her evaluative judgements in different assignment drafts. Therefore, aligning with the suggestion of Morton and Storch (2019), any recognition of a writer's voice needs to emphasise its development during the writing process rather than only focusing on the final product. I therefore propose the analysis of both textual artefacts and talk-around-text interviews to gain more comprehensive understanding of the perspectives framing the demonstration and evaluation of voice. Through such analyses, I have been able to discern the students' self-representation both *through* texts, based on text analysis, and *beyond* texts, based on interviews with the students and the lecturer about the texts. This more comprehensive recognition of voice is necessary to identify the complexity of the concepts of writer's voice and identity, which are both socially-culturally constructed and linguistically demonstrated (Ivanič & Camps, 2001).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented data and analysis concerning the students' initial writing stage of the first assignment in relation to rhetorical conventions, heterogeneity in authorial voice, and socio-historical and political governance in writing. It has also identified inappropriateness in the students' responses following different epistemological assumptions about the rhetoric of academic writing at postgraduate level. However, the students' ongoing exposure to the discourses of their field, particularly via the lecturer's feedback, potentially progresses the development of their understanding of the rhetorical conventions of postgraduate writing and further develops the way they embody their voice. In the next chapter, therefore, I examine how Veronica and Madison demonstrate further development of their understanding of the rhetorical conventions of the course and of their own authorial voice in their second assignment as their subsequent writing stage.

Chapter Seven. Students' Reconceptualisation and Enactment of Postgraduate Academic Writing and Authorial Voice in Subsequent Writing

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports on the students' reconceptualisation of the rhetorical conventions in postgraduate academic writing after receiving the grades and feedback from their lecturer. It further explores how they enacted their new understanding of these conventions in their subsequent writing of the second assignment, seeking answers to the second research question which focuses on this stage. The previous chapter presented the heterogeneity identified in the students' responses to the rhetorical conventions of the course, their authorial voice, and the lecturer's assessment practices in the initial writing stage. The students' perspectives and performances were not always commensurate with the lecturer's expectations, which was evident in the lecturer's expressed dissatisfaction with some instances in the assignments. To support the students' academic achievements and induction into their academic community, mediation tools such as instructional materials, feedback, exemplars, and teacher-student conferences were offered, which assisted in reconstructing their rhetorical competence and transitioning them to become more experienced and successful writers (Han & Hyland, 2019; Kettle & Ryan, 2018; Zhang & Zhan, 2020).

In this chapter, I examine (i) how the students reflected on their initial writing, (ii) how they reconstructed their understanding of the rhetorical conventions required in the course, (iii) how they implemented their reconstructed knowledge to prepare for the second assignment, (iv) how they transformed and projected their authorial voice in their second assignment, and (v) how they perceived the practice of rhetorical negotiation in different writing contexts with variations in the rhetorical conventions. This chapter draws on data from the second assignments, the grades and feedback provided by the lecturer, and from the second and third interviews conducted with the students.

THE STUDENTS' REFLECTIONS ON THE CHALLENGES IN THEIR INITIAL WRITING

The students' reconstructed understandings of the conventions were examined, drawing on data from the second interview to explore their interpretations of the lecturer's grades and feedback. The interviews started with their general views on their performances in the first writing assignment. This was to assist them in recalling the challenges they faced when completing the first assignment and how these had influenced the quality of their work. Both students indicated the need to have and to draw upon teaching experience to be able to write the proposal and justification of pedagogical implications which was the focus of both written assignments in the course. Teaching experience underpinned the primary discourse of the Education-based course they were enrolled in, and this is what they lacked. They also identified several challenges encountered in their writing process.

The universality in academic discourse in the course: Teaching experience

The first assignment, as reported in the previous chapter, had been a literature review in which the students had to describe the teaching context which had a problem to resolve in relation to curriculum design. They had then been required to review relevant literature to inform their subsequent proposal of innovative implications to tackle the problems. This requirement aligns with the ultimate goal of Teacher Education programs, which is to provide highly qualified practitioners (Wright, 2010). The use of teaching experiences and applied pedagogical implications are foundational in Education courses and associated discourses (Samuels, 2020); therefore, the task of reflecting on teaching experience and proposing practical pedagogical implications was crucial; and again, it posed a challenge to these students.

Due to their lack of teaching experience, the students found it challenging to propose effective pedagogical implications. Veronica, for example, could not fully understand the context, the problem, or the relevance of her implications. She could only “see them [the implications] from very limited views” as she “always stand in the students’ role but not in the teacher’s role” (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). Her comments indicated that with no teaching experience, her Implications section unquestionably lacked depth as she was unable to elaborate on the potential effectiveness or ways to implement these implications. For her part, Madison’s understanding was that innovative implications required a combination of theory and practice. She had assembled her knowledge for this assignment from the readings, making her knowledge primarily theoretical. Her limited teaching experience was “the biggest problem” (Madison: Interview Two: 09.10.2020) that restricted her from providing effective and practical implications because “I know the theory, and I can’t find ways to combine theory with practice and improve practice with theory” (Madison:

Interview Two: 09.10.2020). Given the nature of the first assignment to propose innovative implications, both students identified their lack of teaching experience as a significant limitation that did not allow them to write with a strong voice, to clarify the effectiveness of the implications, or to provide a detailed description of how to implement them. This limitation influenced their understanding of the field (Ethos), their ability to propose a good argument of potential pedagogical implications (Logos) to convince the lecturer (Pathos).

The writing process

The students also reported several challenges encountered during their writing processes. The process for evidence-based writing consists of consultation of materials, planning, composing, and revising (Wingate & Harper, 2021). This section identifies the challenges that the students faced in these stages, with a focus primarily on their reports of reading difficulties, time and word constraints, and the value of the assistance they received.

Regarding their sourcing of materials to build knowledge of the topics, Veronica was very explicit about her limited reading ability as an international student. She highlighted the need to read extensively, “to use a lot of theories to support our point of view” (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). She valued this well referenced writing style highly, but “for international students, it’s very difficult because we can’t read quickly” (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). Veronica therefore proposed her writing strategy as starting from her personal point of view and then moving to “find how many scholars have uh share the same point of view” (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). She acknowledged that international students are disadvantaged in academic writing in English due to their limited reading ability, which restricts their acquisition of knowledge from the literature and influences the quality of their writing. Madison, on the other hand, was unconvinced that international students would be disadvantaged in academic writing in English. She made the point that students whose first language is English may find it easier to read and to communicate, but “academic writing is different from ordinary writing” and “requires research skills”, so “Australian students may not acquire these skills” (Madison: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). She was confident that academic writing could be learned from “reading and reading” (Madison: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). This was a different position to that of Veronica, with limited reading capacity or familiarity with referencing conventions.

Given that reading is central to gaining knowledge, the students both mentioned the additional challenge of time limit. They claimed that the deadline for the first assignment in this course was scheduled concurrently with those of other courses in the semester, so they felt that they did not have enough time to perform at their best. This limited time neither allowed them to read extensively nor to revise their work carefully. To illustrate, one of the comments that Veronica received from the lecturer was her lack of reference to recent literature. Veronica commented that “I am so lazy because I have two days to finish it [the first assignment]” (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020), so she relied on the ‘octopus’ strategy (Kettle, 2007, 2017), drawing from the reference list of an article to find further reading sources. She ran into a problem, however, as the article only offered older materials. Limited time was also problematic for Madison, as she believed that the quality of a literature review depended on reading to “find gaps of previous research and you will get support for your uhm like point of view” (Madison: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). Her limited time did not allow her to read further, even though reading was critical to understanding the topic. Madison seemed particularly confused about whether the term ‘young learners’ or ‘children’ would be most suitable for her targeted learners. Although the lecturer had suggested ‘young learners’, Madison thought that this term was too broad; but she was unwilling to seek a further conference with the lecturer on this confusion because “I don’t have time to do more reading about this topic, so I will not get enough information to communicate with with uh tutor” (Madison: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). The time limit clearly restricted Madison’s capacity to acquire substantial knowledge to discuss with the lecturer to clarify terminology.

While limited time did not allow the students to develop substantial understanding of the topic, they also believed that the word limit restricted their ability to elaborate their ideas in the assignment. Referring to the lecturer’s comments on the students’ lack of depth in their writing (see Chapter Six), they attributed their perceived unsatisfactory performance to some extent to the 2000-word limit for the assignment. Veronica claimed that “if she [the lecturer] allow me to write 2500 words, I will give more detailed information” in the Implications section (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). Madison followed the word limit for each section strictly, following the recommendations of the lecturer (see Chapter Five – Figure 5.1). As a result, she had to leave out some details about her hypothetical teaching context in the Introduction section. Her structure for this section included “the context, problem, Uhm...purpose… and uh like the structure of your of your...thesis statement” (Madison: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). When a draft of her assignment exceeded the word limit, Madison had to prioritise what to cut: “maybe the context will be less” while “purpose and uh thesis statement will be kept” (Madison: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). She explained that “the problem I think is also important, but from the purpose readers can infer the problem" (Madison: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). As the implications had to respond to both the context and its problem, she was concerned that erasing some contextual information might be detrimental to justifying the applicability and innovations of her proposed implications.

Another challenging aspect of the writing process referred to by the students related to the value of the assistance that they had received for the revision stage. From the lecturer's comments, Veronica realised that she had not conformed to several academic writing conventions. She reported that before submitting the first assignment, she had used social strategies by seeking support from her peers in relation to both the language and the content of her work. Although there are well known issues around the quality of peer feedback (Nguyen, 2021), Veronica completely trusted her peers because "they got high marks last semester, then I believe they have more academic skills than me so they can give me help" (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). She therefore took their advice without considering the relevance or value of their suggestions. She had limited time for this assignment, so was not too likely to question the advice of her peers. On reflection, she presumed that her peer had thought of her as having very advanced English competence, and of being someone who would not commit many language errors in her writing; therefore, the peer was not thorough in editing Veronica's writing: "she [the peer] not seriously go through my work" (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). Veronica herself did not notice the inconsistency of tenses or the grammatical and spelling mistakes in her paper. Most notably, her lack of time resulted in her missing references, which the lecturer was disappointed about, as noted in her feedback. For Veronica, the priority was to "make a report come out together" and "to ensure I can get a mark" (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020); therefore, she primarily aimed at completing the assignment for submission by the due date without careful revision of the writing.

It is clear from the above discussion that the students encountered several challenges in their initial writing task. Building on the experience of these challenges and the feedback they received, they reconceptualised what they understood to be the characteristics of successful academic writing in this course. The following section presents their reconstructed understanding of the requirements and of how these requirements could be achieved.

THE STUDENTS' RECONSTRUCTED UNDERSTANDING OF ACADEMIC WRITING AND AUTHORIAL VOICE

This section focuses on the students' reconstruction of what successful academic writing is by exploring their critical engagement with aspects of the assignment, namely the relevant literature, implications and practical applications, and academic writing conventions. These elements are key evaluation criteria for assessment in the course. I drew on the second interview with the students and on the first assignment with grades and feedback from the lecturer to understand how they reconstructed their understanding of the rhetorical conventions in the course.

Critical engagement with relevant literature

As reported in Chapter Five, critical engagement with relevant literature helps to construct students' knowledge of the field (Ethos) and to build a convincing argument in their written assignments (Logos). The lecturer considered the construction of a strong argument to be central to academic writing. The students needed to be critical in evaluating the relevance of the knowledge they gained from the literature in the context of their practice and its associated problems. Critical engagement with relevant literature was also foundational to the required proposal of innovative implications for successful curriculum design in their respective contexts. Both Veronica and Madison, however, received comments from the lecturer about a lack of criticality in their essays in terms of selecting and reviewing the literature. The effects noted in the lecturer's feedback were unconvincing arguments - and low grades for their first assignments. The second interviews with the students indicated that they had learned from this experience and altered their understanding of the need for critical engagement with relevant literature and its application to practice.

The students presented a similar view of the requirement for critical engagement with the literature. Through this level of engagement, they believed they would be able to "learn from the researchers how they do the research and their opinions" as "a fundamental skill of master's students" because they "must do research, must practice to do research" (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). Veronica repeatedly employed the modal verb 'must', as the highest level of obligation (DeCapua, 2017; Parkinson, 2020), which emphasised how crucial it is for Master's level students to conduct critically-oriented research in order to improve their teaching and the learning experiences of their students. Veronica further claimed that providing implications was necessary for students in a Master of Educational Principles course, “because you study Master of Educational Principles, you want to develop your teaching skills, you learn all the techniques, how can you apply them in your teaching” (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). In the same vein, Madison commented that research was intended to contribute new knowledge to the field, therefore providing innovative implications that “combine theories and practice” (Madison: Interview Two: 09.10.2020) would be helpful. She also commented, more directly, “that’s the reason why the Master’s degree exists” (Madison: Interview Two: 09.10.2020) - to help to identify and to address gaps in the knowledge of a field.

In addition, both students recognised the connection between engaging with literature and forming a critical voice. According to Veronica, criticality - or critical thinking – reflected a “personal standpoint” that could be stated as “a conclusion by myself”, adding the detail of the need to provide “a good summative sentence, first sentence then lay out all the reference I need” (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). This perspective can be seen as a response to the lecturer’s comment on Veronica’s use of direct quotes as topic sentences without elaborating on her own thoughts about these quotes. Veronica’s subsequent reflection was that this writing style with quotes was “not critical”, because “I don’t have a view about other literature review” (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). She provided a specific example of the instance in her assignment when she included a definition of an ESP course in the form of a direct quote: “we need to show our critical thinking ability of the literature” by explaining “why I give their definition here”, “why you use a lot of evidence here to support what, why you use it, you use it for what” (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). In this way, Veronica was establishing her understanding of the principle of critical thinking by presenting her own evaluation of the literature. On a more micro level, she stated that critical thinking should be presented in the form of an overarching statement placed at the beginning of a paragraph as her topic sentence - a summative sentence - relating to her knowledge of the topic gained from critical engagement with relevant reading materials. Madison also reflected on the use of literature-informed evidence as an essential element of academic writing for criticality and objectivity, involving “less emotion and more evidence-based” (Madison: Interview Three: 28.11.2020).

While mentioning the need for literature-informed writing, both students indicated the importance of selecting *relevant* literature, a problem that they had experienced in their first assignments. Madison noted that *irrelevant* literature had been identified in her first assignment and had negatively impacted her grade. Her subsequent conclusion was the need to combine theories and literature from different disciplines with practice for effective innovations. For example, she commented that “most of innovations are achieved according to combine two different fields of knowledge” (Madison: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). With that perspective, Madison utilised literature from both English Language Education and Technology, allowing “new ideas from the combination” to emerge (Madison: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). Although this use of multi-disciplinary literature seemed to be questioned in terms of relevance by the lecturer, it was Madison’s understanding that this was how innovation could be created.

Veronica also developed her understanding of what constitutes relevant literature. She preferred using evidence from “big names” - renowned scholars in the field as relevant sources to support her claims (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). In addition to the “big names”, she identified the need to include recent publications, because “if I use some out-of-date research might already change, and it’s not suitable for now recent context” (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). She even extended her view to include comparing old and new literature on the same topic to build a more convincing argument. Such comparison was seen to be critical to figuring out “what’s the new idea, what’s the new teaching method, why the new one is good, and why we should follow the new one, not the old one” (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). In this way, Veronica was seen to be operating at a higher level of criticality by identifying advancements in the field through the comparison of old and newer positions, in order to increase the effectiveness of the implications for practice proposed in her paper.

In summary, the students were seen to have developed their understanding of the nature of critical engagement with relevant literature in order to obtain knowledge of the field, a process required by the course but not successfully achieved in their initial writing stage. They clearly now understood that critical engagement with relevant literature was a core element of the assessment tasks and necessary for them to show substantial knowledge of their respective topics. To demonstrate criticality, the students needed to select relevant literature to review, evaluate, and synthesise. They then needed to show how the knowledge gained from this process had practical and innovative implications for their teaching contexts. This criticality, analysis, and creative application demonstrated higher level of thinking and performance in the course, which is a key objective of the Teacher Education program.

Implications and practical applications: Justifications and creativity

The implications for practice through practical and creative applications of the literature with reference to context was an objective of this Education-based course. This requirement came with its own rhetorical conventions. The lecturer emphasised the need to offer implications in response to the contextual problems and conditions that the students had established in the Introduction. Following their critical engagement with the literature, the students had to justify the effectiveness of their implications with literature-informed evidence and in alignment with the contextual conditions.

Both Veronica and Madison were unsuccessful in the Implications section of their first assignment due to the lack of in-depth discussion about the implementation and effectiveness of the proposals. The lecturer assumed that the students did not sufficiently specify their teaching contexts and the identified problems because of a lack of teaching experience. Their implications, therefore, were unable to "speak to" the pre-established problems identified in the Introduction. For Veronica, the issue was her uncertainty about the level of detail expected by the lecturer, assuming that "maybe she [the lecturer] thinks I just gave a plan but I does not explain why this plan works, why it is important" (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). Veronica then concluded that practical implications required that "you should talk about why it is good and how it works to your learners, and how it has a positive impact of them", and "what's the challenge of applying it, how can I uh how can I overcome the difficulties" (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). In the Implications section, therefore, not only the effectiveness but the foreseeable challenges that the implications might impose should also be discussed for solutions with "more sense and more depth" (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). Veronica further considered the ability to see both strengths and limitations of the proposed implications as the way to show her 'critical thinking'.

In addition, innovations in pedagogical implications are politically governed by government policy. In Assignment One, Madison had mentioned the national policy in China that "provides a framework for teaching; then teachers can prepare their lessons or curriculum in this framework" (Madison: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). She was well aware of political influences on teaching and learning. Nevertheless, she further responded that "I don't want to include too much policy" (Madison: Interview Two: 09.10.2020) because the national policies did not strongly influence her learners, who were in Grades One and Two. Instead, Madison suggested the use of "the previous literature review and provide recommendation for practices" (Madison: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). However, the lecturer had questioned the applicability of Madison's implications in the Chinese educational context because she had not elaborated on the political issues in China that guided learning and teaching practices in this context. Learning from the feedback, Madison realised the need for her proposed pedagogical implications to comply with the political conditions in her context. Specifically, she commented that she should have clarified this point in her writing to explain the influence of policies on her curriculum design. Hence, the specification of contexts and contextual conditions was necessary to effectively justify the implications in response to those conditions.

Academic writing conventions

Academic writing conventions need to be strongly adhered to at postgraduate level for the purposes of successful communication. They include the logical organisation of texts for coherence and cohesion, proper referencing style, and the use of precise disciplinary terms. In addition, these conventions indicate the writers' credibility in terms of writing ability and engagement with the discourse of the field. In relation to this importance of academic writing conventions, I will focus on the experience of Veronica who failed her first assignment, as Madison's performance was considered to be relatively satisfactory by the lecturer. Veronica's fail was marginal (Grade 3); therefore, it was of interest to investigate her reflections on this result, and how she reconstructed her understanding of the conventions demanded in English language academic writing in an Australian Master's program.

At the macro-level of coherence and cohesion, several sections in Veronica's writing were difficult to understand due to a lack of connection between the sentences in a paragraph. The lecturer noted that at times she could not interpret the meaning of the paragraph or the argument that Veronica was proposing. Veronica admitted that she had not yet mastered coherence and cohesion in academic writing. She was in fact confused about these concepts: "I can't make it very clear, I think they are same but they are different" (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). Despite this confusion, she was aware that coherence and cohesion were both characteristics of "Western academic writing habit" (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020).

Also at the macro-level, referencing conventions in terms of the lecturer's expectations were discussed in Chapter Five. The lecturer made it clear that she considered referencing an important element of academic writing. As Friedman (2019) notes, within postgraduate education referencing is seen to indicate students' understanding of the discourse of the field. In the *Innovations in Education* course, however, Veronica did not demonstrate mastery of this when several in-text sources were missing in the reference list, which "disturbed" the lecturer and was detrimental to Veronica's academic performance and overall sense of herself as a writer. While Veronica was aware that proper referencing was necessary in scholarly writing to avoid plagiarism, she was not familiar with it initially as it was not a usual practice in her educational context in China. For her undergraduate degree program, the only form of evidence-based writing was her thesis, which was "the only time they require to put reference" (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). From the lecturer's feedback, Veronica commented: "here [Australia] because master's level we need scholar work to support our point of view so that is more convincing so we should put their names as the references" (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). Referencing was also described as a way to "show respect" to those who conduct research and contribute to the knowledge of the field (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). The experience of failing caused her to change her practice and to reconstruct her understanding of the rhetorical demands of her writing tasks.

Another feature of postgraduate writing is the appropriate use of disciplinary language. Postgraduate students are in the transition stage from learners to disciplinary experts (Ivanič & Camps, 2001), which means learning to use the language recognised by the community, establishing their image as a member of that community (Dressen-Hammouda, 2008). Both students had included several linguistic features in their initial writing that positioned them as members of the TESOL community (see Chapter Six). However, Veronica had used some disciplinary language inappropriately, which accounted for the lecturer's scepticism about the level of her engagement with the discourses of the field. The inappropriate uses have been identified in Chapters Five and Six, such as use of the terms 'native' and 'non-native speakers', lexical items that suggest a deficit model that had been extensively critiqued in class; yet Veronica continued to use the terms, seemingly unaware of the discussions. Veronica maintained that she "did some peer review and they use non-English speaking environment" and that her peer had suggested "to change it to non-native speaking environment" (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). Veronica followed this advice but saw the negative consequences for her grade. She consequently reconsidered the accuracy of her choices in disciplinary language, recognising that at Master's level it is important to "be more professional" because "when you doing some research, you will find some key terms in the research" (Veronica: Interview Two: 09.10.2020).

Summary

This section has reported on the students’ reconstructed understanding of the rhetorical conventions of academic writing based on the grades they received and the feedback provided by the lecturer. Recognising this more developed understanding, the study further explores how the students’ trajectories in becoming more agentive and rhetorically competent were evidenced in the higher quality of their writing and in the way that they talked about their subsequent writing practices, as discussed later in the chapter.

THE STUDENTS’ PREPARATION FOR THE SUBSEQUENT WRITING STAGE

Following the discussion of their improved understanding of the rhetorical conventions required in the course, this section reports on how the students prepared for the second assignment, informed by their new understanding and more developed competencies in academic writing. In this section, I focus on the students’ identification of the demands of the second assignment and their engagement with the literature to gain knowledge about the writing topics. This had been the focus of the third interview.

The discussion earlier indicated that identifying the task demands and engaging with relevant literature seemed to be the limitations of the students, contributing to their unsuccessful outcomes. They acknowledged their limited understanding of the first task demands, which had resulted in unsatisfactory writing. It was therefore their priority now to clearly understand the task demands for the second assignment, through accessing different resources and strategies, such as feedback, consultation, and use of course materials. The lecturer’s feedback is a powerful mediation tool in academic writing: she is the gatekeeper, tasked with marking the assignments to assess the students’ understanding of the task requirements (Hyland, 2019; Kettle & Ryan, 2018; Nguyen, 2021). Examining the feedback on the first assignment would give students “an idea what she [the lecturer] prefers, what style she prefers, and how she marks” (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020).

As they valued the lecturer’s feedback, both students became more agentive in seeking consultation for the second assignment. Veronica “made an outline and I clearly put in each paragraph what I should write and give a topic sentence then yeah I make a big structure” (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). After consulting with the lecturer, Veronica realised that she needed to consider carefully the innovations and feasibility of her proposed curriculum. This conclusion was reached after she had commented that she would like to implement Virtual Reality in her teaching context, but it was not feasible because “it’s just in your your imagination I can’t practice it” (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). Afterwards, she selected Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) because “it’s new in your context” and “it’s a creative teaching application” (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). Similarly, Madison “sent email to [the lecturer] to describe my structure, and she gave me some suggestions” (Madison: Interview Three: 28.11.2020). From this lecturer’s input, Madison realised that the Rationale section of this assignment was “for the justification of the research, the importance of the research and project” (Madison: Interview Three: 28.11.2020).

Other materials in the course also helped the students to understand the task demands. For example, Veronica paid attention to the exemplar of the second assignment while in her first assignment she had not had sufficient time to familiarise herself with this document due to the time limit. She learned that the exemplar provided by the lecturer “is always high score”, and the lecture “must think it’s a good paper” (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020); hence, she saw the relevance of using it to understand exactly what the lecturer’s expectations were regarding “what a successful response to the task looks like” (Lecturer: Interview: 14.10.2020). Madison drew on “the worksheet” - the assignment guidelines - to conclude that “the most important point [of the second assignment] we should get is how can you describe the innovation of your curriculum design” (Madison: Interview Three: 28.11.2020). She further elaborated that the task sheet, with bullet points and questions (see Figure 5.2), had provided her with a clear view of what this task required. Specifically, she referred to “the content in the second bullet point – justification for the choice of learning outcome, why is that innovation necessary” (Madison: Interview Three: 28.11.2020). For Madison, this question guided her understanding of what needed to be demonstrated in the assignment, because “if there is not this sentence, maybe I will not know the content of the Rationale, or I just write as what I think it should be” (Madison: Interview Three: 28.11.2020).

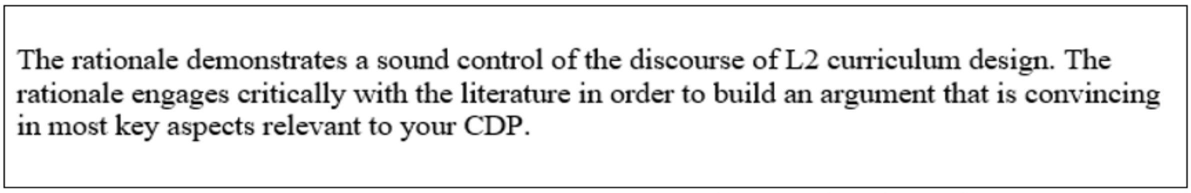
After receiving feedback on their initial proposals for the second assignment, the students acknowledged the need to read more extensively and intensively to advance their understanding of the topics, which indicated their intention to engage critically with the literature. In the process of writing evidence-based papers, material consultation is considered the starting point, so that students are equipped with sufficient knowledge and ideas to plan their writing, selecting suitable topics, identifying points to cover, and how to structure their paper (Wingate & Harper, 2021). The lecturer also mentioned again the need to critically and substantially engage with relevant literature to learn more about the topic. With a strong knowledge foundation, students could then proceed with the subsequent stages of composing and revising. Materials consultation is re-iterated several times with reference to high-quality writing. After researching writing by successful and unsuccessful students, Wingate and Harper (2021) conclude that the majority of time is spent by successful students on reading and re-reading. It is these students who produce high quality writing, characterised by relevant content and strong argument. Reading certainly represented one of the greatest challenges for Veronica. However, she had shifted her thinking: “I read this article and I find some information for me like your curriculum design should according to the syllabus and your teaching syllabus and you teaching purpose” (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). Gaining this valuable knowledge would assist her design of the lessons in the second assignment and maintain an alignment between the Rationale (teaching purpose) and the actual design (teaching syllabus). Madison knew that reading for knowledge was indispensable in academic writing. She devoted as much time as she could to it: “reading all the materials and formed my own structure of the assignment and some points I would write; then according to my questions I will search some literature and uh also reference the examples” (Madison: Interview Three: 28.11.2020). Despite the challenges involved in reading for knowledge, the students knew that they had to read intensively and extensively to advance their disciplinary understanding.

Both students were therefore well-prepared for the second assignment. They were aware of the problems that had emerged in their first assignment and had subsequently sought help and developed strategies for achieving better outcomes in the second assignment. They also clearly understood the need to critically engage with the literature for knowledge, and to construct a well-written Rationale to justify the principles of course design in this second assignment.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF AUTHORIAL VOICE IN THE SUBSEQUENT WRITING STAGE

This section will focus on how the students applied their reconstructed understanding in the second assignment. I have drawn from the assignment, with the lecturer’s feedback, and from the third interview with the students. I aimed to explore how they demonstrated their compliance with the rhetorical conventions of the course and how they demonstrated their authorial voice in writing, guided by the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001).

For the second assignment, Veronica was awarded a 5- grade. Specifically, her Rationale section was commented on by the lecturer as

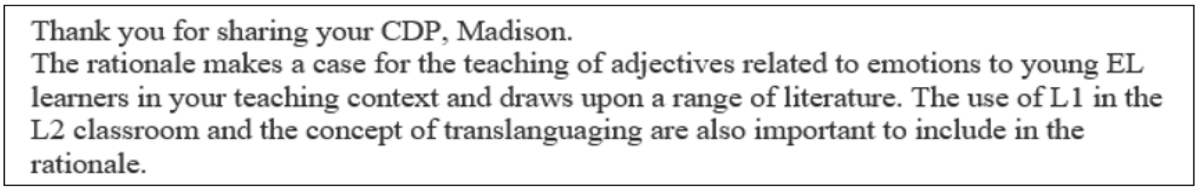


The rationale demonstrates a sound control of the discourse of L2 curriculum design. The rationale engages critically with the literature in order to build an argument that is convincing in most key aspects relevant to your CDP.

Figure 7.1. Lecturer’s comment on Veronica’s Rationale section.

From the comment, the lecturer recognised Veronica’s critical engagement with the literature to make a strong argument for the curriculum design. It was noteworthy that these aspects were absent in the first assignment, in which Veronica was reminded of her limited demonstration of critical thinking. Several features of her performance in the second assignment revealed her transition to being a more competent academic writer.

A similar improvement was noted in Madison’s performance in the second assignment, for which she was awarded Grade 5+ with the following feedback on her Rationale section.



Thank you for sharing your CDP, Madison.
The rationale makes a case for the teaching of adjectives related to emotions to young EL learners in your teaching context and draws upon a range of literature. The use of L1 in the L2 classroom and the concept of translanguaging are also important to include in the rationale.

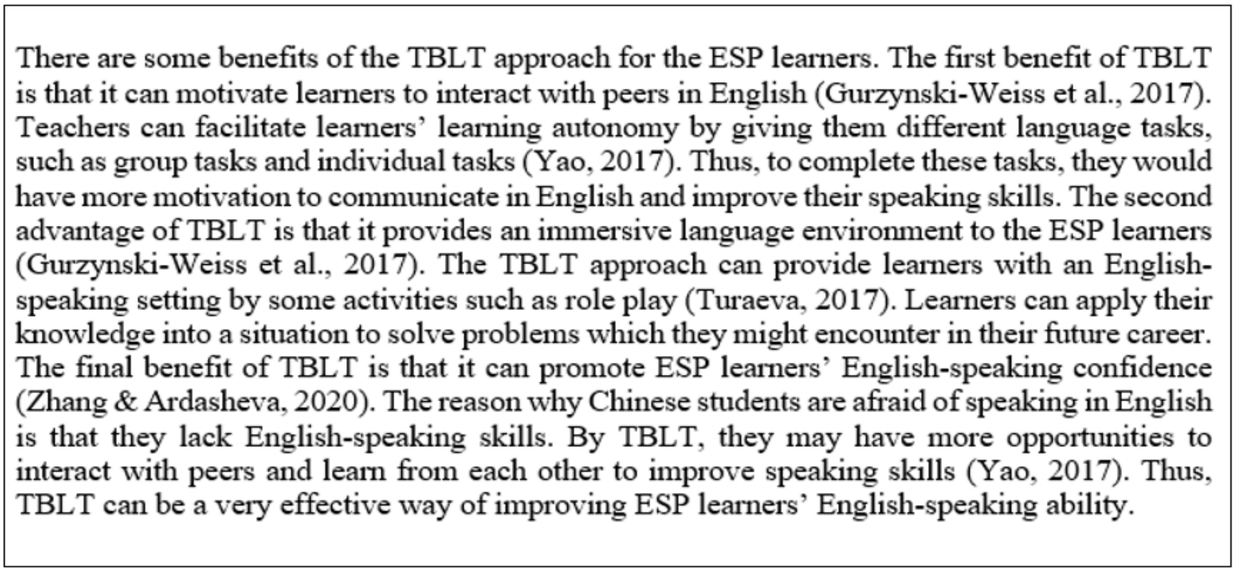
Figure 7.2. Lecturer’s comment on Madison’s Rationale section.

Madison's progress was evident in her demonstrated knowledge of the rhetorical conventions, her alignment with these conventions, and her strategies to produce that alignment effectively. To illustrate, she selected relevant literature to support her claims and successfully elaborated on the pedagogical implications in her Rationale. Her writing style and demonstration of voice was relatively consistent in both assignments, which meant that rhetorical progress in terms of her writing was not as apparent as that of Veronica. Veronica had received several comments relating to unsuccessful adherence to the rhetorical conventions, but her performance in the second assignment had improved significantly.

To illustrate their improved performances in the later writing stage, I further selected sections in the students’ Rationale to provide evidence of critical engagement with the literature and their expression of authorial voice. My analyses of the assignments and interviews showed a transformation in voice, and this section now presents the students' voice in the form of a summative statement, evaluative judgements, and the identified level of authoritativeness and proper adherence to academic writing conventions.

Voice in the form of a 'summative' statement

In this section, I illustrate Veronica's critical engagement with relevant literature in the form of a summative statement as her 'voice'. She herself explained how to show her voice: "voice is your point of view", and "it's a topic sentence, yeah the topic sentence is your point of view" (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). For Madison, who had successfully included literature-informed statements in the first assignment, this was not a problem. Veronica, however, had failed in this regard in the first assignment, using direct quotes for her topic sentences, which the lecturer had regarded as lacking critical thinking and voice. As the lecturer had indicated, critical engagement with the literature does not consist of descriptive author-led writing, but students' own interpretation of the readings, evaluation of the relevance of the readings to their writing topics, and establishment of a relationship between the different readings. Veronica had improved her performance of critical engagement in her second assignment, as evidenced below.



There are some benefits of the TBLT approach for the ESP learners. The first benefit of TBLT is that it can motivate learners to interact with peers in English (Gurzynski-Weiss et al., 2017). Teachers can facilitate learners' learning autonomy by giving them different language tasks, such as group tasks and individual tasks (Yao, 2017). Thus, to complete these tasks, they would have more motivation to communicate in English and improve their speaking skills. The second advantage of TBLT is that it provides an immersive language environment to the ESP learners (Gurzynski-Weiss et al., 2017). The TBLT approach can provide learners with an English-speaking setting by some activities such as role play (Turaeva, 2017). Learners can apply their knowledge into a situation to solve problems which they might encounter in their future career. The final benefit of TBLT is that it can promote ESP learners' English-speaking confidence (Zhang & Ardasheva, 2020). The reason why Chinese students are afraid of speaking in English is that they lack English-speaking skills. By TBLT, they may have more opportunities to interact with peers and learn from each other to improve speaking skills (Yao, 2017). Thus, TBLT can be a very effective way of improving ESP learners' English-speaking ability.

Figure 7.3. An extracted paragraph of Veronica's Rationale section.

The above extract was taken from the Innovations section in Veronica's second assignment because (i) this section demonstrated how she proposed and justified the effectiveness of her implications with literature-informed evidence, and (ii) the section was well-evaluated by the lecturer. It indicates, therefore, her successful application of her new understanding of the rhetorical conventions required in the course, such as showing critical engagement with the literature, proposing and justifying the pedagogical implications, and adhering to academic writing conventions.

In Figure 7.3, Veronica was shown as building the structure of her discussion, starting with her literature-informed statement about the benefits of TBLT and deductively supporting the statement with relevant literature. She then reiterated the statement in the form of a concluding sentence. In this instance, she indicated a change in her understanding of how to structure a paragraph to demonstrate her points of view as her voice and the supporting evidence.

> Extract 7.1
>
> Actually before now I always think I should make uhm an opinion uhm uhm that is I think this opinion is good then I will I can put it in my topic sentence. Then I find some other some other references to support. But now I think I probably I can about read a lot of articles then combine their opinions uhm combine two opinions together then then separately describe in the following sentences. (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020)

While reflecting on this innovative paragraph structure, Veronica admitted that she had previously thought that this form of writing was unnecessary. For the first assignment, to save time, she tended to start with a purely personal opinion and did an extended search on GoogleScholar or other sites to find literature that shared the same view which she could use as evidence. However, she effectively transitioned in the second assignment, consulting with materials to provide content knowledge and constructing a literature-informed statement. She now understood that the lecturer expected her “to read more about articles of the topic so that we can really understand this what is what we have learned, what we want to use in the future teaching” (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). She also commented, “we don’t have a deep foundation of the teaching theories, then we can’t apply it well in our future teaching” (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). Veronica appeared to have moved in the direction followed by high-achieving students, as successful academic writing requires substantial materials consultation for building knowledge (Wingate & Harper, 2021). To explain further, she was able to synthesise information that she had obtained from reading materials in the form of a statement that summarises the information, what she termed ‘a summative statement’. The lecturer commented on the paragraph (Figure 7.3) as: “A strong argument for the use of TBLT in your context to address the issue you have identified” (Lecturer’s comment, 2020). Starting with a literature-informed ‘summative sentence’ to establish her ‘voice’, and then providing supporting evidence from the literature, Veronica effectively constructed her textual positioning (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) and demonstrated both critical and substantial engagement with the literature and her voice. This voice established her identity as a guide who was informing readers of the focus of her writing, and as an originator, who was advocating TBLT in ESP education - despite the absence of the first-person pronoun (Tang & John, 1999).

Voice in the form of evaluative judgements with authoritativeness

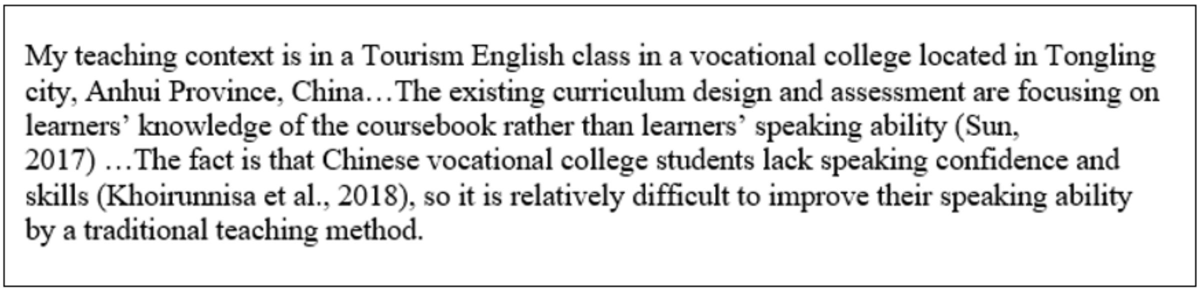
The students responded to the task demands and the lecturer’s expectation of critical thinking by showcasing their evaluative judgements. In the self-positioning model, these judgements present the writers’ stances towards the topic (ideational) and their authority (interpersonal) (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). This section is interested in the students’ assertiveness, authoritativeness, and confidence in their performance of their voice when it was effectively supported by the relevant literature in their second assignment.

In Figure 7.3, Veronica used diverse forms of evaluative lexis to present her critical stance towards TBLT. Guided by the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001), her evaluative judgements could be found in nouns (*benefits, autonomy, motivation, advantage, confidence, opportunities*), adjectives (*immersive, English-speaking, effective*), verbs (*motivate, facilitate, communicate, promote, interact, improve*), and determiners (*some, many, more*). These evaluative judgements indicated Veronica’s ideational positioning towards the advantages when TBLT was implemented in ESP education. This diversity in her use of language to express evaluative judgements, coupled with her use of references as evidence, indicate her improved linguistic and pragmatic competence as an academic writer and a member of the TESOL community (Chen, 2020). Specifically, she demonstrated competence in her use of language systems to achieve her ideational positioning and to align with the evidence-based nature of the discourse of postgraduate academic writing.

Veronica employed the Simple Present tense and indicative mode extensively to signify the factual value of her statements (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). She used tenses consistently in the second assignment. While in the first assignment she had some difficulties explaining the purpose or meanings of different tenses, she acknowledged that participation in my research had helped her to become more aware of these features: “My tense is not the same, so it’s a problem; if you [the researcher] don’t ask me, I will not find the problem” (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). Veronica and I had discussed her inconsistent use of tenses and focused on her meaning-making when using them. Conducting interviews is a commonly-used research instrument, and my research has also provided evidence of how this form of communicative interaction contributes to knowledge construction (Friedman, 2020; Polio & Friedman, 2017). Our interview had mediated her development of writing competence in relation to the consistent use of tenses, which contributed to her improved performance and strengthening of her academic identity.

Referencing previous research aligns with Veronica’s belief that knowledge construction is dialogic and intertextual; consulting and responding to previous research helped her to build her own knowledge (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Sun et al., 2022). When presenting supporting references, she tended to place them at the end of sentences. According to the lecturer, this form of writing was categorised as “idea-led”: “rather than saying that you know Smith did this and another paragraph Jones did that” as would be typical of author-driven writing (Lecturer: Interview Two: 14.10.2020). Using this style was included in her expectations of students’ writing. She saw this idea-led writing style as an indicator of critical writing: students are “able to synthesise, to be able to see the connection between the things that they are reading” (Lecturer: Interview Two: 14.10.2020). Veronica also adopted an assertive stance, proposing these advantages with the use of limited modality forms (*would, can, may*). These forms of modality were reported to imply some hesitation, as “I am not a 100% sure” (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). However, their limited appearance in her writing raised Veronica’s level of authoritativeness, as she provided knowledge of TBLT to her readers (Ivanič & Camps, 2001).

The innovative implications proposed by Veronica involved the implementation of TBLT in her teaching context. According to the lecturer’s comment on the proposal, Veronica had successfully presented “a strong argument of TBLT” that was relevant to the context “to address the issue you [Veronica] have identified” (Lecturer’s comment, 2020). Veronica herself defined an argument as offering “your opinion, your standpoint”, noting that particularly in this assignment “you should convince the readers why it [TBLT] is important” (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). Regarding the quality of her argument in advocating the TBLT approach, Veronica was confident in its persuasiveness, thanks to the support she had obtained from peer-reviewed journals: “My paper will become higher quality and more authentic, and reliable” (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). Through her critical engagement with the literature, Veronica was able to identify the values of TBLT and ways to implement the approach in her teaching context (see Figure 7.3). As previously noted, in Assignment One the lecturer had disqualified Veronica’s judgements of ESP education in China and the characteristics of Chinese EFL learners primarily because they were based on her personal experience, and she had supplied no supporting evidence. As a result, her claims were disregarded as legitimate knowledge by the lecturer. In Assignment Two, Veronica again reiterated the value of personal experience but this time with support from relevant literature (Figure 7.4).



My teaching context is in a Tourism English class in a vocational college located in Tongling city, Anhui Province, China…The existing curriculum design and assessment are focusing on learners’ knowledge of the coursebook rather than learners’ speaking ability (Sun, 2017) …The fact is that Chinese vocational college students lack speaking confidence and skills (Khoirunnisa et al., 2018), so it is relatively difficult to improve their speaking ability by a traditional teaching method.

Figure 7.4 An extract from Veronica's Rationale section.

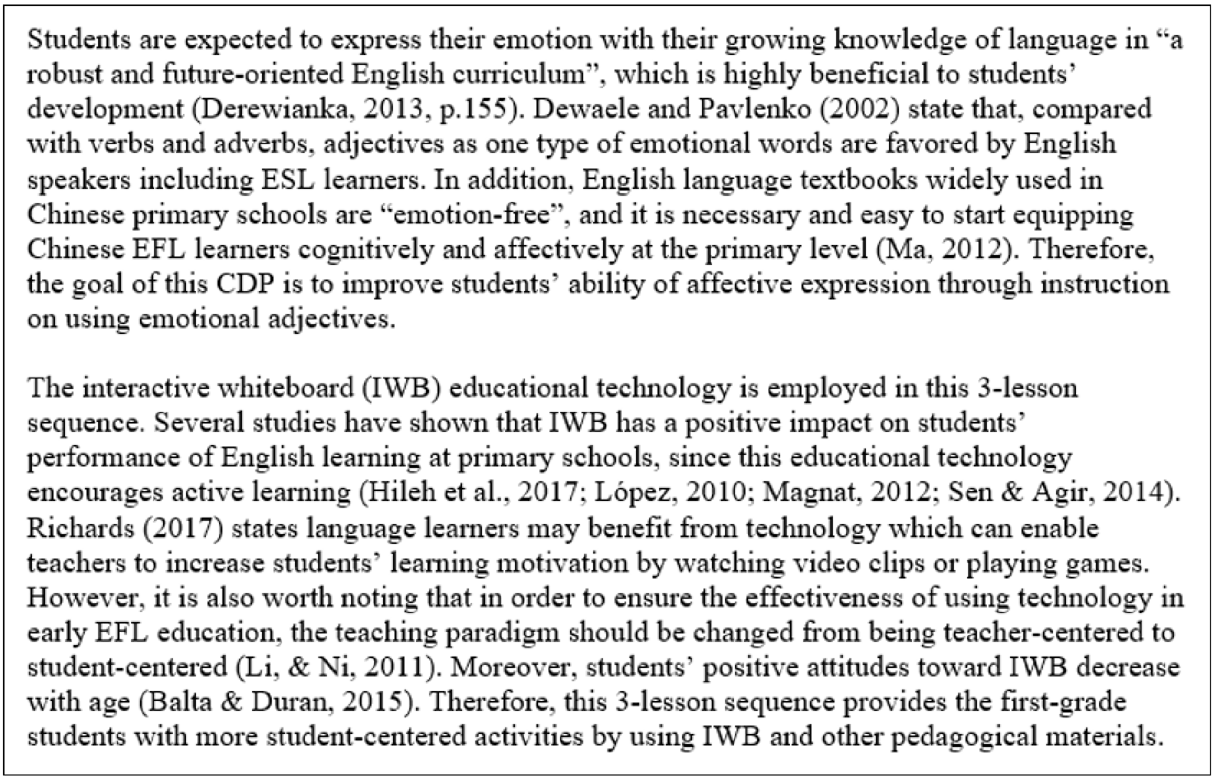
When referring to her teaching context and the problem she had identified in that context, Veronica used her own experience as the primary motivation for proposing TBLT as a means to improving students’ speaking skills. This motivation was reflected in the use of the first-person pronoun, as she represented herself as an insider of the ESP community in China (Tang & John, 1999). Having understood from her experience in Assignment One what counts as legitimate knowledge in academic writing and academic communities, Veronica now added evidence from the literature to strengthen the persuasiveness of her claims. She now rejected the use of personal experience as legitimate knowledge: “your experience is too narrow can’t be applied to a lot of people so it can’t be reliable” (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). She has realised that having literature-informed evidence will strengthen the persuasiveness of her writing: “Here you just cite others to support you then no one will uhm will say you’re wrong because someone already proved it’s right” (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). Having used relevant literature for support, Veronica proceeded to then re-assert her voice in her paper, being confident that “she [the lecturer] gave me Credit [for the Rationale section] because I use some references to support it [TBLT] is useful and beneficial” (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). Therefore, the qualities of confidence, certainty, and authoritativeness in her voice in this assignment were the result of the support she gained from the literature. The assignment consequently became a type of contact zone, in which Veronica was able to negotiate between the personal and the social in a form of audible voice, communicating and drawing from her personal experience in an acceptable way in her academic writing in the course (Canagarajah & Matsumoto, 2017).

The effective persuasiveness in Veronica’s proposal of TBLT was attributed to different mediation sources. Firstly, she had sought the lecturer’s advice on her ideas for the second assignment. She had initially proposed the use of Virtual Reality tools in teaching, however she learned from the lecturer that “it’s [Virtual Reality] not authentic, I don’t have any uh device and the virtual reality teaching experience” (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). Thus, actively engaging with her learning community as a social environment helped her to recognise that *practicality* and *authenticity* were important elements of implications in course design; and so she considered TBLT as a better solution. In addition to the lecturer’s advice, the exemplar provided also supported Veronica’s choice of TBLT. While she understood that the exemplar was what the lecturer wanted her to learn from, she took a more authoritative and critical stance in the subsequent writing stage by making evaluative judgements of this high-quality paper. She identified “the structure” and “references” as being helpful in providing “some theoretical framework” about language teaching approaches (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). She commented: “I also can use one theory like TBLT as my theoretical framework but the content [of the exemplar] is I can’t use her [the previous student] content” (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). Veronica demonstrated critical engagement with the discourse of the field by evaluating the relevance and usefulness of the exemplar to her assignment. It was crucial to demonstrate her critical voice as a response to previous research and writing (Sun et al., 2022).

In the case of Madison, her criticality and advanced rhetorical competence in the second assignment were discernible in her demonstration of understanding core components of the assignment (i.e., the justification of the innovations) and in the fact that she was able to select relevant literature to support her proposal of these innovations. This criticality in identifying the central focus of the assignment and reviewing the literature for supporting evidence was acknowledged and rewarded by the lecturer. She had identified the principle of successful academic writing at postgraduate level as evidence-based and critical writing. Madison elaborated on this criticality as follows.

> Extract 7.2
>
> Critical uhm combine my questions with previous findings even though the findings even maybe got from different topics….I think everything has at least two sides at least and most of the time they have several sides so this if I see the uhm like I can in this assignment I can use another education technology instead of whiteboard and even though I use this educational technology I can also mention disadvantages of using technology in language teaching. (Madison: Interview Three: 28.11.2020)

For Madison, a critical review of the literature referred to recognising and evaluating different perspectives on subjects. For this assignment, she found that conventional emotion-free textbooks hindered young learners' cognitive and affective development. She was therefore decisive in her advocacy for the innovative use of emotion-based textbooks and interactive whiteboards. The proposed innovations were a combination of different disciplines; the use of an interactive whiteboard was to encourage students' learning and engagement. Madison included evaluative judgements towards the writing subjects such as the effectiveness of teaching materials and the use of technology in language education based on her substantial knowledge of the field. I have purposefully selected the below extract from the Innovations section in her Rationale to indicate how Madison convinced the lecturer of her proposed implications (Figure 7.5).



Students are expected to express their emotion with their growing knowledge of language in "a robust and future-oriented English curriculum", which is highly beneficial to students' development (Derewianka, 2013, p.155). Dewaele and Pavlenko (2002) state that, compared with verbs and adverbs, adjectives as one type of emotional words are favored by English speakers including ESL learners. In addition, English language textbooks widely used in Chinese primary schools are "emotion-free", and it is necessary and easy to start equipping Chinese EFL learners cognitively and affectively at the primary level (Ma, 2012). Therefore, the goal of this CDP is to improve students' ability of affective expression through instruction on using emotional adjectives.

The interactive whiteboard (IWB) educational technology is employed in this 3-lesson sequence. Several studies have shown that IWB has a positive impact on students' performance of English learning at primary schools, since this educational technology encourages active learning (Hileh et al., 2017; López, 2010; Magnat, 2012; Sen & Agir, 2014). Richards (2017) states language learners may benefit from technology which can enable teachers to increase students' learning motivation by watching video clips or playing games. However, it is also worth noting that in order to ensure the effectiveness of using technology in early EFL education, the teaching paradigm should be changed from being teacher-centered to student-centered (Li, & Ni, 2011). Moreover, students' positive attitudes toward IWB decrease with age (Balta & Duran, 2015). Therefore, this 3-lesson sequence provides the first-grade students with more student-centered activities by using IWB and other pedagogical materials.

Figure 7.5. An extracted paragraph from Madison's Rationale section.

Several commonalities could be identified between Madison and Veronica in the way they presented their evaluative judgements in this second assignment. To illustrate, in Figure 7.5, Madison made evaluative judgements of the innovations that she was proposing, using adjectives (*growing, beneficial, emotion-free, necessary, easy, positive, active, worth, teacher-centered, student-centered*), nouns (*impact, motivation, effectiveness*), verbs (*expect, favor, equip, improve, encourage, benefit, enable, increase, decrease*), adverbs (*highly, widely, cognitively, affectively*), and determiners (*several*). Her use of a wide range of different linguistic forms reflected Madison's linguistic competence. In addition, her inclusion of relevant literature as evidence to substantiate her claims indicated her pragmatic competence – showing that she understood how to communicate these judgements academically and convincingly to the lecturer (Chen, 2020).

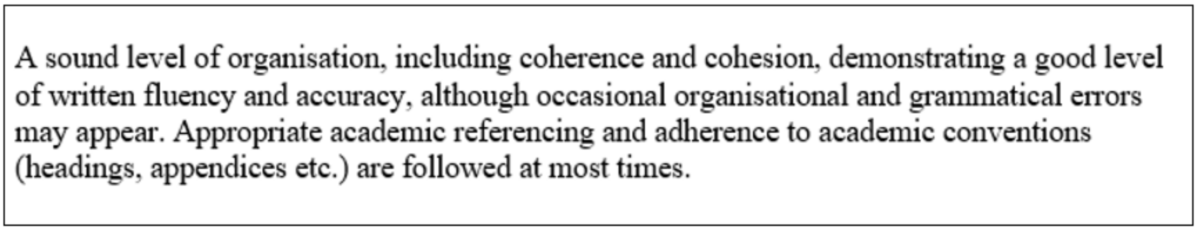
When providing the implications as shown in Figure 7.5, she used the Simple Present tense and declarative verb mood. These language choices strengthened the value of the statements she was making – elevating them to the status of universal truths – and thus strengthening their persuasiveness (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). In relation to the first assignment, Madison had claimed that modalities were used to express her objectivity and uncertainty as to the effectiveness of the implications; but now in the Rationale section of Assignment Two, she reduced the frequency of modalities when proposing her pedagogical implications. She had noted that "no research is perfect, and your research is also not perfect" (Madison: Interview Three: 28.11.2020). She knew that her proposed implications might not be perfect in terms of their applicability in different contexts. Nonetheless, by advocating for evidence-based writing for objectivity, using references from relevant literature to support her claims, including fewer modalities, Madison's authoritativeness in the Rationale could be seen as having escalated. Learning from the first assignment, Madison explained that "my curriculum design is based on previous research uhm I used previous research to support my design" (Madison: Interview Three: 28.11.2020), indicating that previous research studies "are quite related to my topic" (Madison: Interview Three: 28.11.2020).

When evaluating Madison's performance, the lecturer agreed with the persuasiveness of her proposal of implications: "Good to note that technology can be used in a purposeful way for language learning" (Lecturer's comment, 2020). The lecturer acknowledged her rationale for using technology in her teaching context, due to her adequate elaboration of the usefulness of interactive whiteboards as innovative educational technology. Madison's identification of the knowledge gap and her proposal of innovations were well-supported by relevant literature to make a convincing case for including a new textbook with educational technology as the innovations in her context. The lecturer agreed that Madison’s argument was convincing, thanks to her selection and use of relevant supporting evidence from the literature.

In summary, both students demonstrated their ability to make evaluative judgements of the subjects they were writing about: the qualities of teaching approaches, materials, and educational tools. The judgements were made through employing a variety of linguistic forms and features to demonstrate their linguistic competence. They were also able to support their judgements with the literature, showcasing their pragmatic competence in convincingly presenting these judgments in their writing. They wrote with confidence, assertiveness, and authoritativeness, and were positively evaluated by the lecturer. They had complied with the requirement in academic writing at postgraduate level to strengthen their voice by using relevant literature to foster its persuasiveness. Logos is an essential aspect of authorial voice in academic writing; the fact that this form of writing is evidence-based makes for a strong and convincing argument.

Voice communicated with proper academic writing conventions

This section particularly focuses on Veronica’s performance in Assignment Two and on the third interview I conducted with her because adherence to academic writing conventions had been such a significant challenge for her in the first assignment. She had received a Marginally-Fail grade due to improper referencing, lack of coherence and cohesion, incorrect grammar and use of disciplinary lexical items. However, this element was upgraded in the second assignment when her adherence to academic writing conventions was graded as a Credit. The lecturer made the following comment:



A sound level of organisation, including coherence and cohesion, demonstrating a good level of written fluency and accuracy, although occasional organisational and grammatical errors may appear. Appropriate academic referencing and adherence to academic conventions (headings, appendices etc.) are followed at most times.

Figure 7.6. Lecturer's comment on Veronica's academic writing conventions.

Disciplinary language is important in academic writing at postgraduate level; it demonstrates students’ engagement with and acquisition of the discourse of the field

(Dressen-Hammouda, 2008, 2014; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Both the lecturer and the students were critical of how these terms should be used in their writing. In Assignment One, Veronica was commented on by the lecturer as lacking engagement with the discourse of the field, when fundamental terms in the discourse of language and language learning were improperly used. Veronica accepted this comment and decided on a solution: to engage with readings to learn the terms. She understood the importance of using accurate disciplinary language in writing at this level, so she spent time reading and learned how to use disciplinary terms such as 'Task-Based Language Teaching', 'grammatical knowledge', and 'learner autonomy' in terms of both their spelling and meaning. In this second assignment, she was able to present herself as an insider of the TESOL field, able to use language recognised by the TESOL community (Dressen-Hammouda, 2008; Ivanič & Camps, 2001).

Her own critical consideration of disciplinary language was discernible in her evaluations of the advice she received from peers on language use. She reported that one of her peers, a native speaker of English and currently employed as a teacher, edited Veronica's language and grammar: she thought that her peer "is good at this and I trust her, so I sent my draft to her to help me review" (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). This selection of a peer to help her was evidence of Veronica's critical social strategy of accessing help from people with relevant expertise (Kettle & Ryan, 2018). She also reported that another of her peers had suggested the term 'non-native', which Veronica had learned - from the lecturer's previous comment - is a contested term. Being aware of the lecturer's preference in terms of language use and her view of this term, Veronica decided to use 'EFL context' as a more appropriate term, one referenced in the literature provided by the lecturer. Veronica made her decision: "I change it to *EFL context*, I think that's more suitable" (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). This can be seen as an example of Veronica critically considering the quality of peer feedback before finalising her decision. At the time of her first assignment, she had not yet developed this criticality; she had trusted her peers' expertise. Her criticality was now more developed, and she was able to make "evaluative judgements or being able to judge the quality" of her peer's advice (Tai et al., 2018, p. 468). Criticality in Veronica was now seen in how she determined which terms from the readings she would use and in how she formed her own opinion of peer advice. This critical consideration and use of the disciplinary language represented an increase in Veronica's rhetorical competence.

Further to peer advice, Veronica had considered the institutional writing support service, as suggested by the lecturer. She made good use of it to help improve her writing: "I submit my draft yeah they give me some useful feedback" (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). She was therefore satisfied when "this time [Assignment Two] is better than the Assignment One, Assignment One she [the lecturer] also pick up my grammar mistakes; then she said you should carefully review your draft" (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020).

Although there was an improvement in her academic writing skills, there were still problems. For example, Veronica was still uncertain about cohesion and coherence: "I'm really confused about these two words" and "I really can't pick out which one is which one". To sort out this confusion, she focused on the logic in structuring her writing. She made an outline of her second assignment in which she "put in each paragraph what I should write and give a topic sentence" (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). To avoid the illogical organisation of ideas as in her first assignment, she determined to contact the lecturer for advice, and "I think an outline it's really helpful" (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). She learned how to use linking devices (*the first, thus, the second, the final*), showing her 'reader-considerate' writing (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). As illustrated in Figure 7.3, she clearly and logically presented her flow of ideas, starting with a topic sentence, well-structured and clearly identified supporting evidence, and a conclusion. Her effective textual structure and positioning escalated her profile as an advanced academic writer (Ivanič & Camps, 2001), which contributed to her credibility (Ethos) and to the effective communication of her voice to readers.

Summary: Rhetorically strategic writers with critical authorial voice

Both students demonstrated improvement in the second assignment. They made the transition from being uncertain of the rhetorical conventions in this course to being more confident, experienced, critical, and strategic in aligning with the expectations of the gatekeeping lecturer. In addition, they were able to make effective use of the available discourses to understand and operationalise the required rhetorical conventions. The discourses included those used in the instructional materials provided by the lecturer, in the feedback on the first assignment, by other agents such as peers and supporting services, and by further readings they had extensively searched for from different sources.

With these different forms of assistance and their more developed rhetorical competence, the students presented their more critical, authoritative, and literature-informed voice in the second assignment. Their voice was persuasive, diverse in form, and successfully communicated to the lecturer. For example, Veronica was critical, assertive, and authoritative in advocating TBLT. In the first assignment, her personal experience was extensively but ineffectively employed to persuade the lecturer. However, the second assignment presented her critical and literature-informed writing style in which the relevant literature was included to strengthen her voice. Similarly, while Madison was consistent with a critical, objective, and literature-informed voice in writing, what was notable in her subsequent writing was the ability to select the 'right' literature, to ask the 'right' questions, and to offer the 'right' answers to the questions. Their transformation resulted in their recognisable and acceptable 'voice' that was commended by the gatekeeping lecturer. Becoming a member of this course as a discourse community had become more feasible for these students.

THE NON-NEGOTIABLE CONVENTIONS IN DIFFERENT WRITING CONTEXTS

Although the students eventually were successful in understanding and aligning with the rhetorical conventions required in the course, they also faced some discomfort because of the conflict between their newly-acquired and their expected voices in Australia and China. Both Madison and Veronica were comfortable with the Australian academic writing style, which they saw as focused, critically engaged with relevant literature for content knowledge, and adhering to established academic writing conventions. However, this style of writing would not be suitable in all contexts: "different contexts, you should follow different requirements" and "others don't write like this" in China (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020).

The students each found particular aspects that were difficult. Veronica explained her confusion about referencing style and the use of personal opinions and her experience as legitimate knowledge. Again, she seemed unaware of the role of reporting verbs, using them more as a means of avoiding repetition than understanding their rhetorical function. In addition, the need to draw on teaching experience for the development of practical implications and the concept of what constitutes relevant literature was problematic for both students. Conventions need to be adhered to, but some proved challenging. The course is a discourse community, and despite improvements evidenced in the second assignment, some elements were still not mastered.

The students also recognised that some of the writing conventions could not be applied in their country. Veronica, for example, while finding the strict referencing conventions difficult, knew they were important in order to “show respect to other researchers” and to indicate her extensive engagement with the literature (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020); but when writing in the Chinese context, she noted that she would “make some modifications”, which would include “no in-text citations and not always use other works” (Veronica: Interview Three: 01.12.2020). She re-iterated her previous writing experience as being characterised by predominantly personal opinions and experience, which in that context count as legitimate knowledge (see Chapter Six). Madison made similar comments. When writing in Australia she focused less on government policy, but “if I write this assignment in Chinese in the introduction section, I will mention policies” because of the powerful influence of government policies which “have to be agreed with” (Madison: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). Madison explained that if she were writing in the Chinese language for publication in Chinese journals, she would adapt back to her previous writing style of including policies as “a framework for teaching” (Madison: Interview Two: 09.10.2020). She specifically indicated an article that she referenced in the second assignment in which the author “critiqued the textbooks of Chinese English learners, textbooks used in China”, explaining, “I don’t think the article is more likely be published in China if it is written in Chinese” (Madison: Interview Three: 28.11.2020). Madison recognised the political constraints for writing in different contexts.

DISCUSSION: THE STUDENTS’ RECONSTRUCTED AUTHORIAL VOICE IN POSTGRADUATE ACADEMIC WRITING - CRITICAL, NEGOTIABLE, SITUATIONAL, AND MEDIATED

While the previous chapter has reported on the heterogeneity of the students’ voices, this chapter has provided evidence that in the subsequent writing stage both students moved towards a more critical and literature-informed voice which was audible to the lecturer. This shift was the outcome of their successful alignment with the conventions which applied to their current writing context. This change provides evidence of their socialisation, their membership in their community through “the mastery of linguistic conventions, pragmatics, the adoption of appropriate identities, stances (e.g., epistemic or empathetic) or ideologies, and other behaviours associated with the target group and its normative practices” (Duff, 2007, p. 310). The students’ authorial voices are seen to have been successfully mediated and negotiated in the immediate writing situation of the postgraduate course. This section discusses how this process happened. I concentrate on rhetorical negotiation and mediation, as these elements are essential in the developing writing process but have not been adequately addressed in the literature.

The above analysis has tracked the ways in which the students improved in their writing competence, how they demonstrated a clearer authorial voice. This finding corroborates the perspective of voice as “language performance” that is “always social, mediated by experience, and culturally embedded” (Sperling & Appleman, 2011, p. 71). Writing is a linguistically-oriented product, so the writer’s voice is recognised by looking at how language is used (Brown, 2015; Hyland, 2005; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). The students have been seen to employ varied linguistic features to indicate their ideational, interpersonal, and textual positioning, to affirm their worldview, their TESOL community membership, and their authority as knowledge and innovation originators (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Their voice is not only about speaking their minds; it is overarchingly about representing themselves in texts. And because voice is language-oriented and language shaped, there are requirements in relation to the proper use of language if the voice is to be successfully formed and heard. These accuracies of language use move beyond the micro-level of grammatical and lexical elements to the equally important issue of appropriate use of disciplinary language. Current literature has extensively addressed the issue of adopting an audible voice in a particular community by speaking the community language (Dressen-Hammouda, 2008; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Including terminology that the community recognises and uses is essential particularly for writers who are novice members if they are to communicate successfully with their readers and have their membership recognised.

Voice is not simply projected into texts; it is rhetorically structured - a consideration which has not been adequately attended to in current literature on this subject. For instance, voice can be found in a ‘summative sentence’ placed at the beginning of a paragraph to indicate the focus of the paragraph. This sentence represents the writers’ accumulated knowledge after a substantial review of relevant literature; and it guides the readers towards the focus of the paragraph, leading on to the presentation of subsequent evidence to validate and strengthen the voice. This paragraph structure starting with voice is an additional element to the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001), as analysis of textual positioning needs to go beyond micro-level linguistic features to a macro-level of textual organisation (Kettle & Ryan, 2018). Attending to the location of voice in a text provides additional insight to the critical characteristics of voice in academic writing. The summative sentence can only be achieved when writers are able to comprehend, interpret, and evaluate the voices of other members of the respective disciplines (Bruce, 2014, 2016; Mirador, 2018; Tai et al., 2018). I emphasise 'the respective disciplines' due to the lecturer's insistence on the importance of using *relevant* literature to form and support an argument. While voice is dialogic, this dialogue needs to be considered in terms of whose voice is relevant to respond to and to be included in the text.

Furthermore, given that this study focuses on authorial voice, the critical voice is legitimised, being a key element of the expected conventions. Current literature discusses what voice means extensively, and how to recognise it; but its quality is either less focused upon or more generally described (Morton & Storch, 2019; Wingate, 2012). In academic communities, evidence-based writing is crucial to persuade readers and to form writers' credibility. Disciplinary knowledge has to be evidenced through critical engagement with literature. The quality of voice and the credibility of writers need therefore to build on Logos (Burke, 2008; Samuels, 2020). What counts as persuasiveness has evolved through time and across different societies, and has been a subject of contention (Braet, 1992). For example, Aristotelian rhetoric used to be critiqued for stimulating the audience's emotions (Pathos) and for the power of the rhetors (Ethos) (Braet, 1992; Floyd-Lapp, 2014; Samuels, 2020; Varpio, 2018). Such critiques face counter-arguments from researchers who identify the move away from stressing Ethos in pre-modernism to the modernist emphasis on logical reasoning (Logos) as the primary constituent of persuasiveness, especially in academia (Samuels, 2020). In this study, it has been argued that a convincing argument and an audible voice have to be literature-informed; and that an authorial voice centrally involves criticality and persuasiveness through Logos, that influences writer credibility (Ethos) and audience compliance (Pathos).

Given that students develop their authorial voice in alignment with the rhetorical expectations in their particular contexts, rhetorical negotiation is a crucial process in successful articulation of their voice in their particular discourse community. However, the practice of rhetorical negotiation seems to be only occasionally discussed in current literature, although it is central to the theory of Intercultural Rhetoric (Connor, 2008). From evidence presented in this study, it is clear that rhetorical negotiation should be undertaken by all parties involved if the desired win-win outcome is to be achieved (Arvanitis & Karampatzos, 2011). The activities designed to make sense of the course conventions and the disciplinary norms are part of the instructor's negotiation with their students (Finch & Willis, 2021). Veronica, for example, was advised by her lecturer to use role play or communicative teaching approaches rather than virtual reality to ensure the practicality and feasibility of her course design project. The lecturer negotiated with Veronica regarding her topic, its scope, and what is more appropriate for the task. This consultation helped Veronica to consider the *practicality* or *authenticity* of implications in the assignments, thus contributing to the persuasiveness of her proposed implications (Logos) and to her credibility (Ethos).

Several mediation tools are offered in this *Innovations in Education* course to facilitate rhetorical negotiation, and they are well-utilised by both the lecturer and the students. As the expert in the field, the lecturer negotiates by analysing and understanding the students' initial performances and then scaffolding and supporting the development of their understanding of the required rhetorical conventions through mediation tools such as feedback, exemplars, teacher-led discussions, teacher-students conferences, and other instructional materials (e.g., readings, task sheets, and marking criteria). She offers expert-novice mediation (Lantolf, 2000) through these different mediation tools. One such mediation tool is the exemplars, given to the students to read then followed up by class discussions of why they have been evaluated as successful responses to the tasks. This provision of exemplars, with cross-references to the marking criteria, helps to transform tacit knowledge of the task demands and criteria to a more visualised and realised form (Hendry et al., 2012; To & Carless, 2016; To & Liu, 2018). While using exemplars in Academic Writing courses could result in students' misunderstanding them as exemplars of 'perfect' models, and therefore copying from them, the lecturer discussed the value of the exemplars with the students, helping them to understand the characteristics of successful responses to the tasks. During this exemplar-based discussion, the lecturer reported receiving questions relating to elements that represented the desirable qualities of the exemplars. The lecturer occupies a neutral position in this discussion, objectively analysing the texts, using them as educational mediation tools rather than ultimate representatives of quality writing. Samuels (2020) argues the importance of teacher neutrality in education, that is, teaching students critical and analytical skills to analyse text, rather than pointing to a specific writing model as a perfect response to the task for the students to follow. Having teacher-led discussions around the exemplars is an effective means of concretising the tacit knowledge of qualities which make for successful writing, something that is difficult to verbalise to students; and students' capacity for criticality and agency is strengthened by making evaluative judgements of the exemplars (To & Carless, 2016; To & Liu, 2018).

The other form of assistance shown to be effective is feedback provided by both the lecturer and peers, which also supports the development of the students' understanding of the rhetorical expectations and of how to use strategies to satisfy the lecturer. The lecturer's feedback on both macro- and micro-level elements of the students' writing (see Chapter Six) evaluates the quality of the students' initial writing, shapes their understanding of the required disciplinary conventions, and assists their subsequent writing. Interestingly, previous research emphasises the need for feedback-based discussions to ensure the students' accurate interpretation of feedback (Hyland, 2019; Kettle & Ryan, 2018; Nguyen, 2021); however, no such discussion was conducted between the two students and the lecturer about the feedback on their initial performances. Such feedback was discussed in the interviews with me, but as the researcher it is not my attempt to teach the students what to write and how to write but to elaborate on their understanding of the feedback. The interviews on feedback function as social interaction for knowledge co-construction about academic writing (Friedman, 2020). Despite no lecturer-led consultation, her feedback was clearly useful, as it referenced specific sections in the students' writing with explanations of strengths, weaknesses and potential solutions (Kettle & Ryan, 2018). Peer feedback is also helpful in terms of strengthening voice and sharpening language use to demonstrate voice. Veronica worked with support from her English-L1 peer. Both students have shown themselves to be feedback-literate: they interpret the feedback (awareness of feedback), self-evaluate their performance, and make use of the feedback to self-regulate in their subsequent writing (action) (Carless & Boud, 2018; Finch & Willis, 2021; Wingate, 2010). In addition to the lecturer's written feedback on the initial writing task, feedback through one-on-one consultation on Assignment Two was also an effective form of assistance and negotiation. In this student-teacher interaction, feedback on the quality of the students' initial implications helped to develop their understanding of the evaluative norms which applied in the course and helped them to monitor their writing process (Finch & Willis, 2021; Kettle & Ryan, 2018; Nguyen, 2021). In this way, they became agentive and critical actors in their engagement with feedback, which is an important element in developing as effective writers. Criticality also refers to the capacity to evaluate the value of feedback provided by the lecturer and peers: the lecturer's feedback being perceived to be more valuable.

Following the lecturer's mediation, the students were found to be *reflexive* in the way that they reconstructed their understanding of the conventions for successful writing. This reflexivity revealed the students' *discernment* of their problems, which included incomplete understanding of the conventions, uncritical selection and review of literature, and lack of the cultural capital of teaching experience (Kettle & Ryan, 2018). Following this discernment, the students *deliberated* on possible ways of reading for knowledge, carefully planning the writing process and structuring their writing, and seeking assistance from other sources. Actions were then critically *dedicated* to when the students decided to engage with the literature to gain knowledge, strictly address the task demands, and find support from other agents. This reflexivity demonstrated the students' ability to employ various rhetorical (task demands), cognitive (knowledge about the topic and tasks), metacognitive (deciding possible strategies, planning, monitoring to successfully complete the tasks), and social strategies (assistance from other agents) (Kettle & Ryan, 2018). As a result of such reflexivity, the students gained better understanding of the characteristics of the genres and of the specific task demands. They were able to carefully monitor their writing process with necessary assistance from different sources.

Developing this capacity for reflexivity enabled the students to transition to being rhetorically competent (Ethos). They were able to construct strong arguments, supported by literature-informed evidence (Logos), which had been facilitated by learning from the lecturer's feedback, by knowing what the lecturer preferred (Pathos). An illustration of this is Veronica's continuing use of personal experience in her second assignment with support from the literature to legitimate her claims. She negotiated and aligned with the lecturer's expectations while simultaneously maintaining her own epistemological belief in the value of personal experience being counted as knowledge. Samuels expresses concern that to "get good grades" students must follow the dominant values of their superiors at all costs, that they "should tell the teachers what the teachers want to hear" (Samuels, 2020, p. 59). He proposes reconsideration of students' roles and status as community members who reciprocally follow and (re)shape those values. Samuels' suggestion is reflected in this study: the students were not passive or positioning themselves as inferior in strictly conforming to established values. They were seen to have navigated complicated trajectories, employing various strategies to both align with those conventions and to create harmony between the personal and the social (e.g., using personal experience with support from literature for persuasiveness).

Being able to adapt to the rhetorical conventions required in the course, the students' authorial voice became audible. These conventions reflected the characteristics of postgraduate academic writing (e.g., it is evidence-based) and of postgraduate Teacher Education programs (e.g., innovative implications). There is, therefore, a well-delineated system of contextual influences in relation to what to write and how to write. Writers need to understand, analyse and respond well to these influences, which involves the processes of rhetorical negotiation and mediation. Existing research advocates the concepts of *small culture* and the *context of situation* as being applicable to understanding the writing process, the contextual influences, and the actors involved - such as the particular *Innovations in Education* course, with its rhetorical expectations that the student writers featured in this study needed to unpack and comply with (Connor, 2008, 2011; Holliday, 1999, 2010, 2016). I recognise that the essentialist and homogeneous view of *culture* (e.g., *large culture, received culture*) has been strongly critiqued in the fields of Language Education/Applied Linguistics for conceptualising a hierarchy among groups of English users, placing those of non-Anglophone and non-Western backgrounds in the lower positions (Connor, 2008; Kaplan, 2000; Kubota & Lehner, 2004; Matsuda, 2001). However, I argue the need to consider *large culture* and the *context of culture* to better understand the logic of rhetorical conventions and the challenge of negotiation in different *small cultures* and *contexts of situation* (Halliday, 1999; Halliday & Hasan, 1985). While Intercultural Rhetoric advocates rhetorical negotiation, how this negotiation takes place requires further exploration. In this study, this negotiation has been seen to be not as simple as a one-way negotiation or one-way enculturation process, with the students following the lecturer. On the contrary, the students and the lecturer are both involved in the negotiation, participating in and mediating the writing process (e.g., through feedback, teacher-student consultation). Negotiation is therefore co-performed by both parties, using different strategies and mediation tools.

However, although this rhetorical negotiation is central to producing successful writing and effective voice, I posit that this negotiation can also be uncomfortable for students. Intercultural Rhetoric acknowledges students' complex and dynamic cultural experience (Connor, 2008), which means that they have experienced and acquired different cultural values. These values form their beliefs, characteristics, rhetorical competencies, and voice (Hirvela & Belcher, 2001). Herrick (2016) further reminds us that the characteristics of rhetoric are adaptive to an audience in a context, with political influences that regulate the constituents of successful discourse (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). While the students understand the need for rhetorical negotiation and accommodation, it is not always feasible to practice this principle. For example, the students in this study acknowledged the centrality of teaching experience in proposing pedagogical implications; and they discussed the challenges associated with adhering to some academic writing conventions (e.g., the use of reporting verbs or referencing style), being aware of the importance of these conventions for a successful written assignment. My argument, therefore, is to re-consider Intercultural Rhetoric which not only includes principles for successful writing but also foreseeable associated challenges and discomforts that student writers might encounter in their writing process and in practicing rhetorical negotiation. Other researchers have acknowledged such discomforts when describing their own personal experiences as former international students studying in a new context which required negotiating to craft a form of self that was not their *true* self but a *situational* self – one acceptable to the discourse community (Matsuda, 2001; Park, 2013; Tardy, 2012; Viete & Phan, 2007).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the students' reconstruction and enactment of the required rhetorical conventions of the course. They are seen to be rhetorically competent, agentive, and critical, able to recognise the rhetorical expectations and align with them. They are able to communicate an audible voice, which is under negotiation and mediation, using different tools and shaped by different agents. This chapter has also suggested a reconsideration of the Intercultural Rhetoric in relation to identifying valuable principles for successful writing and also rhetorical challenges. The cases of Madison and Veronica and their writing experiences in a specific course have been reported upon. The next chapter invites a group of international postgraduate students at The Coastal University to discuss their writing experiences towards the end of their academic journeys, to bring the discussion of academic writing and authorial voice to a broader scope.

Chapter Eight. International Postgraduate Students' Writing Experiences Towards the End of the Journey in Australia

INTRODUCTION

I have so far delineated the trajectories of Madison and Veronica to becoming successful writers in their postgraduate courses. These students demonstrated progress in both their understanding and enactment of the rhetorical conventions of postgraduate academic writing in Australia and the successful presentation of authorial voice. They became critical writers, able to evaluate reading materials, establish their literature-informed arguments, and employ different strategies for improving their written assignments. The findings from the previous chapters also postulate that writing is not a monolithic process; that different student writers have their own pathways and strategies to achieve writing success. This variation in writing performance is interesting to explore further from the perspectives of writers from diverse linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds. Insights from such investigation will highlight the need to bring discussion of international postgraduate students' academic writing experiences, including their articulation of authorial voice and their rhetorical negotiation practices, to a broader scope in terms of research sample and focus.

In this chapter, I report the findings of the focus group discussion that I conducted with six international postgraduate students. I was interested in hearing their perspectives on the characteristics of academic writing in Australia, their articulation of authorial voice in their writing, and their rhetorical negotiation and adaptation for successful writing in different contexts. These themes had emerged from the previous chapters; thus, it was worthwhile to discuss them with a larger group of international postgraduate students. Broader investigation was likely to yield further insights via the complexities of their perspectives and experiences. As these students are at the end of their studies, I thought it would be particularly informative to canvas their views as they reflect back over their experience of 'becoming', that is, creating and enacting the required writing identities and voice and the rhetorical conventions in academic written discourse, as required in postgraduate study in a Western, English-speaking country such as Australia.

In this chapter, after introducing the students' backgrounds and writing experiences, I report on their perspectives on the characteristics of successful academic writing at postgraduate level, their articulation of authorial voice in writing, and their perspectives on rhetorical adaptation in academic writing in different contexts. This organisation of my report is purposeful, acknowledging that the characteristics of academic writing have impacts on students' formation and ability to demonstrate their authorial voice in texts. After reflecting on their writing experiences in the MEP program in Australia, the discussion continues with the students' various perspectives on writing in their home contexts upon their completion of the program. I will also make reference to the findings in the previous chapters to compare and exemplify the students' perspectives.

THE DEMOGRAPHICS AND WRITING EXPERIENCES OF THE STUDENTS IN THE FOCUS GROUP

This focus group involved six full-time international postgraduate students in the final year of their MEP program with different specialisations. These students were about to begin their final semester or had just completed their program but not yet graduated. I selected this group because I believed they had become experienced in academic writing and writing with authorial voice across multiple semesters and different courses. Madison and Veronica also participated in the focus group discussion. At the time the discussion took place they had had further experience of the discourses of the field and had probably further advanced their understanding of academic writing. The table below outlines the student participants' demographics in this focus group.

Table 8.1

Focus Group Students' Biographical Information

	Name (pseudonym)	Country of origin	Status of enrolment (at the time of discussion)	English language proficiency achievement	Specialisation
1	Madison	China	Final semester	English Pathway courses	Language and Literacy and Early Childhood Education
2	Veronica	China	Final semester	English Pathway courses	Language and Literacy

3	Carol	China	Completed	IELTS 7.0	Language and Literacy
4	Linda	Papua New Guinea	Completed	IELTS 6.5	Early Childhood Education
5	Sandy	The Philippines	Completed	English Pathway courses	Early Childhood Education
6	Tina	Vietnam	Final semester	English Pathway courses	Inclusive Education

While the biographical information of Madison and Veronica was reported earlier in Chapter Six, Carol, Linda, Sandy, and Tina were new participants in the study. Carol was originally from China but had been in Australia for 14 years and had obtained a Bachelor's degree in Social Work at an Australian university. At TCU, she enrolled in the MEP program specialising in Language and Literacy. She claimed to have been substantially engaged in writing for both academic and general purposes as her daily practice in both academic programs and daily communication in Australia.

Linda was from Papua New Guinea (PNG) and taught at an international school where she was heavily immersed in the English academic environment, especially in spoken form. She used English for academic writing almost weekly in PNG. She was experienced in writing narratives, descriptive, expository, persuasive, and reflective essays in her undergraduate program and in her work. Having achieved an overall score of 6.5 in IELTS, she was eligible to enter the MEP program at TCU, specialising in Early Childhood Education. In the program, she had "engaged in assessments which involved reflections, essays, report writing, critical analysis, research and professional teaching plans" (Linda: Student Information Sheet). While writing weekly in PNG, Linda claimed that she engaged in academic writing almost every day in Australia. As reported later in the chapter, the writing experiences with these writing genres were new to Linda; however, she was satisfied with having mastered new forms of academic writing from her courses.

Sandy, from The Philippines, was enrolled in the MEP program with a focus on Early Childhood Education. Unfortunately, she did not return the Student Information Sheet. However, throughout the focus group discussion she mentioned that she had also attended the English Pathway courses at TCU before enrolling in the MEP program. She struggled mostly with text structure and language use as these aspects of writing were deemed to be different between the contexts of the Philippines and Australia.

Tina was from Vietnam and had worked at an international school where she was a member of an intervention program for children with developmental disorders. She earned her Bachelor of Psychology in Vietnam and pursued a Master's degree in Inclusive Education at TCU. She also attended an English Pathway course as she obtained an overall score of 5.5 in her IELTS test. Tina was experienced in periodically writing educational reports for her work, and had learned to write academic essays, literature review papers, and professional plans in her education programs in Australia.

All students in the focus group were therefore experienced in academic writing of different genres in different contexts and at different levels; and they all seemed to acknowledge that their writing experience at postgraduate level in Australia had offered them new knowledge of academic writing. Being experienced writers, these students were able to conceptualise the characteristics of academic writing in Australia, authorial voice, and strategies for successful writing in different contexts.

CHARACTERISTICS OF POSTGRADUATE ACADEMIC WRITING IN AUSTRALIA

This section reports on the characteristics of academic writing at postgraduate level in Australia, drawing on the students' experiences in the MEP program. The students identified that writing in this context is critical, evidence-based, straightforward, and well-structured. In addition, they acknowledged that Australian writing standards were recognised internationally, and they further explained their strategies for successful writing.

Critical writing with evaluative judgements and evidence

After presenting the focus of the discussion, the ethics considerations and research processes (such as recording), as well as brief self-introductions, the discussion started with consideration of the qualities of successful postgraduate academic writing in Australia. Sandy initiated the discussion by raising the issue of 'critical writing' which she maintained required an argument and supporting evidence. Criticality was discussed in the previous chapters as a central element of academic writing at postgraduate level. I therefore elicited what critical writing meant, which attracted the students' attention and indicated their readiness to contribute to defining 'critical writing'. Linda noted that

> Extract 8.1
> I only learned how to think critically after coming here [Australia]. I've never done any critical writing in my Bachelor's degree and analyse the issues not until I came here to do my Master. So for me, critical writing is really uhm reading between the lines and not describing what is there, but having to analyse and give your own opinions but what you think what you write writing, what it is, providing evidence that are more logical evidence-based to support your argument, and yeah it is thinking outside what has already been there, what has been already provided by other thinkers and creating something you think it's true and it should be practiced. (Linda: Focus Group: 08.07.2021)

In this response, Linda firstly highlighted the importance of criticality as an innovation in her writing experience, as this was not a feature of her education in PNG. She then elaborated on criticality as making evaluative judgements on the relevance of the literature through intensive reading, analysing and evaluating the ideas in the reading materials, rather than simply presenting a summary or synthesis of what had been proposed by other researchers. Making these initial judgments equipped her with substantial knowledge of the topics from which to build her own argument. Furthermore, through intensive and critical reading, she would be able to decide which readings or points in readings would best support her argument. In her response, Linda was reiterating the key issues of developing an argument and providing evidence in critical writing, which Sandy had also done.

Personal opinions were also identified as having value in critical writing. Linda, for example, referred to critical thinking as "having to analyse and give your own opinions" (Extract 8.1), by forming propositions that she offered in her writing to demonstrate her critical thinking. Her opinions were literature-informed through her reading and analysis of the literature. Agreeing with Linda, Tina stated that critical writers need to "identify and explore your thoughts, your feelings, your experience…how they [thoughts, feelings, experience] fit in the ideas or concepts or theories from the researchers from the article" (Tina: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). She referred to personal experience and standpoints to compare and contrast with ideas presented in reading materials as part of the process of evaluating relevance of the readings. She believed that a combination of personal and literature-informed perspectives was required to make evaluative judgements in critical writing. As discussed previously, in the *Innovations in Education* course, Veronica had used her personal experience of ESP Education in China as legitimate knowledge in the first assignment, which the lecturer disapproved of due to the lack of literature-informed evidence (see Chapter Six). Academic writing at postgraduate level is expected to be evidence-based

(Kettle & Luke, 2013); therefore, the students in the focus group had expanded the concept of criticality to include writers' stance towards the topics they were writing about, drawing on their own interpretation and evaluation of the literature and literature-informed evidence to persuade readers of their stance. In providing supporting evidence, Sandy emphasised that "you have to cite ideas that will disagree and agree" with your own stance (Sandy: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). Therefore, criticality involved this process of evaluating the literature and forming an argument with supporting evidence.

Other students illustrated how to critically evaluate the value and relevance of ideas presented in reading materials. As reported in Chapter Seven, Madison had discussed the applicability of pedagogical implications in her assignments. She reiterated this view in the focus group discussion, exemplifying criticality as being able to discern that "some teaching approaches are suitable for Australian children but maybe not appropriate for Chinese children" (Madison: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). Focusing on the Education discipline, Madison suggested that critical writers evaluate the relevance and applicability of pedagogical implications proposed in the literature for different teaching contexts; and Veronica agreed that the literature on teaching approaches in Australia might not be relevant to the Chinese context - mentioning also the need to select recent literature to reference advances in the field (Veronica: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). As reported in Chapter Seven, Veronica had learned from the lecturer's comments on this point. She then suggested comparing old and new publications to identify advances in teaching approaches and to evaluate their effectiveness in her teaching context. This comparison and identification of advances in the field indicated the critical thinking that was previously identified and that she now revisited in the focus group discussion.

Following the discussion of different perspectives on critical writing, Linda concluded that this approach answered the *how* and *why* questions, rather than a simple *what* question. Her previous writing experience was, "I've always been doing is 'what', 'what' it is, but critical thinking is more or less like 'how' and solving the 'how' and 'why' questions" (Linda: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). Asking the *how* and *why* questions had been instilled into her after substantial engagement with the critical writing approach in Australia. The result, she explained, was that she "come[s] to question the things that I see not only articles but other things in life" (Linda: Focus Group: 08.07.2021); that she now tended to not accept what she saw but to question the 'facts' she saw in front of her. Implicit in Linda's perspective on answering the *how* and *why* questions, and in Madison's view of context-based teaching approaches, is the understanding that critical writing in Education involves going beyond consideration of *what* teaching approaches would be relevant, to considering *how* they could be implemented, and *why* they would be effective. As noted previously, the lecturer had commented on the lack of depth in the Implications sections in both Madison's and Veronica's assignments, due to their limited justification of the effectiveness of the proposed implementation of the implications (Chapter Six). Linda's suggestion of answering the *how* and w*hy* questions aligned with the requirement of criticality in Madison and Veronica's *Innovations in Education* course, particularly in relation to the questions around implementation of their proposed pedagogical implications. In summary, the students in the focus group discussion constructed the meaning of criticality as identifying different stances towards a writing topic, evaluating literature, ascertaining arguments, and selecting relevant literature to support them.

Straightforward and well-structured writing

Some students in the group then raised the issues of 'straightforwardness', which in their words referred to the importance of logical textual structure and the explicit expression of a writer's ideas. Sandy first brought the issue up, explaining that academic writing prohibited the use of aesthetic or beautiful language. She shared her experience in the English Pathway course where her instructor had thought that her writing sounded like "a lecture in the church" (Sandy: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). Sandy explained this allusion by referring to her writing experience in the Philippines, where "we use the words that make it [the writing] more beautiful" (Sandy: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). The instructor had then suggested that she "use the words that are appropriate for that idea" (Sandy: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). The students appear to be indicating that careful use of language to explicitly and precisely express the writer's ideas is encouraged in academic writing. For them, this approach seemed to challenge the idea of the aesthetic value of rhetorical discourse to convince an audience. However, as argued by Herrick (2016) we can understand that what constitutes persuasiveness is dependent on the rhetorical expectations in a specific context of communication.

Another issue brought up in the group was the organisation of text. Linda joined in the discussion by adding that "writing here [Australia] is more focused", referring to linear argumentation (Kaplan, 1966), being carefully structured "from the beginning and a sequential order to the end" rather than "telling the story from A then you jump to J and then K, L, M" (Linda: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). Tina continued the discussion by sharing her view about structuring her writing, re-affirming what Sandy and Linda had just said. Tina talked firstly about careful word choice to accurately describe her thoughts, which resonated with Sandy's experience in her English Pathway course. She then talked at some length about the significance of having a carefully structured text. In her view, writers need to follow a clear paragraph structure, starting with the topic sentence and moving on to subsequent supporting sentences (Tina: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). Veronica also contributed, drawing on her experience in the *Innovations in Education* course, emphasising the significance of coherence and cohesion in written assignments although she was still unable to define these terms. Tina explained coherence and cohesion as, "you need to link to connect all sentences; the whole paragraph concentrate on the one idea just for one topic" (Tina: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). Therefore, the general agreement of the group was that writing in Australia has to be logically structured, focused on the topic, and requires precise language.

Australian writing standards are internationally recognised

The students' academic writing experiences in their postgraduate program in Australia has demonstrated the complex characteristics of writing at this level. These characteristics include critical thinking, use of accurate grammar and lexis, text structure, and literature-informed evidence: the points extensively discussed in the literature as the main elements of academic writing at postgraduate level (Hyland, 2013; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Kettle & Luke, 2013; Kettle & Ryan, 2018). Despite these complexities, the students were positive about this form of writing. They embraced 'Australian writing style' by designating its characteristics as being the norm for academic writing worldwide. When I asked about this commendation, they talked about what they saw to be the political features that constituted its internationally recognised status (Extract 8.2).

Extract 8.2

Madison:	And another when we talk about Australian style, I think it's not just Australian style. I think it's also international style. If we want to have some achievements in academic writing and writing articles for international readers, we should learn this style.
Researcher:	Why do you think Australian style is an international style? Why not the Vietnamese style or Chinese style, but Australian style is an international style?
Madison:	We have to agree. It's a development country and its native its language is English and hi-tech.

Sandy: Because Australia is well known for giving high-quality education that are recognized globally that’s why we can say, yeah, it’s an international writing style.

(Focus Group: 08.07.2021)

They viewed different political conditions as contributing to the power of the Australian writing style. Madison and Sandy referred to developed economics, ownership of the English language, advanced technology, and a globally recognised education system. Madison employed the collective pronoun ‘we’ and the modal verb of obligation ‘have to’ to strengthen her advocacy of Australian writing standards (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Following the wide spread of the English language as the global lingua franca, and the explosion of academic publications in English, the language became the most recognised medium of communication in the academic world (Strauss, 2011, 2017). This group of students viewed Australia as an Inner-Circle country, where English is spoken as the first language (Kachru, 1990), and whose writing norms are recognised globally. Madison’s view was agreed to by Sandy, who mentioned the high ranking of Australian education. She was possibly implying that adopting the writing style accepted in Australian educational institutions would signify a writer’s internationally recognised writing competence. The focus group was seen here to be revisiting the essentialist view that different languages, cultures, and nations possess different writing conventions. They certainly believed that a nation's status in terms of its ownership of the English language, education quality, and wealth impacts on the standing of its writing style.

Strategies for successful postgraduate academic writing

The rhetorical conventions of postgraduate academic writing, such as critical writing, straightforwardness, and logical organisation, were new to the students. They therefore made strategic use of course materials, lecturer consultations, peer feedback, writing support services, and technological applications to succeed in their writing.

They made use of these resources to unpack the task demands, which was of ultimate importance. For the students, “the first thing to do is to unpack to understand what it is uhm what part it requires” to produce successful writing (Linda: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). I raised questions on this issue of how to ‘unpack’ task demands. Veronica, Madison, and Tina respectively mentioned course materials such as task sheets, exemplars, and marking rubrics.

Assistance from lecturers, peers, and writing services was also valued. Carol was concerned about her lecturers' expectations, so she valued any advice she could get from the lecturers on her writing plans or drafts. She would take this advice and continually revise her writing to ensure high-quality work for submission. Linda sought support from her peers, who were doctoral candidates at TCU, by asking for their feedback on her ideas or their explanations of reading materials that she could not understand. She greatly appreciated this peer support: "having friends is one of the best things that you can have in the English academic environment" (Linda: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). She also made use of the institutional Writing Support Service for language editing and was happy when she could introduce this service to other students in the focus group. Despite being proficient in English, Linda still considered academic writing in English a challenge. She continued to seek feedback from more experienced writers on her understanding of the reading materials and on her draft writing. Veronica also used the Writing Support Service in the *Innovations in Education* course (see Chapter Seven) and also peer feedback, which proved for her the usefulness of getting feedback from more experienced writers.

Technological applications were also described as helpful, known as *technology-based artifact mediation* (Lantolf, 2000). Sandy, for example, had installed software that supported English language editing. She described it as extremely useful, especially when she had limited opportunities to travel to campus to get help from the Writing Support Service. Furthermore, as evidence-based referencing was a core element of academic writing, EndNote was described by Madison as extremely helpful for compliance with APA referencing practices in her assignments.

In sum, the students in the group were all very aware of the high demands of academic writing, particularly as writers in an additional language, and they were strategic in making use of different resources available in their courses (course materials, lecturers, peers) and elsewhere (writing support services, peers from other programs, technological tools). Making good use of these resources characterised the students as competent writers who ensured their completion of the tasks (Kettle & Ryan, 2018).

VOICE IN POSTGRADUATE ACADEMIC WRITING IN AUSTRALIA

In this section, I present the students' perspectives on authorial voice in academic writing at postgraduate level. The students perceived voice as being closely related to criticality, literature-informed evidence, and text organisation, which had been established as core elements of postgraduate academic writing. Interestingly, the discussion of voice in academic writing started with some confusion, as one student was uncertain of what I meant by the term (Extract 8.3).

Extract 8.3

Researcher: …How do you show your voice in academic writing?

Carol: Sorry, I don’t really get it. Sorry, like what you mean? Like what you mean ‘voice’?

(Carol: Focus Group: 08.07.2021)

At the outset of the discussion about voice, Carol immediately responded with confusion about the meaning of ‘voice’. This instance resonated with the long-lasting discussion and debates around the meaning of voice, the failure to define it definitively, making it an “ill-defined concept” (Tardy, 2016, p. 350). Although I had explored the concept of voice previously with Madison and Veronica (Chapters Six and Seven), it was not my intention to define voice to the participants in the focus group, as I wanted to elicit their various perspectives and experiences in academic writing and understandings of authorial voice. I therefore invited them to present their views in response to the question, to use their ‘voice’ in explaining what it means, how it is defined, constructed, and demonstrated in their writing experiences in Australia.

Extract 8.4

Researcher: I wouldn’t give a specific definition. I just want to know your ideas. What do you know about voice and how do you show it?

Linda: How we show our voice in academic writing would be considering, comparing, contrasting what other people have said and then being able to analyze, being able to synthesise where your thought lies. So Madison has said that, Sandy said this, Sandy and Tina have said the same thing, what do I say about this? This is when critical thinking comes in so what they have said is going against or for your topic and also stating why you think what they said is relevant, how do you think you can address what they said, what you think, so your evaluation your analysis, that is showing your voice.

(Linda: Focus Group: 08.07.2021)

This commentary brought the concept of voice from confusion to the focus of the discussion, with Linda speaking to what voice meant to her in relation to critical thinking.

She saw it as emerging from critical analysis and evaluation, by “comparing” and “contrasting” her view with the antecedent voices in the literature to subsequently form her own propositions (Linda: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). It was not the means of simply reporting on the literature. In the same vein, Sandy contributed the view that writers do not simply express their personal views in writing but “analyse what the idea of this reading and then you will have your own ideas” (Sandy: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). She argued that when a writer compares and contrasts their personal experience with the antecedent voices of other writers in the literature, “that’s how you are going to add in your voice in your writing” (Sandy: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). Voice is therefore seen by the students as dialogic; it does not originate from the writer but rather is a response to existing voices produced previously by other writers and archived in the literature (Bakhtin, 1981). This is voice manifested in a writer’s propositions in a text, which can also be understood as authorial stance (Hyland, 2012; Thompson, 2012). Importantly, voice requires justification of “why you think what they said is relevant”, and being able to convincingly respond to others’ voices, as “how do you think you can address what they said” (Linda: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). Sandy noted that voice is necessarily dialogic and evidence-based, because “my work is based on the other people’s ideas to make it reliable, and it is based on the evidence” (Sandy: Focus Group: 08.07.2021).

Extending on the definitions of voice, the students then elaborated on how voice operates in texts. Tina was concerned that the creation of voice might involve referring to new concepts that might be unfamiliar to the readers. She argued that writers should clarify new concepts to make their voice audible to the audience (Tina: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). Again, she requested literature-informed evidence to explain how writers form their voice and why this voice is worth being heard. For instance, the lecturer in the *Innovations in Education* course required Madison to elaborate on her use of interactive whiteboards in her class to motivate young learners (Chapter Seven). She judged Madison as not being explicit enough in her propositions, leaving the lecturer uncertain of the persuasiveness of her voice. It is the writer’s responsibility to make their voice comprehensible and convincing to readers (Hinds, 1987); a clear and well-justified voice is therefore necessary to demonstrate substantial and critical engagement with the literature.

Demonstration of voice was also brought up in relation to text organisation. Carol talked about instilling voice in the writers’ minds and texts. She spoke about her own approach to academic writing: she would start with her ideas first, then provide evidence from the literature which was "someone's theories" or "someone's articles" (Carol: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). Her textual organisation therefore involved an informed thesis statement followed by subsequent supporting evidence from the literature. I was interested in exploring if this structure would also apply to the writing of other students in the focus group. When I elicited further comments on this topic, Madison described the top-down organisation of voice in her writing; she also started her paragraphs with her own views accumulated from reading materials and then proceeded with literature-informed evidence. She adopted this structure due to her lack of teaching experience. As reported in Chapters Six and Seven, she understood that pedagogical implications grow out of the combination of theory and practice, but because of her lack of teaching experience, she could only reference information about EFL education in China from the literature. Her 'data' came from supporting evidence in the literature rather than teaching experience. Therefore, she structured her paper by starting with her literature-informed statement as the central idea of the paragraph, to indicate her knowledge of the field, then proceeded with the literature to support the statement. Madison identified reading for knowledge as the central element of her writing practice which allowed her to establish a literature-informed statement as a topic sentence. This top-down structure echoes the view of voice as an opening 'summative statement' in a paragraph that is subsequently endorsed by evidence from relevant literature, which Veronica had demonstrated in the previous chapter.

Tina also contributed to the discussion of the structure of writing to form and enact the writer's voice. She expanded the concept of writing structure beyond the scope of a paragraph. She described voice as also referring to the connections that writers make between different sections in their texts. In this way she was able to "show my voice through the structure" (Tina: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). With this larger scope, of a text that included multiple paragraphs, Tina referred to the deductive (having an introductory paragraph) and inductive (having a concluding paragraph) organisation required to encompass her voice. The writer's voice is only audible if the text is coherent: this will not be the case "if the relationship between propositions is not clear, or if the sequence does not contribute to a development of an argument" (Thompson, 2012, p. 125). An effective voice is one that clearly communicates the writer's propositions. A well-structured text, with previewing and reviewing sections, is most likely to effectively transmit a writer's propositions to the readers (Thompson, 2012). Tina's approach fits this model of structuring voice.

In summary, the general perception by members of the focus group was of voice as constituted by writers’ propositions in their texts, primarily informed by their substantial and critical engagement with the literature. Making voice audible to readers is important; and it is the writer’s responsibility. When defining voice, Matsuda (2001, p. 40) emphasised readers' impressions of the writer’s voice – via “discursive and non-discursive practices” in their texts. An effective academic voice contributes to the scholarly images of writers. It needs to be well-justified and well-structured, comprehensible, and convincing.

RHETORICAL ADAPTATION IN WRITING AND THE TEACHING OF WRITING IN AUSTRALIA AND HOME CONTEXTS

So far in this chapter, I have reported on the group’s accounts of their writing experiences and on the characteristics of postgraduate academic writing in their courses in Australia, with an emphasis on authorial voice. The Australian style of writing from the students’ point of view is considered an international writing style, with valuable conventions. Learning these conventions effectively forms the students’ scholarly images of what constitutes competent academic writers. Despite the students’ appreciation and valuing of their writing experiences in Australia, however, they know that they will still have to adapt rhetorically when writing in different contexts such as their home countries. The following section reports on the students’ discussion of rhetorical adaptation in different writing contexts.

Different contexts have different expectations with which writers have to comply. There is a need therefore for rhetorical adaptation. Tina gave the example of what is considered proper referencing practice to avoid plagiarism in academic writing in Australia, which might be alienating in Vietnam. She approved of evidence-based writing and strict referencing practice in Australia, understanding that it is necessary to “respect” and “appreciate” other researchers when using their research (Tina: Focus Group: 08.07.2021); but she still found it challenging to apply, because it was unfamiliar to writers and readers in her home context. From her observation, Vietnamese writers would be unfamiliar with the referencing practices prescribed in Australia. Attitudes towards plagiarism, for example, are context-based and culturally-governed, which means that different standards apply to the definition and detection of plagiarism. For example, in some contexts the notion of knowledge as communal property allows writers to use this property without having to acknowledge the source (Matalene, 1985). Tina, who advocated for strict referencing practice, indicated that she would gradually integrate this practice into her teaching of writing in the Vietnamese context. Understanding that different contexts have different views in relation to referencing, she indicated that in the future when she was teaching in Vietnam she would start with the requirement to include “the link or the website at the end of your writing” (Tina: Focus Group: 08.07.2021), before working up to mandating strict adherence to the APA referencing style that she had learned to adopt in her academic program in Australia.

Referencing practice in the Australian model indicates academic integrity. Linda was thinking along similar lines to Tina, also advocating for the APA referencing style as an indication of academic integrity, acknowledging the significant difference between referencing in Australia and PNG. Linda intended to apply this referencing practice to her teaching in PNG but was concerned about the limited reading resources that hindered students from engaging with literature and practicing referencing. She knew that she had to find ways to adapt her writing and teaching of academic writing to her social context in Papua New Guinea, to “make it more convincing in learning environment of people and children in my country” (Linda: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). Although this practice was unfamiliar in her home context, and there is a lack of resources to teach it, Linda was convinced of the need to introduce this dimension of academic integrity to the students. Her solution was to “download all of the resources, so like a CiteWrite book that I printed and I’m sure passing on the knowledge to students in my home country” (Linda: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). Based on the resources available to her in Australia, Linda would create her own teaching database to “give them [her future students] an opportunity to be learning what I learned here even though they can’t make it here that providing them opportunity to also learn academic writing” (Linda: Focus Group: 08.07.2021). Comments such as this - suggesting a commitment to rhetorical adaptation - show how much the students appreciate their academic writing experiences in Australia. They are determined to transmit these experiences to their future students where possible. They also showed respect for the rhetorical norms operating in their home contexts; that they understand the need for rhetorical negotiation between Australian conventions and those in their home contexts.

DISCUSSION: POSTGRADUATE ACADEMIC WRITING AND AUTHORIAL VOICE FROM THE STUDENTS' WRITING EXPERIENCES IN AUSTRALIA

The focus group discussion provided the students with opportunities to confirm, modify, and challenge what other members had claimed about academic writing and authorial voice in the Australian context as a way to (re)construct their understanding on these issues. This discussion group provided an opportunity to conceptualise the characteristics of academic writing in Australia and in other writing contexts, based on their own writing experiences. It was helpful to listen to students talking about - conceptualising - authorial voice and how to present it in texts, as the concept is on the whole loosely defined in the literature.

The group confirmed the characteristics of academic writing at postgraduate level that Madison and Veronica had identified and presented in the previous chapters. Specifically, criticality was still acknowledged as the central component of writing at postgraduate level (Bruce, 2014, 2016; Mirador, 2018; Tai et al., 2018). The students described critical thinking as involving the interpretation, synthesis, analysis, and evaluation of the literature to develop propositions which are critical and evidence-based (Hyland, 2013; Kettle & Luke, 2013). Criticality is also seen in the selection of relevant evidence to convince readers. Discussion of criticality and evidencing valorises logical reasoning (Logos) as the core element of academic writing as a form of rhetorical discourse (Braet, 1992; Herrick, 2016; Samuels, 2020). Samuels (2020) focuses on the essence of effective argumentation (Logos) in academic writing to persuade readers (Pathos) and to construct the scholarly identities of the writers (Ethos). The focus group reiterated the need for effective argumentation, constructed through the writer's authorial stance, and provision of evidence to support the stance. These elements constitute the core component of academic discourse.

In discussing how academic writing at postgraduate level needs to be logically structured, the students revealed their thoughts on the demonstration of authorial voice through text organisation. They described the model of deductive and inductive text structure, in which voice can be articulated at the beginning and the end of a paragraph or a text. For a paragraph, voice typically embodies the topic sentence or summative statement that captures the student's accumulated knowledge from critical engagement with the literature, before providing supporting evidence from the literature, as reported by Madison and Linda. However, as Tina explained, voice can also be projected in the introductory and the concluding paragraphs of a text that comprises multiple well-connected paragraphs. In this way the group brought the topic of voice to include the larger scope of text structure as an additional affordance to express the writer’s voice. While the literature has investigated voice extensively in relation to specific linguistic categories - such as the stance and self-positioning models (Hyland, 2005; Ivanič & Camps, 2001), structuring texts as writers’ textual positioning to show authorial voice adds to the complexity of voice.

In their discussion around the concept of voice, the students in the group seemed to sort out the long-standing confusion between voice and stance - by locating stance under the umbrella of voice. Nonetheless, the binary perspective on these two concepts has yet to be finalised in the literature, making them interchangeable at times (Hyland, 2012). Hyland has defined stance as: “the writer’s expression of personal attitudes and assessments of the status of knowledge in a text” (Hyland, 2012, p. 134). The students in this group firstly defined voice as the writers’ interpretation and evaluation of the literature to establish their own conclusions, and ‘having something to say’ (Ivanič & Camps, 2001), which resonates with the concept of stance (Hyland, 2012). However, voice is described as “the authorized ways of speaking as a community member” (Hyland, 2012, p. 134), and as writers’ self-representations in texts (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). In relation to how the students in the focus group defined voice, they assimilated their stance to include not simply their opinions but also literature-informed propositions resulting from their interpretation and critical evaluation of the literature. They also described voice as ‘speaking out’ about their stance, with supporting evidence, straightforwardness, and logical text structure. The students therefore seemed to subsume stance in voice, which means that the forming and demonstrating of their stance needed to adhere to the conventions of postgraduate academic writing in their particular contexts to form “the impression of the writers in the text” (Thompson, 2012, p. 122). This impression is simultaneously perceived as self-representation and authorial voice, which showcases writers’ scholarly identities and legitimises their memberships in the Australian academic community (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Morton & Storch, 2019; Thompson, 2012).

While reflecting on the characteristics of academic writing in Australia, the focus group associated global writing standards with the Australian style of writing, due to what they observed as the national wealth, high-quality education, and ownership of the English language. The close relationship between language, culture, and writing has long been identified, including in the seminal work of Contrastive Rhetoric, where Kaplan identified different paragraph structures written in English by English as L2 writers (Kaplan, 1966). As referenced earlier in this thesis, substantial critique of the model of Contrastive Rhetoric has devoted considerable effort to eliminate the power of the so-called ‘Western writing style’ and ethnocentric view of standard English as ‘owned’ and privileged by the Inner-Circle countries (Connor, 2008; Kubota, 1997; Strauss, 2017; Viete & Phan, 2007). However, despite the ongoing contestation in research communities, the students in this group still emphasised the need to acquire the English language and its associated writing standards as performed by L1 speakers as the standard. The students seemed in favour of Australian ‘one-style-fit-all’ writing conventions. They considered that being able to master the characteristics of postgraduate academic writing in Australia represented an ‘upgrade’ in their writing skills and offered the key to writing for a global readership.

At the same time, the group also acknowledged the sociocultural influences which shape academic writing, and the subsequent need for rhetorical adaptation to write successfully. They recognise that different contexts have different rhetorical expectations which need to be aligned with (Connor, 2004, 2008, 2011). This understanding of the contextual dimension of academic writing resonates with the concepts of *context of situation* and *context of culture* (Halliday, 1999; Halliday & Hasan, 1985). An element of rhetorical adaptation emphasised by the students was the practice of citation, a recognised representation of academic literacy socialisation (Friedman, 2019). As Tina noted, reference to sources might be differently practiced in a Confucian context like Vietnam, probably due to the cultural perception of knowledge as being communal property (Friedman, 2019; Matalene, 1985) rather than a judgement of writing conventions in other contexts. From her report, it seemed impossible to Tina that the APA referencing practice could be mandated in the cultural context of Vietnam; but she believed it could be possible to negotiate between the two rhetorical systems, for example by simply having a reference list or links to sources at the end of a text, without any adherence to a specific referencing style to avoid plagiarism. This proposed hybrid or in-between form of referencing indicates Tina’s rhetorical adaptation: she is thinking how to introduce principles of academic integrity that she had learned in Australia and still follow Vietnamese rhetorical conventions.

The intensely socioculturally-politically governed nature of writing means that writers need to be reflexive in finding ways to write successfully. The students in this focus group talked about employing the kinds of strategies discussed in previous chapters in the cases of Madison and Veronica, strategies associated with the *reflexive* model (Kettle & Ryan, 2018), including rhetorical, cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies, as discussed in the previous chapter. This model involves unpacking the task demands to identify the genre and the task requirements (e.g., critical writing with evidence). Students cognitively analyse the task demands (e.g., knowledge about the tasks, the topics) and metacognitively monitor their writing processes (e.g., reading for knowledge, making plans for and monitoring the writing process). They also reach out to more experienced writers in their social networks for advice (e.g., lecturers, peers, writing support services). The students in this focus group were competent and strategic in relation to their academic writing as they were moving towards the end of their academic journeys. For this level of advanced evidence-based writing, a critical review of the literature is a crucial first step to acquire knowledge of the topic, before the subsequent planning, composing, and revising stages (Wingate & Harper, 2021). The students talked about these stages and strategies, and about how they contribute to high-quality writing. This finding challenges the deficit model that assumes that international students, especially those who have engaged substantially with academic writing, are incapable of unpacking the characteristics of academic writing, employing different writing strategies, or undertaking a rigorous writing process to satisfy the rhetorical expectations in different writing contexts (Kettle, 2017; Wang, 2011).

Mediation has also been recognised as being necessary to support students' academic writing development, an observation which resonates with the role of mediation tools as discussed in the previous chapters in respect to the experience of Madison and Veronica. The students in the focus group had formed their previous knowledge of academic writing in the context of their socio-historical backgrounds; they then learned the new rhetorical conventions in their Australian program, such as critical writing, straightforwardness, and proper referencing style. When adapting to these conventions, the mediation of course materials, feedback from instructors and peers, and academic support services were beneficial (Hackney & Newman, 2013; Hyland, 2019; To & Carless, 2016). With support, the students progressively understood the values and practices of their new academic communities and produced writing that could be recognised in these communities. Rhetorical adaptation and negotiation require mediation to support writers who are new to conventions in new contexts if they are to succeed in writing. The students in this group showed themselves to be aware of this reality.

The discussion of different rhetorical conventions in various writing contexts under sociocultural-political influences provides recommendations for writing pedagogy. The students in this focus group intend to transmit their knowledge of academic writing to their students without violating the ideological values of their home communities. They plan to practice rhetorical negotiation in their teaching of Academic Writing courses, with the objective of maintaining the Australian writing style which they have valued and appreciated, at the same time harmonising with the rhetorical conventions of their home writing contexts (Connor, 2004, 2008, 2013). Rhetorical adaptation has been seen to involve more than a Study Skills approach, that emphasises surface language features, structure, and accuracy; it involves more of an Academic Socialisation approach, understanding different writing genres and Academic Literacies approach, with close attention to socio-cultural and political influences (Lea, 2004; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006). This concept of an evolving writing pedagogy will support their students' academic literacy socialisation, teach them how to identify what to write and how to write in different contexts so that they can develop acceptable authorial voice in alignment with the rhetorical conventions in their own contexts (Duff, 2007; Friedman, 2019).

CONCLUSION

Through their discussion in the focus group, the students co-constructed the characteristics of postgraduate academic writing and the embedded authorial voice as operating in the academic community in Australia. They acknowledged the value of learning how to write in this context, seeing the experience as contributing to their academic identities. They also emphasised the political and sociocultural influences on academic writing and on the teaching of writing, which requires rhetorical adaptation. They also clarified their understanding of the concept of authorial voice, focusing on how voice is dialogically and critically formed and structured in texts. The findings from this focus group discussion have made a rich contribution to my analysis of the students' understanding of the development and use of authorial voice in academic writing, of the rhetorical conventions of postgraduate academic writing in Australia, and of the self-images of international postgraduate students as being rhetorically competent, agentive, and strategic writers.

Chapter Nine. Returning to Conceptualising International Postgraduate Students' Authorial Voice in Academic Writing in Australia

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is the 'wrap-up' of this thesis in which I conceptualise authorial voice in postgraduate academic writing from the perspectives and experiences of international students in a postgraduate program in Australia. The information presented in this chapter is synthesised from both phases of the study. It presents an overview of the findings and a summative discussion of the research questions raised in this study as follows:

1. What are the rhetorical conventions of academic writing in a postgraduate course in Australia?
2. How do the international postgraduate students present their voice in academic writing at the initial and subsequent stages in the course?
    - What guides or influences the international postgraduate students' presentation of voice?
    - How does the lecturer evaluate the international postgraduate students' voice?
3. What are international postgraduate students' perspectives on the rhetoric of postgraduate academic written discourse in Australia?

In answering these questions, I firstly revisit the key findings and concepts identified previously in the study to illustrate the conceptualisation of authorial voice in postgraduate writing in Australia. I also draw a conclusion about the scholarly images of international postgraduate students in this context as they navigate their trajectories to becoming successful academic writers. I then highlight the contributions of the study in relation to theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical dimensions not only of teaching and learning but also of research methodology and policy implementation in higher education to assist international students in writing for academic success. What the study has not aimed to achieve will be also pinpointed and turned into suggested directions for future research. My final message in this thesis relates to the valorisation of the need to conceptualise authorial voice in academic writing, which is what this study sets out to achieve.

WHAT HAS BEEN FOUND IN THIS STUDY?

In this section, I summarise the key findings from both phases of the study and provide an overall discussion of the findings to answer the research questions presented in the previous section. From the findings, I argue that it is necessary to understand the rhetorical conventions of writing in different contexts as these conventions frame how students navigate writing performance and projection of authorial voice. I also contend that international students can - and do - recognise and align with these conventions to succeed in academic writing in Australia. I therefore revisit (i) the rhetorical conventions of postgraduate academic writing in Australia, (ii) the students' perspectives on their authorial voice in texts, (iii) the students' reflections on rhetorical negotiation and mediation for successful writing and voice, and eventually (iv) the students' development of their rhetorical competence and scholarly identities in Australia.

The rhetorical conventions of postgraduate academic writing from the students' experiences in Australia

The investigation into rhetorical conventions in a writing context is necessary because these conventions represent the dominant discourse of an academic community which members are required to comply with (Connor, 2008). These are the conventions which determine what to write and how to write in accordance with the relevant contextual norms; and they guide both the performance and the assessment of voice in writing. In this section, I revisit the rhetorical conventions associated with the *Innovations in Education* course, indicating how I identify them. They are also found to determine how writing and the embedded authorial voice are presented so that student writers are acknowledged as fully-fledged members of their academic communities. These conventions were reiterated by the students in the focus group discussion.

From the findings in both phases of the study, I posit that the rhetorical conventions of academic writing at postgraduate level identified in this study accord with the Australian Qualifications Framework (2013) for knowledge and skills at postgraduate level and the disciplinary characteristics of Education. In other words, these conventions are contextually conditioned and discipline-based. To recap, this study is situated in an Education postgraduate program in an Australian university; the rhetorical conventions of writing in this program are essentially the characteristics of academic writing at postgraduate level in the discipline of Education in general.

Specifically, the conventions require critical engagement with the literature for the purpose of acquiring knowledge about specified topics, identification of any identified gaps in current knowledge, and a proposal for well-justified pedagogical implications which are relevant to specific contexts; all of these processes combine to form an argument that must be convincingly projected in the written text. Literature in the educational field provides students with a range of information relating to different teaching approaches. The students are then tasked with identifying which approaches are appropriate in specific teaching contexts, and justifying how and why these approaches should be implemented. This justification forms the students' propositions in written assignments. As academic writing is contextually and disciplinarily inter-dependent, students' writing and embedded authorial voice need to be examined in relation to the particular demands imposed in particular contexts (Connor, 2008; Hyland, 2013; Prior, 1998), such as an educational course or program.

Academic writing at postgraduate level requires students to construct convincing propositions, which involves substantial and critical engagement with the disciplinary literature. In Chapter Five, it was shown that critical and substantial engagement with the literature involves the selection of literature relevant to the writing topic and demonstrated knowledge of advancements in the field. Knowledge gained from this engagement with relevant literature is then used to propose effective pedagogical implications to solve context-based problems. The requirement of critical engagement to form and justify an argument to convince readers indicates the central role of logical literature-informed reasoning (Logos) in academic discourse, which has been supported by rhetorical theories as the central element of persuasive academic discourse (Braet, 1992; Herrick, 2016; Samuels, 2020). It is this capacity to reason that demonstrates writers' or rhetors' credibility (Ethos), evidenced in their substantial knowledge of relevant fields, which constitutes proof of intellectual ability and legitimacy, and improves the quality of their rhetorical discourse.

Further to their substantial engagement with the literature to successfully propose pedagogical implications, students are then expected to communicate this information to readers effectively, which is another feature of their credibility (Ethos). As new members of the academic community, students are expected to master the discourse, to speak in a way that is recognised by other members of the community (Hyland, 2013; Li & Deng, 2019). The conventions of academic writing have been extensively analysed and demonstrated; this study has elected to focus particularly on the appropriate use of disciplinary language, cohesion and coherence, and referencing. These have been seen to be particularly challenging features for the students in this study. Using disciplinary language appropriately proves writers' credibility as speakers of the language of the community. Inaccurate use of language devalues their academic identities, suggesting insufficient engagement with the field and failure to acquire the relevant linguistic 'dress code' (Dressen-Hammouda, 2008). Cohesion and coherence are needed for effective communication of propositions to readers (Thompson, 2012). This study has identified the importance of effective text organisation in relation to such effective communication of ideas; for example, by carefully structuring a single paragraph, or a text with multiple paragraphs. In addition, referencing has also been extensively discussed as a key element of academic writing. Reporting verbs, for example, should be consciously and rhetorically used to indicate student writers' interpretations of claims made in the literature by other researchers in the field (Bloch, 2010; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). It was shown in this study that students may randomly select reporting verbs to complete their sentences in order to avoid repetition rather than being aware of the rhetorical functions of these verbs.

In summary, the findings in this study have confirmed that different writing contexts impose different rhetorical conventions on writers. This is evidenced in the students' elaborations on the differences in rhetorical expectations in their home contexts and in Australia as well as the need for a re-adaptation upon their return to their home countries. In addition, rhetorical expectations are discipline-based, for example, Madison's recognition of the different expectations between the reports she wrote for Business and the Steel Industry and the assignments in her postgraduate Education course. This finding reminds us of the inter-connectedness of *contexts of culture* and *contexts of situation* (Halliday, 1999; Halliday & Hasan, 1985), as well as of the values of *large culture* and *small culture* (Holliday, 1999, 2010, 2016). These concepts are of particular relevance to the students in this study, as they negotiate their way between their experience of the *large culture* of their postgraduate experience in the academic culture of Australia and the expectations of the *small culture* (Holliday, 1999, 2010) of the immediate writing situation (the assignments) in a particular academic course (the *Innovations in Education* course) (Ene et al., 2019). Intercultural Rhetoric (Connor, 2008) and the Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion (Braet, 1992; Herrick, 2016; Samuels, 2020) provide a framework to investigate and understand how contextual conditions influence texts production. These findings strengthen understanding of the need for students to understand the rhetorical conventions associated with specific academic writing tasks in order to complete the tasks successfully. The students in this study were observed to critically engage with the disciplinary literature, to acquire sufficient knowledge to propose pedagogical implications, and to communicate these implications effectively, thereby establishing their credibility and legitimising their authorial voice in their written texts.

Authorial voice in postgraduate academic writing: Critical stance and self-representation in alignment with rhetorical expectations

The discussion of authorial voice in this section follows on from the characteristics of postgraduate academic writing because the characteristics are highly influential in shaping authorial voice: how it is developed, articulated, and successfully ‘heard’ by readers. This study has undertaken a deep conceptualisation of authorial voice in postgraduate academic writing, foregrounding the concept of voice as complex, multifaceted and multi-dimensional. My findings suggest four key elements of authorial voice: (i) the linguistic dimension, (ii) textual organisation, (iii) stance and writers’ self-representations, and (iv) alignment with contextual rhetorical expectations.

Firstly, drawing on previous research (Bowden, 1995; Hyland, 2005; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Morton & Storch, 2019), it is important to define voice as being **linguistically presented**. In this study I have identified several linguistic categories of voice associated with the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). These include first-person pronouns, evaluative lexis, modalities, disciplinary lexis, and multi-syllabic words. Voice is self-evidently heavily language-oriented; however, I have argued that analysis of language features alone is insufficient to explore or explain voice in texts; that it is also important to consider the complexities of the writing process, the influence of context, and the identity and experience of the writers and readers. Postgraduate students in this study came from different socio-historical backgrounds, which had shaped their understanding of what to write and how to write (Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Wette, 2021). This understanding is then adjusted through awareness that the students’ knowledge of writing is subject to change through their interactions with different discourses in different contexts, and it becomes clear that beliefs about writing are complicated and dynamic (Connor, 2008). Analysis of students’ written texts needs therefore to be accompanied by understanding of the writers’ decision-making practices in the writing process (Lillis, 2008; Morton & Storch, 2019; Polio & Friedman, 2017). The data collected from the *talk around texts* sessions with the student writers in this study reveal different perspectives on language features and the process of text construction in relation to the self-positioning model. For example, Veronica understands how the self-reference pronoun “I” can represent different levels of authority within the same text (see Chapter Six). It is important to understand that the underpinning principles of language use as understood and operationalised by student writers are flexible and unstable.

Secondly, what seems to be missing in current literature is recognition of the role of **textual organisation** in shaping voice, something which the participants in this study referred to several times. While the element of textual positioning in the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) focuses on the linguistic dimension, such as the use of multi-syllabic words, complex grammatical forms, and other semiotic features, in this study I have also focused on how voice is constituted via textual structuring. For example, voice can be inserted through the forming of the topic sentence of a paragraph, the summative statement that encapsulates the writer’s accumulated knowledge from their critical engagement with the literature, and which is then followed by supporting evidence. A deductive textual structure was seen to be preferred by the students in the study, and also by the lecturer who prioritised the inclusion of voice in the topic sentence as a way of establishing the necessary authority to guide the readers into the paragraph. The students also valued a combination of both deductive and inductive organisation to showcase their authorial voice, by having an introduction and a conclusion to preview and review the ideas presented in the texts; this is a strategy recommended by Thompson (2012) for effective communication of propositions. In terms of textual organisation, voice functions as the architect of the text, providing guidance and communicating the views of the writers. This understanding broadens the discussion of how writers learn to represent themselves in texts, extending on the more specifically linguistic focus of previous research (Abdi & Farrokhi, 2015; Brown, 2015; Tang & John, 1999).

Another important element of the analysis of participants’ commentaries in this study relates to the relationship between voice and **stance** (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Li & Deng, 2019; Xie, 2020) The difference between voice and stance is that voice indexes and engages more with the ideologies of the respective discourse community; while stance is more simply defined as a writer’s perspectives, voice encompasses these perspectives but also extends to other rhetorical features, such as “the way writers structure arguments, negotiate claims, refer to a literature, and criticize prior work, all of which are to be recognized by readers as legitimate and authoritative” (Li & Deng, 2019, p. 329). In this sense voice can be understood as being related to *critical stance* (Hyland, 2005; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Tai et al., 2018; Xie, 2020), as ‘having something to say’ (Ivanič & Camps, 2001), reflecting writers’ perspectives and evaluative judgements towards the subject of their writing - an outcome of their critical engagement and evaluation of the literature, their ability to identify the value or the inadequacy of current knowledge, and to address ways of rectifying any perceived ‘gap’. Thus, authorial voice emphasises both *averral* and *attribution* (Thompson, 2012). The former refers to writers’ standpoints towards the topics being discussed, while the latter indicates that these standpoints are formed by learning from and responding to the antecedent ‘authorial voice’ in the literature. These two elements are both required in postgraduate academic writing to demonstrate students’ acquisition of substantial disciplinary knowledge and their ability to present their propositions and convince their readers (Thompson, 2012). Evaluating literature in order to establish a stance towards issues represents a form of a dialogue between writers and between writers and readers, which resonates with the response-inviting characteristic of rhetorical discourse (Herrick, 2016).

In addition to stance, voice also resonates with and contributes to writers’ **self-representation** in the way that writers decide how their stance should be presented in their writing to be accepted by readers in the discourse community. This study was situated in an Education postgraduate program; therefore, stance involved the student writers’ identification of pedagogical problems and justifications of implications for specific teaching contexts; and it resulted from critical engagement with the literature to provide appropriate evidence, effective communication and compliance with the required writing conventions. In this way, writers are able to demonstrate their credibility, to improve the persuasiveness of their voice to convince their readers, and to claim membership in the respective discourse communities (Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Identifying voice as writers’ self-representation also supports the idea of voice as “sensing a person behind the written words” (Bowden, 1999, pp. 97–98, as cited in Hirvela & Belcher, 2001, p. 105), and of being the “amalgamative effects of the use of discursive and non-discursive features” on readers (Matsuda, 2001, p. 40). These self-representations are obviously created by the writers themselves, determining the impression of them formed by readers responding to the discursive and non-discursive practices embedded in the texts in the relevant discipline, making voice discipline-based (Dressen-Hammouda, 2014; Wette, 2021).

Fourthly, while writers shape their self-representations or voice in texts in accordance with the ideologies or **rhetorical expectations** of their respective discourse communities, the process of making specific decisions about constructing and projecting this voice is complicated. The students in this study were seen to have an already established academic voice shaped by the knowledge of academic writing conventions acquired in their socio-historical backgrounds in their first language (Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Ivanič & Camps, 2001). Finding themselves in a new rhetorical context meant that they had to learn new ways of writing as required in the new context. As evidenced in the students' commentaries, they typically find themselves at the crossroads of different rhetorical conventions, which creates tensions in their writing process. In other words, new rhetorical values are *ascribed* to writers so that they can act like other members of their communities (Gee, 2000). Successful adherence to the community's values will form their social identities and their ability to write like other in-group members, to be recognised in academic communities, to successfully create their *achieved* identity (Gee, 2000). When discussing the concepts of *self* and *identity*, Ivanič (1998) identifies different forms of self that writers may construct, such as their autobiographical self, their discoursal self, their self as author, and other possibilities for selfhood. These forms of different selves suggest the complexity of writers' self-representation in their writing. These identities are interrelated, and they inevitably involve conflict; conflict between the personal and the social identities that are associated with different genres and different discourse communities. This conflict was discerned in how Veronica struggled with using her personal experience as a legitimate 'knower' and the evidence-based form of academic writing required in the genre of postgraduate assignments.

In relation to contextual rhetorical conventions, this study has extended the understanding of voice as being deeply situational. Different discourse communities impose different requirements on how voice should be presented so that it is heard. Writers need to engage in rhetorical negotiation and adapt to conventions in different writing situations, presenting their voice in alignment with the ideologies of the communities, specific situations, and the nature of the audience for which their voice must be audible (Braet, 1992; Connor, 2008; Herrick, 2016; Miller, 1999). Voice is therefore seen to be dialogic, between the social and the personal dimensions of writers in their socialisation and interaction with other members of their writing community.

In summary, student writers need to be adaptive and reflexive in their adoption of and adaptation to the values of the different social groups in which they are interacting. Therefore, the identities - and the voice - that they learn to construct and project in their written texts are the outcomes of rhetorical negotiation of the misalignments between the personal and the social. As demonstrated in this study, however, these values are subject to change in both directions, as writers with distinctive individual identities may contribute to enriching the shared collective values by integrating their personal values into the discourse of their social groups and writing communities.

Rhetorical negotiation and mediation for voice

This study about voice has confirmed the complexity of voice in academic writing. Student writers' interactions with rhetorical conventions in different contexts produce the phenomenon of multiple voices and identities (Ivanič, 1994, 1998, 2004). Rhetorical negotiation and adaptation is an established principle of Intercultural Rhetoric (Connor, 2008; Ene et al., 2019), but these processes need further explication as they are inadequately addressed in current literature. Rhetorical negotiation involves challenges to previously established voice and a form of reconstruction required to be heard in the new context. While this can be difficult, having multiple identities allows students to adapt to and function in different situations for successful self-representation as legitimate members of different discourse communities (Hyland, 2013; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Tran, 2011b).

This study has elaborated on how rhetorical negotiation and adaptation take place in different ways. More specifically, these two processes involve surface, commitment, and hybrid forms (Tran, 2011b). Students may firstly perceive some sense of obligation, or even coercion, to follow the specified writing demands, such as the use of literature to support an argument while disregarding their personal experience as legitimate knowledge; this is surface adaptation. They subsequently come to understand the values of the rhetorical conventions specified in academic writing at postgraduate level and commit to aligning with these. Then, operating at a higher level, they are able to identify contrasting conventions in their different writing contexts, typically between their home contexts and the Australian context, and develop a hybrid form whereby they integrate their existing understanding of academic writing with the conventions of the new context. For example, as the concept of voice in this study is related to stance and needs to be literature-informed, how the students use and acknowledge literature to support their own voice, may be presented in hybrid form. Veronica, for example, included literature-informed evidence to support her personal experience (see Chapter Seven); and Tina suggested an acknowledgement of reading sources despite the dissonance of APA referencing style for Vietnamese writers, as she saw the possibility of this form of hybrid referencing practice to be applicable in her home context to begin to introduce the idea of academic integrity (see Chapter Eight). This hybrid approach suggests the potential usefulness of progressing learners towards an in-between writing style (Starks & Nicholas, 2020). Students adhere to the evidence-based principle of academic writing, but also maintain the persona formed by their sociocultural and historical backgrounds.

While Intercultural Rhetoric emphasises rhetorical negotiation as the responsibility of writers, I argue for a two-way model of negotiation, or ‘win-win’ negotiation (Arvanitis & Karampatzos, 2011), in which all agents involved in the negotiation (e.g., students and lecturer) are responsible for achieving consensus on what to write and how to write. More specifically, while students engage in rhetorical negotiation by adapting to the conventions embedded in their writing contexts, lecturers, as the other agents, engage in their form of negotiation by clarifying and explaining the conventions to the students through the use of different instructional tools. In this way, rhetorical negotiation takes place between the different parties, representing a “transcultural disposition to language use and willingness to understand each other in a given space” (Lee & Canagarajah, 2019, p. 25). This space can be conceptualised as a contact zone (Canagarajah & Matsumoto, 2017) in which students and lecturers come into contact and negotiate in the unpacking of the discourse of the community and of what is involved in learning how to adhere to it. Through such negotiation students are initiated into the rhetorical expectations of the academic setting and are able to successfully respond to these expectations. In turn, lecturers interpret students’ writing, recognise the students’ challenges, learn more about the students’ previous rhetorical experience, and offer necessary mediation to introduce them to their academic communities as legitimate members.

Because rhetorical negotiation is two-way and is undertaken by both lecturers and students, I consider mediation as a form of rhetorical negotiation, between lecturers as more experienced members in disciplinary communities interacting with the less experienced student writers, teaching the community writing norms and negotiating how writing should be presented. In this way, lecturers initiate the students into the expected norms which are foundational to academic writing at postgraduate level; and, importantly, they accept students' perspectives, for example relating to flexible language use in texts and their construction of argument drawing on personal experience. The data from conversations with the students in this study show how they adopt distinctive writing styles, for example through the use of personal experience, first person pronouns, and tenses, and that this can be accepted, while requisites for academic writing at postgraduate level - such as evidence-based argument – are still adhered to (see Chapter Six). Meanwhile, the lecturer's acknowledgement of students' socio-historically constructed writing orientation and conventions represents her adaptation to their writing, which represents her contribution to the act of rhetorical negotiation conducted between them.

I have emphasised the importance of such dialogic rhetorical negotiation between students and lecturers as an important dimension of the role of mediation provided by experienced members (e.g, lecturers and peers) to support student writers' rhetorical negotiation for successful writing. They are thus helped to understand and adhere to the rhetorical values of their communities, and to self-categorise as in-group members (Connor, 2008; Ene et al., 2019). As noted previously, mediation from more experienced writers and members of discourse communities is crucial if students are to develop acceptable authorial voice (Kettle & Ryan, 2018; Lantolf, 2000). The mediation in this study is offered by lecturers, peers, institutional support services, and technology-based support. It includes the provision and discussion of course materials, including writing exemplars, and feedback, which has been shown to be successfully interpreted by the students themselves without consultation with lecturers, as previous studies usually recommend (Han & Hyland, 2019; Kettle & Ryan, 2018). Through such feedback, students learn what to write and how to write not only in their current assignments but they also take the newly acquired knowledge from feedback to future assignments of similar nature, transforming feedback into feedforward (Fazel & Ali, 2022).

Rhetorically competent international postgraduate student writers

While different rhetorical conventions of writing in different contexts are found challenging, as multilingual-multicultural writers, international students are still able to write as required by readers in their communities. Through the students' successful identification of rhetorical conventions and articulation of authorial voice in their writing, the study has identified trajectories they have followed to become successful academic writers at the Australian university. Understanding this trajectory assists in re-shaping our understanding of international postgraduate students and their multicompetences in academic writing. What I therefore argue in conclusion is that international students are capable of developing rhetorical competence, that they are reflexive, adaptive, and agentive in recognising and aligning with rhetorical conventions in their writing contexts.

To summarise, the international postgraduate students in this study are observed to be reflexive in their discernment, deliberation, and dedication to agentively adapt to the rhetorical conventions required in their current writing context to achieve their desired outcomes. They have shown themselves to be capable of shaping their perceptions of what counts as knowledge in academic writing and of how this knowledge should be presented in text form (see Chapter Seven). Such perceptions are clearly subject to challenge and change following their immersion in different writing situations where they are required to adapt and reshape their understanding of academic writing. Some researchers have focused on the problems caused by these challenges of adaptation (Park, 2013; Phan, 2011; Viete & Phan, 2007; Wette, 2021). Indeed the theory of Contrastive Rhetoric is itself a seminal theory that identifies the difficulties involved in producing successful writing in another language (Kaplan, 1966). Nonetheless, the students in this study proved themselves to be agentive in recognising that learning how to write in a new context involves an adaptation of their knowledge. Instead of erasing or phasing out their pre-existing beliefs and views of writing, formed in their sociocultural and historical backgrounds (see Chapters Seven and Eight), they demonstrate a process of hybrid adaptation in which they incorporate their pre-existing knowledge and beliefs of writing with the rhetorical conventions associated with the new academic context. They achieve rhetorical alignment and also maintain their self-representation. Different terms have been used to capture the nature of such adaptation, such as the *third space* (Kramsch & Uryu, 2011), the *in-betweenness* (Starks & Nicholas, 2020), or *hybrid adaptation* (Tran, 2011b). All these descriptors capture in different ways the nexus between their multiple identities and voice and interactions between the personal and the social.

Students' performance in interpreting and adhering to the dominant discourse and drawing on their linguistic and cultural repertoires potentially contributes to the creation of new practices in their respective communities (Lee & Canagarajah, 2019). Such new practices can be seen to include how referencing in the students' home contexts can change to reflect their new understanding of referencing conventions in Australia. This study has therefore identified evidence of agency and decisiveness in the international students' writing. While the students are committed to adaptation to rhetorical conventions in different contexts, following their understanding of the need for this alignment (Tran, 2011b), it is important to recognise the complex, dynamic and open nature of their multiple identities' perspective (Connor, 2008; Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Ivanič & Camps, 2001).

It has been clearly evidenced in this study that international postgraduate students are capable of using their discursive and non-discursive repertoires - which are constantly changing – to understand and align with required conventions (Matsuda, 2001). Because of the complexities involved in the sociocultural-historical construction of identity, international postgraduate students have their own distinctive ways of rhetorical adaptation and developing writing performance. This variation can be seen in how they interpret rhetorical conventions, make use of different strategies, and decide on their self-representation in texts. Through such reflexivity, agency, and adaptation to writing norms in different contexts, the students demonstrate their multicompetence in relation to writing and intercultural rhetoric, including identity formation, as outcomes of their Australian experience. This study consequently contributes to the long-standing debate around essentialist and deficit views of international students, that commonly misconceptualise them as being necessarily disadvantaged in entering their new academic communities and that have been challenged (Chalmers & Volet, 1997; Grimshaw, 2007; Kettle, 2017).

WHAT CAN BE CONCLUDED FROM THESE FINDINGS?

Authorial voice captures writers' critical stances towards the subjects they are writing about; these stances need to be critically formed through substantial engagement with relevant literature. Authorial voice is writers' self-representation in texts, which too is socioculturally and disciplinarily determined, linguistically performed, and rhetorically structured, and is mediated by agents and discourses of relevant fields. Authorial voice therefore represents writers' presence through means of propositions, stances, and arguments made in texts. This representation necessarily accords with the ideologies of the respective discourse communities which legitimise the memberships of writers by requiring them to speak and write like community members. While these conclusions on voice resonate with what the current literature has claimed (Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Li & Deng, 2019; Tardy, 2016), the highlighted aspect of voice in this study is the process of rhetorical negotiation, as termed in Intercultural Rhetoric theory and used widely in previous research. However, rhetorical negotiation seems to be taken for granted in the existing literature. On the other hand, this study argued that for authorial voice to be heard, intensive negotiation needs to be undertaken by the writer, which involves surface, committed, and hybrid forms of adaptation (Tran, 2011b). The decision on which forms of adaptation to implement relies on the writers' perspectives on writing, which in turn are shaped by their sociocultural-historical backgrounds and their exposure to the discourses of their fields as manifested in writing situations. Judgements on how to adapt, and on the extent of this adaptation, require negotiation between the writers and other agents in their writing contexts to decide how to perform the necessary rhetorical adaptation.

While performing rhetorical adaptation, students' writing processes are mediated by more experienced members in the communities and by the discourses that distribute the rhetorical conventions to the students. The students themselves are agentive and decisive actors, who determine how to adapt to the rhetorical conventions in the new contexts, drawing on writing strategies and resources to simultaneously align with the prevailing writing requirements while also maintaining their socio-historically-constructed identities. In this way students construct multiple identities and voices, and reshape their own writing competence as well, potentially, as the discourse of academic writing in their discourse communities. The knowledge constructed from their sociocultural and historical backgrounds is identified not as a detriment but as a support, which helps them negotiate the complexities and diversities of rhetorical conventions in their current writing situations (Halliday, 1999; Halliday & Hasan, 1985). Their successes in academic writing in different contexts construct their identities as multicompetent writers who are both linguistically and pragmatically competent (Chen, 2020). This multicompetence challenges the ethnocentric view and the deficit conceptualisation of international students as being disadvantaged by their pre-existing beliefs and understandings of writing when practicing writing in a new context.

The integration of a range of concepts and theories to explore writing and voice in this study has been helpful in constructing a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of the writing process: the lexicogrammatical resources as well as the contextualised academic, cultural and rhetorical expectations. The findings of this study further propose a re-consideration and extension of the conceptual framework presented in

Chapter Three. In this new model (Figure 9.1), in addition to the language features associated with the expression of voice, I emphasise the need to understand how international postgraduate student writers' negotiate the rhetorical conventions of their new academic context, particularly in relation to demonstration of authorial voice in texts (see the left blue arrow as the addition to the diagram from earlier chapter). Writers' acquisition of rhetorical conventions, and their responses to these conventions, do not happen in a vacuum. They involve negotiation, mediation, and reflexivity to successfully comply with the conventions (see the right blue arrow as addition to the diagram from earlier chapter). Intercultural Rhetoric proposes valuable principles regarding the examination of texts in contexts, cultural complexity and dynamism, and rhetorical negotiation (Connor, 2008). I argue that academic writing - as the construction of text - needs to be understood with greater appreciation of the negotiation which takes place within the *immediate* situations in which the writing takes place. In addition, I argue that it is crucial to understand that writers hold a complexity of beliefs which are subject to change, due to constant interaction with and exposure to different conventions, views and practices. Rhetorical negotiation and adaptation are therefore necessary and can be achieved with appropriate mediation from more experienced agents, and through the reflexivity of writers themselves to find ways to align with and incorporate the conventions.

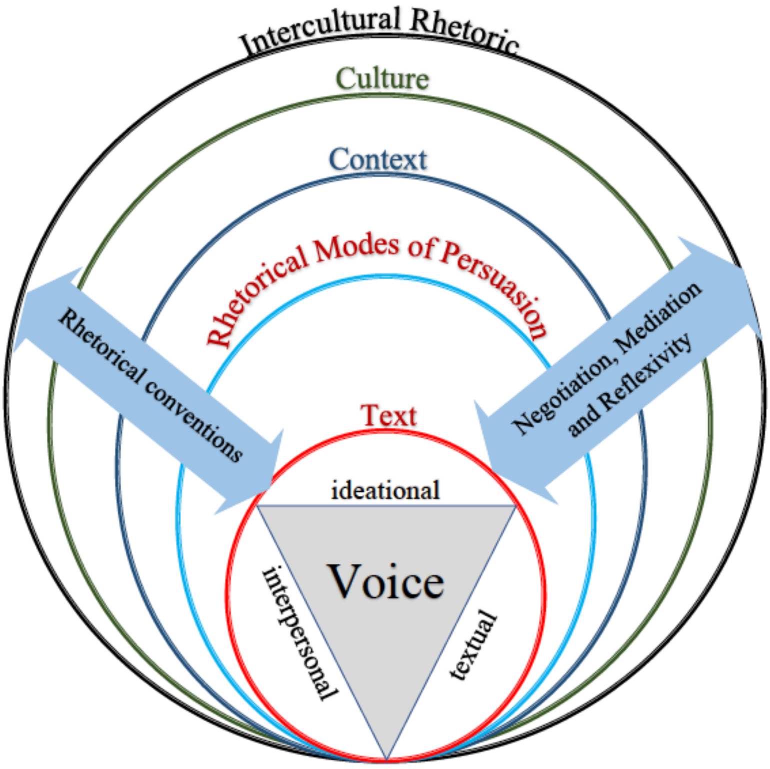

Intercultural Rhetoric
Culture
Context
Rhetorical Modes of Persuasion
Rhetorical conventions
Negotiation, Mediation and Reflexivity
Text
ideational
Voice
interpersonal
textual

Figure 9.1. The modified conceptual framework.

WHAT DOES THIS STUDY CONTRIBUTE?

In this section, I present the theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical contributions of the study to enriching the scholarship related to academic writing and the development of authorial voice by international postgraduate students. I explain how future academic writing and voice could be investigated through the conceptual framework developed in this study. Contributions to teaching and to the issue of evaluating academic writing and authorial voice are identified. I also outline the implications for understanding, researching, and teaching academic writing and voice with recommendations for practice.

Theoretical contributions

Authorial voice in academic writing has been identified as a loosely defined concept which constantly invites further exploration. This study has (re)conceptualised authorial voice and captured the complex linguistic, sociocultural, and rhetorical dimensions that construct authorial voice in written texts. This conceptualisation of voice is comprehensive as it takes into account the language features and text structure that realise voice, and the agents and discourses that represent the rhetorical conventions that govern its performance. The study has also foregrounded the process of rhetorical negotiation and adaptation that international postgraduate students undertake in their trajectories to becoming successful writers and recognised members in their respective discourse communities. I further highlight the finding on the difference between voice and stance, which has long been taken for granted and the terms often used interchangeably. I highlight how voice incorporates stance as having something to say, but is broader and more consequential, encompassing the demands of the ideologies of the communities or contexts where the writing takes place; thus voice acknowledges the writers' self-representation in consent and conformity with the ideologies of the discourse community.

This study notably contributes to our understanding of the process of writing, the decision-making acts, the strategies, and the resources that are valuable to aid the construction and performance of authorial voice in texts. Intercultural Rhetoric emphasises the concepts of rhetorical negotiation and adaptation (Connor, 2008), but these aspects remain vague as limited research has been conducted on how such negotiation and adaptation actually occurs. In this study, I have contributed new knowledge to the field by clarifying the relationship between texts and contexts, that is, how a writing context imposes its rhetorical conventions as the norms with which writers must comply. Students are obliged to acquire and comply with the conventions for successful writing and for the projection of audible authorial voice. This study has also identified how students transition from being unaware of the rhetorical conventions of postgraduate academic writing to becoming more aware, strategic, and adaptive to these conventions. By tracking the students' improved academic writing performance, this study has added to current arguments against the deficit model that positions international students as unable to write successfully due to the different rhetorical conventions of their educational backgrounds. This study argues for seeing international students as rhetorically competent writers, who can acquire new ways to align with the dominant discourse of their postgraduate courses, while also maintaining their socioculturally-historically constructed identities; and potentially contributing to broader definitions and understandings of academic literacy practices. In these various ways, I see this study as contributing to understanding of the development of writing multi-competencies in overseas postgraduate study experience.

Methodological contributions

Regarding methodological contributions, I believe that future research on voice can make use of the multi-dimensional analytical and theoretical frameworks that have been used and modified in this study. I have identified how authorial voice is linguistically performed and logically structured. The linguistic features are analysed following the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) which utilises and presents relatively comprehensive linguistic categories for identifying voice in texts. From the findings from both text analyses and text-based interviews, these linguistic features have been explored, clarifying the meaning of use of these features in texts and eliciting different views of their meanings generated by previous research (Brown, 2015; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Tang & John, 1999). For example, the first-person reference does not always demonstrate authoritativeness and assertiveness; it can also reflect hesitancy, depending on how a writer perceives or expresses their power relationship towards their readers (see Chapter Six). As has also been established, textual organisation is essential to effectively demonstrate the writer's voice but is neglected in current literature. This study has therefore shown how the structuring of a paragraph and texts with multiple paragraphs can assist writers' expression and readers' recognition of voice. The contributions of the study to wider analytical frameworks are therefore significant in terms of helping future research to explore voice more thoroughly, from the perspectives of both language use and text structure.

Through identifying writing as a process of acquiring and developing culturally-contextualised social practices, this study has indicated that text analysis alone is clearly insufficient for developing in-depth understanding of authorial voice. Analysis of students' texts needs to include attention to the rhetorical conventions of writing contexts because these conventions guide how texts and authorial voice are produced. As noted, these rhetorical conventions are identified through course materials focusing on marking criteria, task sheets, exemplars, and lecturers' feedback and consultation. Importantly, text analysis needs to be complemented by other sources of information, such as interviews with the writers and the examination of writing drafts that show writers' decisions and development of writing throughout the process. Interviews with writers and readers in this study have been shown to help understand this process, to gain insight to the meanings of the language and textual structures, to the meaning-making intentions of the writers. While frameworks to linguistic analysis of writing are available from previous research, it is necessary to also recognise the "person behind the written words" (Bowden, 1999, pp. 97–98, as cited in Hirvela & Belcher, 2001, p. 105), given the contradictions identified between writers' perspectives and linguistic frameworks in relation to the making of meaning and the expression of voice. I propose a combination of text analysis and text-based interviews when researching writing, as exemplified in this study. Such an approach to researching writing would potentially improve understanding of the complexity of the writing process and of the construction of the writer's voice.

Pedagogical contributions

The findings show that international postgraduate students undergo a complicated and challenging process in developing their writing style to achieve academic success and successful projection of their authorial voice. As newcomers to the discourse communities of academic courses they may not initially be aware of the dominant discourse they need to comply with. It is vital, therefore, for that discourse community to scaffold incoming students, to teach them how to be successful in the course, especially in relation to their written assignments, which are the primary form of assessment (Hyland, 2013; Kettle & Luke, 2013; Paltridge, 2004; Wette, 2021).

Firstly, therefore, it is necessary to acknowledge the need for explicit teaching and modelling of rhetorical conventions and expectations. This is important given that assessment in this course determines students' individual achievement and credibility as legitimate members of the academic community. Assessment is "situated within personal and professional histories such as discipline knowledge, university assessment policy, and previous experiences with assessment and judgement-making" (Beutel et al., 2017, p. 6). As the experienced members of the academic community, lecturers need to find appropriate ways of inducting their students into the expectations of the course including creating shared understandings of marking criteria so that students are aware of what to write and how to write in specific contexts (Beutel et al., 2017). This study has clarified the value of different mediation tools (e.g., assignment guidelines, marking criteria, feedback, exemplars, and teacher-student consultation) and identified agents (e.g. lecturers, peers, writing support services) involved in supporting students' rhetorical negotiation. The tools are used with dialogical approaches, via which students are able to discuss the effectiveness and any concerns about them, and to strengthen their conceptualisation of how to write successfully in postgraduate courses. Lecturer-student consultations are necessary to ensure shared understanding of the criteria applied to writing in a social context. Apart from lecturers' support, other sources of help include peers and institutional writing support services. Their advice is useful, but in relation to peer support it has been shown that their advice may not be as valuable as that of lecturers, due to different qualifications and disciplinary experience and expertise. However, if being critically reviewed, peer feedback can be helpful. Veronica provided an example of seeking help from different peers depending on their expertise as well as of critically reviewing the values of peer feedback. Having opportunities to interact with others and access to appropriate mediation tools assists students to acquire and align with dominant discourses. In particular, institutional support is needed to build students' understanding of the rhetorical conventions and expectations in their new academic context; preparation courses before enrolment in postgraduate programs would be useful.

Some students in this study did enrol in English Pathway courses before entering their postgraduate programs. Writing research and evidence-based papers is heavily discipline-based, so students need to be well-informed of "complex and diverse written genres, research purposes, rhetorical conventions, language functions and cultural norms" in their particular disciplines and writing contexts (Bastalich et al., 2014, p. 373). While English Pathway courses introduce students to the general discourse of postgraduate academic writing, these courses should be designed in accordance with the disciplines that the students will be studying in. Discipline-based course design would therefore be desirable, to bring the students closer to the expected norms of their respective areas (Marr & Mahmood, 2021; Wette, 2021). Secondly, the importance of being aware of the students' transition from undergraduate to postgraduate levels and between different educational contexts is emphasised by the lecturer in this study (see Chapter Five). This awareness of transitions means that institutions need to be suitably well-prepared with relevant resources (e.g., preparation courses, orientation programs, academic support services) to support students in a timely and sufficient manner. To illustrate, the students in this study argued the case for discipline-based preparation courses, emphasising the value of feedback from peers and writing services. Such resources will assist students to make use of all possible mediation tools and agents at their institutions to ensure successful writing.

It is also crucial to recognise the pedagogical power of understanding academic writing as performance in a culturally-situated context, and that international students are already multilingual-multicultural writers. While existing literature tends to argue the need for students' writing to align with the dominant discourses of academic communities (Hyland, 2013; Kettle & Luke, 2013; Kettle & Ryan, 2018; Wette, 2021), the potential contributions of international postgraduate students as multilingual-multicultural writers are worthy of both pedagogical and institutional consideration. Being able to interact with their lecturers and peers allows students to practice their legitimate peripheral participation in the social context of academe and interact with members of their discourse community so that they can eventually act in the same way.

While there is the risk that newcomers in a discourse community may have difficulty in aligning themselves with disciplinary expectations, there is also the potential within the academic contact zone that the newcomers can contribute to reshaping of these norms and opening up new values and academic ways of being. In other words, international students such as those in this study bring their already formed academic writing styles and voice to the new academic context, and can potentially extend and complement existing models of scholarly writing and voice. It has been noted that conducting lecturer-student consultations about rhetorical conventions is a form of rhetorical negotiation which can support students' success in academic writing. Through such consultations, lecturers can learn how students interpret assessment criteria through reference to their existing repertoire of related knowledge. The outcome can be lecturers modifying their teaching and assessment approaches, not only to clarify issues for the students but also to acknowledge students' contributions to a (re)shaping of teaching and assessment practices in the academic context. Research has highlighted the problem of constructing differences as difficulties, and acknowledged the value of diversity that new members bring to the communities (Connor, 2008). Hence, there is a need to provide an engaging environment for international postgraduate students as multilingual-multicultural writers so that they can participate in and contribute to discourse community activities and find legitimacy in reshaping the values and knowledge base of the community. This will result in academic communities becoming dynamic and more inclusive of newcomers from multilingual-multicultural backgrounds (de Magalhães et al., 2019).

Australia is an ideal destination for international students, and the students' enrolment and engagement in Australian institutions contribute significantly to the nation's economy, the reputation of its institutions, and its perceived value (Department of Social Services, 2018). Therefore, implications need to be expanded from a purely pedagogical focus to include institutional policy-making practices, with a view to creating an environment that is supportive and welcoming to international students, welcoming their enrolments and participation in the communities.

WHAT ARE THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH?

Some limitations can be claimed for a qualitative case study, but this does not mean under-valuing case study research. This qualitative study has involved a case study of a postgraduate program at an Australian university. A notable element of the study turned out to be the impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic, and the initial challenge of recruiting participants. This issue was addressed by redesigning the study to include a focus group discussion with international students who had either completed their studies or were nearing completion. The qualitative nature of the study enabled in-depth analysis and improved understanding of the students' experiences of academic writing at postgraduate level, and of the development and projection of authorial voice within the written texts of a specific academic discipline. The study has both captured the detailed experience of international students in one postgraduate course and provided insight to the broader question of understanding academic writing development in the context of second-language writers. Details have been provided of how the participants navigated and identified rhetorical conventions and worked towards developing authorial academic voice; the process has been evidenced as involving moments of tension and appreciation, requiring mediation, negotiation and adaptation in relation to specific rhetorical expectations required to be successful in high-stakes written assessments.

The recommendations which emerge from the study relate to a broader future focus in regard to the number of participants, diversity of participant backgrounds, the range of disciplines, educational levels, timeframes, and types of academic texts. Firstly, given that writing and voice are always context-based and discipline-oriented, a recommendation is made for future research to include a wider focus, potentially across disciplines and involving different contexts of culture and contexts of situation to explore how academic writing and authorial voice are framed, developed and required across different disciplines and subject areas. Additionally, writing and voice are recognised as being impacted by writers' sociocultural-historical backgrounds and levels of education. It is suggested that future research expands to include participants from different backgrounds and degree programs at various levels, to compare rhetorical conventions of academic writing and ways of demonstrating voice in texts by writers of the same and different backgrounds and disciplines. In addition, longitudinal research could explore the trajectories of writers across a broader timeframe to identify the variations and complexities of academic writing and authorial voice. In this study, it has been found that lecturer feedback has a strong impact on students' understanding and performance of voice in academic writing. Classroom observations might be undertaken in future research to gain insights about how instruction can be effectively provided to postgraduate students. Moreover, this study also identifies genre-based influences on authorial voice; future research may consider other forms of academic writing, such as research articles and dissertations. Voice is language performance, and this study has explored voice in written English by L2 writers. Therefore, it may be useful to compare how these writers produce academic writing and voice in both their L1 and L2; an investigation of voice 'written' by the same writers but in different contexts and languages and the embedded identities in texts could be informing.

Additionally, how the findings from such research can be distributed to and practiced by university lecturers and policymakers needs further consideration. This study has focused on academic writing in the form of written assignments in an Education-based course in Australia. Thus further research on different genres in different contexts could contribute to enriching our understanding of rhetorical conventions of different genres. Findings from future research can be accumulated as guidelines for teachers to build students’ writing competence. The lecturer in the course in this study had effectively made use of feedback and exemplars to scaffold students’ understanding and their enactment of rhetorical negotiation and adaptation. Writing teachers need to be aware of how to mediate students, particularly those of linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Since starting my doctoral research journey, I have become more interested in researching academic writing and voice in relation to international students as multilingual-multicultural writers. Researching this topic has offered me opportunities to reflect on my own academic journey, on my perspectives on academic writing, and on the development of my own authorial voice. I have become fully aware of the importance of understanding rhetorical conventions and authorial voice in a context where academic writing is used as a primary form of assessment. This study has provided the opportunity to investigate and analyse the rhetorical conventions of postgraduate academic writing as required for a postgraduate course; this has involved consideration of the elements of authorial voice, the process of forming this voice, how students conform with expected rhetorical conventions for successful academic writing performance and for the development of audible authorial voice. By providing a theorised account of voice in relation to academic writing, a methodological framework that can be applied to further research on the topic, and pedagogical implications for teaching, performing, and assessing voice, the thesis makes a substantial and original contribution to knowledge in the field of second language writing.

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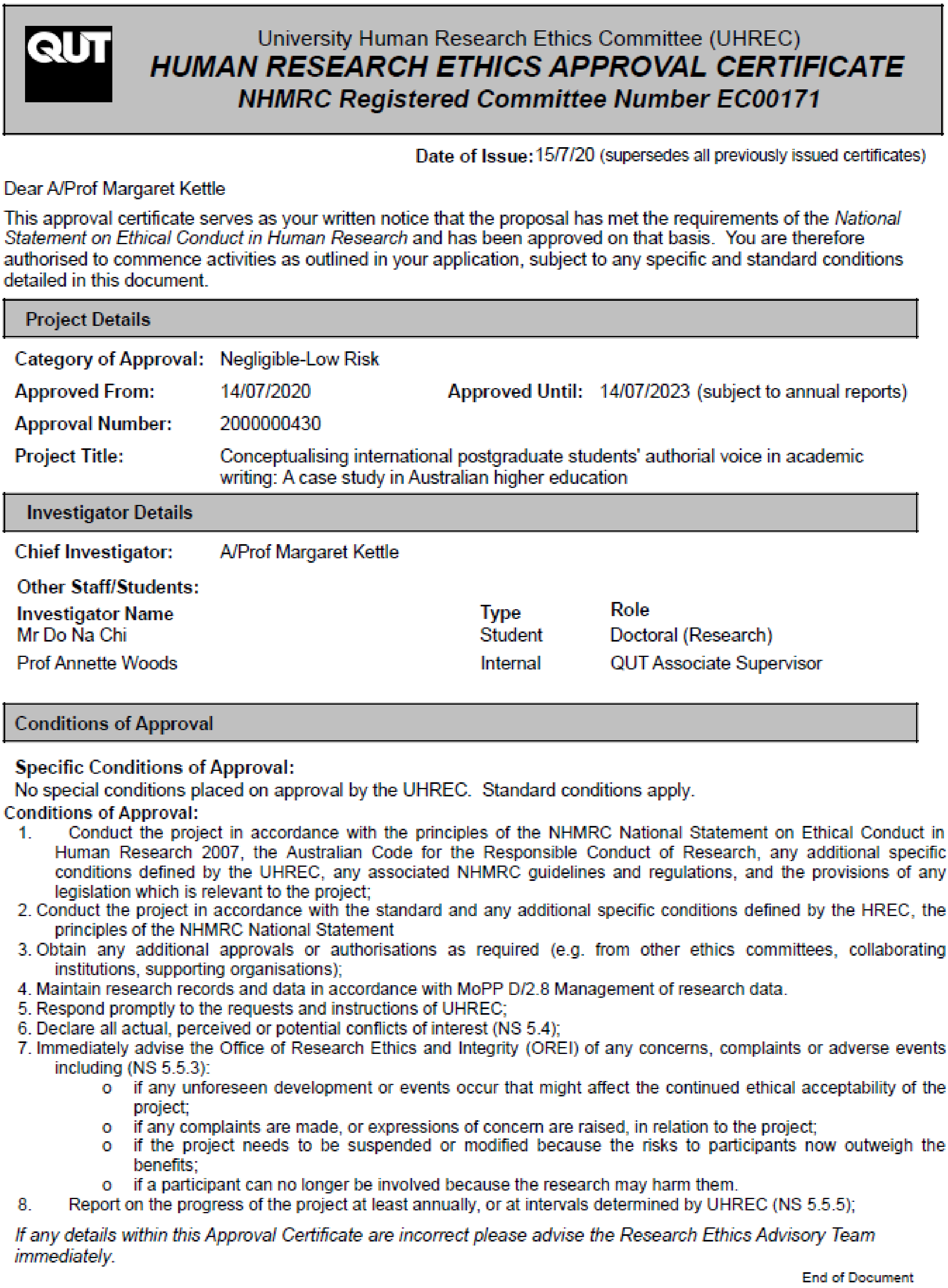
Appendices
Appendix One. Ethics approval



QUT

University Human Research Ethics Committee (UHREC)

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

NHMRC Registered Committee Number EC00171

Date of Issue: 15/7/20 (supersedes all previously issued certificates)

Dear A/Prof Margaret Kettle

This approval certificate serves as your written notice that the proposal has met the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and has been approved on that basis. You are therefore authorised to commence activities as outlined in your application, subject to any specific and standard conditions detailed in this document.

Project Details

Category of Approval: Negligible-Low Risk

Approved From: 14/07/2020 **Approved Until:** 14/07/2023 (subject to annual reports)

Approval Number: 2000000430

Project Title: Conceptualising international postgraduate students' authorial voice in academic writing: A case study in Australian higher education

Investigator Details

Chief Investigator: A/Prof Margaret Kettle

Other Staff/Students:

Investigator Name	**Type**	**Role**
Mr Do Na Chi	Student	Doctoral (Research)
Prof Annette Woods	Internal	QUT Associate Supervisor

Conditions of Approval

Specific Conditions of Approval:
No special conditions placed on approval by the UHREC. Standard conditions apply.

Conditions of Approval:

1. Conduct the project in accordance with the principles of the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007, the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, any additional specific conditions defined by the UHREC, any associated NHMRC guidelines and regulations, and the provisions of any legislation which is relevant to the project;
2. Conduct the project in accordance with the standard and any additional specific conditions defined by the HREC, the principles of the NHMRC National Statement
3. Obtain any additional approvals or authorisations as required (e.g. from other ethics committees, collaborating institutions, supporting organisations);
4. Maintain research records and data in accordance with MoPP D/2.8 Management of research data.
5. Respond promptly to the requests and instructions of UHREC;
6. Declare all actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest (NS 5.4);
7. Immediately advise the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity (OREI) of any concerns, complaints or adverse events including (NS 5.5.3):
    - if any unforeseen development or events occur that might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project;
    - if any complaints are made, or expressions of concern are raised, in relation to the project;
    - if the project needs to be suspended or modified because the risks to participants now outweigh the benefits;
    - if a participant can no longer be involved because the research may harm them.
8. Report on the progress of the project at least annually, or at intervals determined by UHREC (NS 5.5.5);

If any details within this Approval Certificate are incorrect please advise the Research Ethics Advisory Team immediately.

End of Document

Appendix Two. Student information sheet

Student name:

Course:

Part A. Background

1. What are your previous degrees?
2. What is your job in [home country]?
3. Where did you work in [home country]?
4. How long had you been doing that job before moving to Australia?
5. How much writing in English did you undertake before moving to Australia? Please indicate
   - The types of writing
   - The frequency of writing per week or month

Part B. Language proficiency

1. What are your IELTS scores (overall and individual bands) or other language proficiency tests?
2. Did your work in [home country] involve using English?

Part C. Studying experiences in Australia

1. How long have you been studying in Australia?
2. How much writing in English have you been undertaking in your study?
   - Types of writing
   - Frequency of writing
3. Your scores from previous semesters

Appendix Three. Phase One – Interview Questions

(Student Participants)

Interview 1 - Approximately 30 minutes

1. How long have you been in Australia [what semester/writing experience?]
2. How is the semester going for you?
3. Can you explain why you chose this program in Australia (specifically at TCU University - pseudonym)?
4. What did you think you could learn/develop from studying here?
5. Did you foresee any challenges you may encounter when studying here?
6. Can you tell me the objectives of this course?
7. You have completed an assignment for this course, can you describe the task demand?
8. How have the requirements for the assignment been provided to you?
9. What documents/materials do you use or are you given for the information about the assignment?
10. How do you use those materials/documents as guidance in completing your assignment?
11. Besides what has been given in the course, have you been using any other sources of assistance when you work on the assignment (e.g. peers, lecturer, videos, recordings, attendance of meetings/workshops, etc.)?

With the analysis of the students' drafts, the questions will be asked about the highlighted changes in the drafts*:*

12. The process of writing [approach in making drafts]
13. Can you please explain why you made these changes? [indicating changes in drafts]
14. How do you think these changes help you address the task demand or meet the criteria?

Interview 2 – Approximately 30 minutes

1. What do the grade and feedback suggest to you are required in order to write a successful written assignment in this course?
2. Are the points of feedback/comments/suggestions new to you and your thinking? Please explain. [indicating actual sections of feedback and comments etc]
3. Are there things from the feedback that will allow you to make changes in your writing processes for assignment 2? Are there things you've learnt from this process that you plan to take forward as you begin to write for the second assignment?

Interview 3 – Approximately 20 minutes

At the end of the course, can you please reflect on your writing experiences in Australia

1. What do you think you have learned about writing from engaging in the assignments of this course?
2. What challenges did you encounter in writing the assignments in this course?
3. How did you overcome these challenges (sources of assistance)?
4. What do you now think you should do to be successful in producing academic writing at postgraduate level in Australia?
5. How is this writing experience in Australia different from how you would write for university assignments in your home country?
6. Do you think that the writing experience you've had in your home country/background supports or constrains your writing performance in Australia? Please explain.
7. Any other comments about the assignments, the course, or other experiences related to writing when you study in Australia.

Appendix Four. Interview Questions (Lecturer)

The general questions (Part 1) will be asked only once and last approximately 20 minutes. Then, each subsequent interview (Part 2) will last approximately 30 minutes per assignment.

Part 1: General questions – The lecturer will be asked these questions only once

1. Can you tell me a little about the course and the class this semester?
2. What are the general objectives in this course?
3. What are the key points that you would like the students to acquire upon completing the course? And in terms of demonstrating these key learnings, what are you looking for in written assignments produced by students?
4. What do you want to assess in the assignment(s)?
5. How do you think the assignments reflect the course objectives?
6. What elements of writing academic text are important in demonstrating the course objectives?
7. What do you understand the place of voice is in relation to students written assignments? [define voice if required]
8. What materials/sources of assistance do you provide the students for information on the assignment? Do your students use any other resources and materials as they write assignments for the course?
9. How do you instruct students to complete the assignment? [techniques, content]
10. What are your expectations for the students’ written assignments at postgraduate level? Can you please explain how the criteria (and other documents) reflect the expectations?
11. What is your experience in teaching and marking international students at postgraduate level?
12. What are your general insights about the writing performance of international students? Are these different from domestic students?
13. How do you approach teaching international students in your course? Are there any differences to how you teach domestic students?

Part 2: Questions for each assignment

1. What do you think about this student’s completed written assignment? [focus on graded assignment]
2. Regarding each students’ graded assignment, the question is: Can you please explain the reasons for this grade and the comments?
3. What do you think the student could have done to be more successful in this assignment?

Appendix Five. Focus Group Discussion Prompts

Preamble (Krueger, 2002):

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of this focus group discussion. This focus group discussion is about your writing experiences in Australia and to explore your views about what helped you become successful academic writers and what hindered your becoming successful academic writers in a postgraduate setting using English as a medium of instruction.

Please remember that:

- There are no right or wrong answers but rather differing points of view. Please feel free to share your points of view even if these differ from what others have said. Keep in mind that we're just as interested in negative comments as positive comments, and at times the negative comments are the most helpful.
- I will use your first names to identify you during the focus group discussion, but these will not be used in later reports. You can be assured of confidentiality. Anything we talk about during this focus group discussion should not be discussed outside of this discussion. What is said in the session, stays in the session. Even though you are all agreeing to keep our discussion confidential, it is important for us all to remember that whatever we say here will be heard by all others in the group.
- Listening respectfully is the key but if anyone gets off track it is my job to gently redirect;
- There is a tendency in the discussion for some people to talk a lot and some people not to say much. But it is important for us to hear from each of you because you have different experiences. So if one of you is sharing a lot, I may ask you to let others talk. And if you aren't saying much, I may ask for your opinion.

Can you please reflect on your writing experiences in Australia?

1. What do you think is required of you to be successful in producing academic writing at postgraduate level in Australia?
2. Are there any challenges that you have encountered when engaging in academic writing at postgraduate level in Australia? How do you cope with those challenges? What do you do to solve these issues?

3. How is the experience of producing academic writing in Australia different from how you would write for university assignments in your home country?
4. Do you think that the writing experience you've had in your home country/background supports your writing performance in Australia, or does it create difficulties? Please explain.
5. Do you think that you are a good academic writer? Why (not)?
6. Any other comments about experiences related to writing when you study in Australia.
7. Other possible questions:
    - Have you ever heard about voice or argument in academic writing?
    - Is it necessary to include your critical thinking in writing? What is critical thinking? How can you show your critical thinking?

Appendix Six. An Example of Thematic Analysis

This is an example of thematic analysis for the theme “Veronica’s authoritative voice as a legitimate knowledge provider” in Chapter Six. In the table below, the linguistic features of the self-positioning model (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) are identified in the student’s text and coloured in accordance with the codes. The codes of both text and interview analyses are interpreted and cross-examined to form the theme.

Data sources	Codes	Interpretation	Themes
Text analysis			Veronica’s authoritative voice as a legitimate knowledge provider
As I am a TESOL student, I have an interest in teaching English for Special Purpose (ESP), so I observed a classroom of Tourism English (TE) at a vocational college in China. English as a global lingo franca, has become a tool in the global tourism market (Khalid, 2016). The purpose of a TE course is to develop students' skills of providing tourism service including introducing Chinese culture and historical scenery for English-speaking tourists. In response to the large population and highly competitive job market in China, Chinese English learners who study English for special purposes (ESP) in a vocational college is to prepare for a future career and become competitive in the employment market.	Classificatory lexis Self-reference Tenses	Insider identity	
Like most Chinese students, the ESP learners tend to keep quiet in the classroom, obtain the knowledge transmitted by teachers. They rarely question tutors and lack critical thinking. They highly value “face” (self-esteem), fear of criticism from others, and are reluctant to answer questions because they feel ashamed of making a wrong answer. Furthermore, the majority of Chinese learners are reluctant to ask questions for fear of revealing his ignorance. They value scores of exams. Those who achieve high score in the exam, will feel very proud and be praised by their teachers. On the other hand, students with lower score will feel shameful. For a class with a large number of students, teachers tend to pay attention to some	Evaluative lexis Tenses	Stances Facts	

students who listen attentively and give positive feedback in class, while ignoring the students who do not give teachers positive feedback by nodding or shaking their heads.			
Interview extracts			
Researcher: You start your writing with Introduction “I am a TESOL student. I have an interest in teaching English for Specific Purposes I observe a class”. So can I ask why you decided to introduce yourself at the beginning of the assignment? Veronica: Why do I introduce myself? Researcher: Yeah! **Why do you introduce about yourself, about your experienc**e? Veronica: I think because can strengthen the reliability validity because the purpose you write the essay then I want to say because at first I am a TESOL student I will teach English in China so I should make it clear that my teaching group my target group then I can go on describe on the target group so first I should let the readers know why I choose the target group because my personal interest I am interested I want to teach them I want to help them.	Increased values/trustworthiness of writing	Writers’ personal experience is counted in academic writing	
Researcher: You mention about your experience because here you say that you observe a class. **Is it good to use our experience or our observation just to share our purpose or our motivation for the writing**. You think it’s an interesting way? Veronica: I think so, especially for the readers they are not Chinese they want to know what happen in this classroom uhm not very general view but especially for this classroom why they are all Chinese students and your Chinese students speaking at low level why for this	Informing readers	Personal experience as a legitimate source of knowledge in academic writing for readers	

classroom it’s a very big problem. I want to show they need to develop their oral skills because it’s their professional skills to make a living in the future you need to use this skills very professionally then you can find a job and then you clients will be satisfied so you must develop your communicative skills in English English communicative skills so for these students it’s a big problem it’s very urgent so I have to solve this problem.			