Preparing Asian ESOL Teachers to Respond to Student Writing: A Systemic Functional Linguistic Perspective in Action

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Preparing Asian ESOL Teachers to Respond to Student Writing:

A Systemic Functional Linguistic Perspective in Action

A Dissertation Presented

By

I-AN CHEN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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College of Education
Preparing Asian ESOL Teachers to Respond to Student Writing:

A Systemic Functional Linguistic Perspective in Action

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ABSTRACT

PREPARING ASIAN ESOL TEACHERS TO RESPOND TO STUDENT WRITING:
A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE IN ACTION

FEBRUARY 2018

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L2 teachers generally lack the ability to respond to student writing in productive ways, because L2 teacher education has typically not developed teachers’ understanding of how language works in constructing meaningful texts. To address the need for preparing teachers to give meaningful feedback, this study investigates the professional experiences of Asian English language teachers (ELTs) who participated in a professional development program informed by Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics (SFL). This program attempts to apprentice teachers to becoming critical text analysts who are able to analyze the linguistic features of their students’ emergent writing practices and provide informed feedback. The research question guiding this study is: How does coursework in SFL influence Asian ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing?
This study uses qualitative case study methods, and focuses on two specific timeframes for data collection: 1) over 28 weeks (two semesters) of a SFL-based professional development course; 2) over ELTs’ teaching practicum conducted eight months after the completion of the course. Multiple types of data were collected, including the researcher’s fieldnotes, interviews, ELTs’ course assignments and written responses to student writing samples. The data were analyzed inductively, using multiple layers of coding, theme identification, and relational analysis.

The findings indicate that ELTs progressed from offering decontextualized reactions to lexical and syntactic issues (e.g., correcting errors, calling for a wider vocabulary) to providing feedback aimed at strengthening meaning in a text. Specifically, ELTs were able to identify students’ ineffectual register choices for constructing texts relevant to specific genres and writing tasks, and offer linguistically-precise guidance for improvement. However, since ELTs’ uptake of SFL was highly influenced by their exam-oriented, formalism-informed language education and socialization in Asia, they usually addressed the issue of genre stages in student writing prescriptively. They also emphasized students’ language choices in constructing content (ideational meaning) and managing information flow (textual meaning), while overlooking features of voice (interpersonal meaning) in student text.

The study contributes to research and practice of L2 writing teacher education by providing empirical information regarding the opportunities and challenges of using SFL to support Asian ELTs’ professional development in responding to student writing.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Research Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Purpose of the study</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Research Questions</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Significance of the study</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Organization of the dissertation chapters</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 The formalist perspective of language</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Definition of language</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 The formalist perspective of language and L2 learning</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3 The formalist perspective of language and L2 teacher education</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 A reconceptualization of language as social practice</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics (SFL)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 SFL and L2 writing instruction</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.1 Reconceptualizing the definition of writing</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.2 SFL metalanguage for writing instruction</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.3 SFL-based writing pedagogy</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. CONTEXT OF THE STUDY</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 The TESOL teacher education program</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2. The focal courses in systemic functional linguistics</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Participants</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 Course instructor: Dr. O’Connell</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.2 Focal Asian ELTs ............................................................................................................ 63

4. METHODOLOGY .................................................................................................................. 74
  4.1 Research approach ........................................................................................................... 74
  4.2. Research questions ......................................................................................................... 77
  4.3 The unit of analysis .......................................................................................................... 77
  4.4 The researcher’s role ........................................................................................................ 79
  4.5 Data collection procedures .............................................................................................. 87
    4.5.1 Strategies of selecting participants ............................................................................ 87
    4.5.2 Sources of data .......................................................................................................... 88
    4.5.3 Data collection phases ............................................................................................... 95
  4.6. Data analysis procedures ............................................................................................... 104
  4.7 Limitations of the study .................................................................................................... 115

5. FINDINGS ............................................................................................................................ 119
  5.1 Overview of the findings ................................................................................................. 119
  5.2 Three case study narratives ............................................................................................ 125
    5.2.1 Lin .............................................................................................................................. 125
    5.2.2 Jiwon .......................................................................................................................... 148
    5.2.3 Pei-Ying ...................................................................................................................... 165

6. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION ...................................................................................... 185
  6.1 Developing Asian ELTs’ critical language awareness ......................................................... 185
  6.2 Benefits and challenges of using SFL to enhance Asian ELTs’ professional development ................................................................................................................................. 187
  6.3 Asian ELTs’ uptake of SFL in responding to student writing .......................................... 192

APPENDICES
A. SAMPLE OF FIELDNOTES .................................................................................................... 198
B. COURSE INSTRUCTOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL .............................................................. 201
C. FOCAL ELT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL ............................................................................... 202
D. CONSENT FORM FOR THE PILOT STUDY .................................................................. 205
E. CONSENT FORM FOR THE DISSERTATION ................................................................. 207

BIBLIOGRAPHY ....................................................................................................................... 213
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Summary of the program core courses.</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Summary of SLLD content.</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Summary of the lectures on conceptions of grammar</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Register analysis resources.</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Summary of IFG content by module.</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Data collection matrix.</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Collected data from individual focal ELT.</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Summary of coding categories.</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. ELTs’ approaches to responding to student writing over time.</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The relationship between text and context in the SFL framework.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sample open coding table.</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A code-to-theme visual illustration</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lin’s report on the strengths in Emily’s text.</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Lin’s report on the weaknesses in Emily’s text.</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Transcript of Liliga’s personal narrative</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Visual writing prompt for the pre-assessment</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Transcript of Xinxin’s pre-assessment essay.</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Lin’s lecture slides on argument writing.</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Lin’s instructional model text.</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Lin’s instructional slide on the cohesive devices.</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Transcript of Xinxin’s revised essay about environmental problems.</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Transcript of the student writing sample Jiwon analyzed in <em>SLLD</em>.</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Transcript of Ting’s argumentative essay</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Jiwon’s feedback chart</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Jiwon’s instructional handout</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Daesung’s use of a graphic organizer for writing.</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. The zig-zagging pattern in Christopher’s text.</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. The comparison activity in Pei-Ying’s unit</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Samples of visual advertisement for teaching the skills of persuasion.</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Pei-Ying’s lecture slide on the organization of an argument</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Samples of graphic organizer for student writing</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Pei-Ying’s Persuasive writing checklist</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Problem

Responding to student writing is one of the most challenging aspects of an L2 writing instructor's job. Writing instructors often invest a great deal of time annotating student papers with their feedback. However, their effort does not necessarily result in improved student learning. Research has found that in responding to L2 writing, teachers focused primarily on correcting lexical and syntactic errors (e.g., Ferris et al., 2011; Furneaux et al., 2007; Lee, 2008, 2009; Montgomery & Baker, 2007). Relatively less attention has been given to content and text-specific issues, such as idea development, text organization, and coherence and cohesion. In the cases where teachers did provide content- or text-level feedback, the feedback was generally too broad and vague to help students produce meaningful texts (e.g., "Add more details," "Be more specific") (Patthey-Chavez, Matsumura, & Valdes, 2004). As a result, these comments did not lead to substantive improvement in the overall quality of student work. While corrective feedback is useful in improving formal accuracy in students' revised texts (Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Pan, 2015), it contributes little to improvement in the clarity and quality of writing (Ashwell, 2000; Sheen, 2007), and to students' long-term writing development (Pan, 2015; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). On the whole, L2 teachers lack the ability to respond to student writing in ways that can deepen students' understanding of texts and help them use language effectively to produce meaningful texts (Ferris, 2007; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Patthey-Chavez, Matsumura, & Valdes, 2004).
To respond to students’ texts with greater expertise and specificity, teachers need an increased ability to analyze students’ writing (Gebhard, Demers, & Castillo-Rosenthal, 2008; Ferris, 2011). Recent work among L2 writing scholars suggests Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics (SFL) may provide a useful framework for teachers to engage in this type of text analysis (e.g., Hyland, 2007; Gebhard, Chen, Graham, & Gunawan, 2013; Martin & Rose, 2012; Schleppegrell & Go, 2007). According to these scholars, a functional linguistic approach to analyzing student writing can support teachers in: 1) understanding writing as a goal-oriented communicative activity that involves writers making language choices to present ideas, create discursive flow, and construct social relationships with readers in ways that are appropriate for a specific purpose and context; 2) using a meaning-based metalanguage for investigating the specific language choices students have made in their writing and evaluating the effectiveness of these choices in the context of the writing task (i.e., for presenting an idea to a specific audience, managing discursive flow, constructing a particular voice); and 3) providing precise feedback that explicitly identifies student writers’ strengths and weaknesses, and suggests specific directions for subsequent learning.

Existing literature on the use of a functional linguistics approach to support teacher response to L2 writing has primarily focused on introducing teachers to the general principles and analysis strategies of this approach. This body of literature comprises mainly pedagogical book chapters and educational journal articles that illustrate this approach through the authors’ demonstrated analysis of student writing samples (e.g., Alicea, 2012; Fang & Wang, 2011; Martin & Rose, 2012; Schleppegrell & Go, 2007). The value of this body of literature lies in that it provides teachers with
guidelines and examples for using SFL analytic tools to analyze and assess student writing. Specifically, through demonstrated analysis of student writing samples, the authors highlighted a set of analytic questions teachers can ask during their analysis; identified the language resources teachers can investigate to evaluate the content, organization, and voice of student writing; and discussed strategies for how to use analysis to inform curriculum planning and instructional practices.

However, to date, very few empirical studies have been published on how teachers draw on SFL concepts and tools to analyze student writing and provide feedback. Among the existing number of empirical studies that do address teachers’ use of SFL to respond to student writing, most of them focus on how teachers made sense of SFL in designing and implementing disciplinary literacy instruction, with only brief descriptions of how they provided feedback (Gebhard, Chen, Graham, & Gunawan, 2013; Gebhard, Harman, & Seger, 2007; Humphrey & Macnaugh, 2016). While these studies reveal valuable details about how teachers developed a functional metalinguistic knowledge for teaching disciplinary literacy, they provided limited information regarding teachers’ feedback practices. In addition, the examples of teacher feedback reported in these studies are composed mainly of oral feedback teachers gave during class discussion as part of instructional scaffolding, or feedback that teachers self-reported in response to researchers’ interview questions. Little is known regarding how teachers took up SFL tools in analyzing student writing and giving written feedback.

On the other hand, there are two studies which analyzed teachers’ use of SFL tools in giving written feedback (Accurso, Gebhard, & Purington, in press; Aguirre-Muñoz, Park, Amabisca, & Boscardin, 2008). These studies used pretest and posttest
methodology to analyze changes in the ways in which teachers gave written feedback to samples of student writing before and after the SFL-informed professional development training. These studies have provided empirical data about the content of the teachers’ written feedback and shown the potential of SFL to support teachers in providing more precise feedback targeting problem areas for additional learning. However, the short-term, experiment-oriented examinations of teachers’ pre- and post-intervention written feedback limited these studies’ ability to reveal the complicated phenomenon of teacher professional development. Questions remained regarding how the teachers developed a specialized ability to analyze student writing from a functional linguistics perspective; what accounted for the teachers’ change in their approach to responding to student writing; and to what extent the SFL-informed professional development influenced the manner in which the teachers give feedback in real instructional contexts.

1.2 Purpose of the study

To contribute to the empirical research concerned with the potential of SFL to support teacher response to L2 writing, this study explores how Asian English language teachers (ELTs) participating in a professional development (PD) program made sense of SFL in analyzing student writing and providing feedback. This study attempts to add to previous empirical research by using longitudinal case study methods to analyze in more detail the influence of SFL-informed PD on ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing. Drawing on multiple sources of data, including the researcher’s observational fieldnotes, interviews, and documents, this study provides in-depth descriptions of ELTs’ personal and professional histories that shaped their approach to responding to student writing; noteworthy events that accounted for the change (or lack of change) in ELTs’
approach to responding to student writing; and the ways in which ELTs took up the complexities of SFL concepts and metalanguage in analyzing student writing.

1.3 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following central question and sub-questions.

Central question: How does professional development (PD) coursework in systemic functional linguistics (SFL) influence Asian ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing?

Sub-questions include:

a) Based on their previous socialization as language learners and language teachers in Asia, what conceptions of language tend to inform Asian ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing?

b) Over the course of their participation in the SFL-informed PD, how do Asian ELTs’ approaches to responding to student writing change (or not)?

c) After completion of the PD, how do Asian ELTs respond to student writing during their teaching practicum? In what ways are their response practices influenced by SFL (or not)?

1.4 Significance of the study

Literature has shown that L2 teachers generally lack abilities to respond to student writing in meaningful ways, because L2 teacher education has typically not developed teachers’ understanding of how language makes meaning in the types of texts students are routinely asked to write in school (Hyland, 2004; Gebhard, 2010; Schleppegrell, 2004). Traditional L2 teacher education programs have primarily drawn on a formalist perspective of language to define what teachers need to know about language and
language teaching (Johnson, 2009; Scarino, 2014). Within a formalist orientation, language is viewed as a stable, naturally-ordered system consisting of predetermined phonological, lexical, and syntactic elements that are structurally related (Saussure, 1959; Corder, 1973). Writing is seen as the demonstration of individuals’ lexical and syntactic knowledge (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). Informed by this orientation, L2 teacher education programs have long focused on preparing teachers to teach the structural elements of a language and to help students use these elements accurately for comprehending and producing sentences (Hu, 2005; Johnson, 2009; Scarino, 2014). This in part explains why teachers primarily provide corrective feedback on lexical and syntactic issues in their response to L2 writing.

This study contributes to L2 writing teacher education by examining an alternative approach to teacher professional development informed by an epistemologically-different perspective of language as social practice (Duranti, 1997; Kramsch, 1994). With a specific focus on Halliday’s social semiotic theory of language, this PD program emphasizes language as a system of choices from which language users select to make meaning in ways that are appropriate to the social and cultural contexts in which they participate (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). In addition, this program emphasizes writing as social practice of constructing meaning for specific purpose, audience, and context (Hyland, 2003; Kern, 2000). It attempts to apprentice teachers to becoming critical text analysts who are able to analyze the language choices their students have made and provide informed feedback on their writing. This study provides detailed descriptions about how this program supports ELTs in developing an understanding of language, writing, and writing instruction from an epistemologically-
different, sociocultural perspective of language. This information will benefit researchers and teacher educators who seek to expand the current knowledge base of L2 teacher education, specifically writing teacher preparation.

Moreover, this study contributes to the debate concerning the use of Halliday’s theory of language, or SFL, to support teacher professional development in L2 literacy instruction. Research regarding the benefits of SFL-informed teacher professional development suggests that learning SFL metalanguage for analyzing how language constructs meaning in texts enables teachers to unpack the language demands of particular curricular topics their English language learners are studying. This ability to identify the language demands of the curriculum, in turn, allows teachers to integrate subject matter/content instruction with academic literacy development activities (e.g., Berg & Huang, 2015; Gebhard, Chen, & Briton, 2014; Humphrey & Macnaught, 2016; Schleppegrell & de Oliveira, 2006)

On the other hand, critics argue that SFL is too technical and complex to be a viable framework for teacher education. For example, Bourke (2005) writes that “functional grammar seems to be ideally suited to language teaching and learning…[because] it is communicative grammar that learners can take out of the classroom and use in the ordinary situations of their daily lives…[However] many teachers find it is a veritable maze, very messy and complex” (p. 93). Similarly, Ferris (2011), in her review of literature on the applications of various written discourse analysis approaches in L2 teaching contexts, raised the concern about the complexity of SFL for teachers. She critiques that written discourse analysis, particularly SFL analysis, is “time-consuming (and often tedious),” and it “requires advanced linguistic training.” (p.
She maintains that “suggestions that teachers conduct such research themselves to design materials for their own students seem frankly unrealistic” (p. 657).

This study attempts to address the debate concerning an SFL-based approach to L2 teacher professional development by examining Asian ELTs’ experiences and perceptions of learning SFL metalanguage to analyze student writing. The findings of this study will provide empirical information regarding the opportunities and challenges of implementing a Hallidayan perspective of language and a functional language analysis in L2 teacher education.

1.5 Organization of the dissertation chapters

This dissertation is organized into six chapters. Chapter 1 investigates the problems related to teacher response to L2 writing that leads to the need for the study. This chapter also presents the research questions this study attempts to address, and discusses the potential contributions of the study to research and practice of L2 writing teacher education.

Chapter 2 reviews an epistemological shift in the conceptualization of language within the context of L2 teaching. It begins by reviewing the historical development as well as the limitations of a formalist-individualist perspective of language. Next, it articulates a reconceptualization of language and writing using the perspective of language as social practice. Last, it reviews Halliday’s SFL and how it has informed L2 literacy instruction and teacher education.

Chapter 3 introduces the context of the study. It describes the TESOL teacher education program where the study was conducted and two focal SFL-informed
professional development courses this study investigated. It also provides profiles of the participants of the study, including one course instructor and three focal Asian ELTs.

Chapter 4 describes the research methodology of the study. It identifies key characteristics of a case study approach to inquiry that this study adopts, defines the unit of analysis of the study, and describes the data collection and analysis procedures. In addition, the researcher’s role and the limitations of the study are discussed.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the study. It first highlights general trends seen across three focal ELTs regarding the influence of the SFL-informed professional development on their approach to responding to student writing. Next, it provides three case study narratives that illustrate and discuss the general trends, while also presenting noteworthy contrasts to one another.

Chapter 6 discusses the findings of the study by offering explanations, extrapolating lessons learned, and comparing the findings with information gleaned from the literature. This chapter concludes with a discussion of directions for future research and the implications of this study for L2 writing teacher education.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

General literature on L2 teaching has shown that teachers’ language awareness (TLA) shapes teachers’ approach to designing literacy curriculum, instruction, and assessments (Andrew, 2007, 2010; Borg, 1994; Wright, 2002). Framed as the subject-matter knowledge of L2 teaching (Shulman, 1999), TLA has been defined as “the knowledge that teachers have of the underlying systems of the language that enables them to teach effectively” (Thornbury, 1997, p. xi). However, what constitutes knowledge about language and how it is presented to teachers are contingent on what perspective of language a teacher education program adopts. Traditional L2 teacher education programs primarily draw on a formalist perspective of language to define what teachers need to know about language (Johnson, 2009; Scarino, 2014). Informed by a formalist perspective of language, TLA has traditionally meant developing teachers’ conscious understanding of the structural elements of language and rules for combining these elements (Bigelow & Ranney, 2010). Teachers’ attention is limited to syntactic arrangements without regard to their role in “discourse semantics” (Martin, 1992, p. 26; Macken-Horarik, Sandiford, Love, & Unsworth, 2015).

More recently, scholars in L2 teaching and teacher education have called for an expansion of TLA to include a teacher’s understanding of how language works in constructing meaning at the lexical, syntactic, and discourse semantic levels, and how the kinds of meaning made are influenced by the social and cultural contexts in which they are exchanged (e.g., Bigelow & Ranney, 2015; Gebhard, 2010; Luk & Wong, 2010; Kramsch, 2014; Scarino, 2014). To support the development of an expanded TLA
requires an epistemologically different perspective of language, one that is referred to as language as social practice (Duranti, 1997; Kramsch, 1994). This perspective of language provides a conceptual framework for language teachers to recognize, explain, and teach the relationships among form, meaning, and context. (Scarino, 2014). Among various theories of language rooted in the language-as-social-practice perspective, Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics (SFL) has been increasingly adopted by scholars in both L1 and L2 studies to support the development of TLA (e.g., Carpenter et al., 2015; Llinares, Morton, & Whittaker, 2012; Macken-Horarik, et al., 2015; Walker, 2010). What makes Halliday’s SFL distinctive and well suited to informing TLA is that it offers a meaning-based metalanguage for analyzing how meaning is constructed in complex lexical-grammatical and discourse-semantic patterns, which helps to raise teachers’ consciousness about the form-meaning relationship (Schleppegrell, 2012).

In what follows, I review the historical development as well as the limitations of a formalist perspective of language within the contexts of second language teaching and writing instruction. Next, I articulate a reconceptualization of language and writing using the perspective of language as social practice. Last, I review the theoretical insights of Halliday’s SFL and how it has informed L2 literacy instruction and teacher education.

2.1 The formalist perspective of language

2.1.1 Definition of language

This formalist view of language finds its root in Saussurian science of semiology, which attempts to construct language as a stable object that can be studied through scientific methods (Saussure, 1959; also see Hanks, 1996). The study of language is intentionally confined to the study of its formal properties, abstracted from any actual use
of language in everyday interactions (Bloomfield, 1933; Chomsky, 1965). Language is seen as a stable, naturally-ordered hierarchical system consisting of predetermined phonological, morphological, and syntactic units that are structurally related (Corder, 1973). The primary focus of formalist linguistics is to understand the distinct characteristics of each unit and the relationship among the units in the language system in order to find the general law of language and the underlying rules for the combination of the lower-level units (sounds, morphemes) into higher-level units (words, phrases, sentences) that encode meaning (Chomsky, 1957). The meaning that formal linguists are concerned with are primarily “referential”, or “denotational” ones, which are assumed to be autonomous and fixed, that is, they “remain constant across time, space, and speakers” (Duranti, 1997, p. 162). This assumption implies that any verbal form, such as a sentence, as long as it is constructed accurately following the rules governing a language, can be understood in the same and unambiguous way by speakers from any context and with any communicative intention. Reddy (1979) used the term “the conduit metaphor” to describe this assumption of language. In Reddy’s metaphorical model, language is represented as a conduit, whose function is transmission of propositional information from one person to another. People are assumed to use language in a straightforward, literal way, and have few problems understanding each other as long as they agree on the conventions used to encode information.

Firth and Wagner (1997) criticize that a conduit model of language and meaning has resulted in “a skewed perspective on discourse and communication” (p. 295). In this model, communication is viewed as “a process of transferring thoughts from one person’s mind to another’s” through encoding and decoding of information without taking into
account the sociocultural, institutional, or political contexts where the information is produced and exchanged (Firth and Wagner, 1997, p. 295). Similarly, Heritage (1984) argues that human communication is not a simple matter of encoding and decoding literal messages. He argues that meaning depends on interpretation, based on one’s understanding of context as well as on one’s knowledge, intention, beliefs, and experiences. He summarizes his critique of a formalist perspective of language nicely:

Language is not to be considered as a matter of ‘cracking the code’ which contains a set of pre-established descriptive terms combined, by the rules of grammar, to yield sentence meanings which express propositions about the world. Understanding language is not, in the first instance, a matter of understanding sentences but of understanding actions – utterances – which are constructively interpreted in relation to their contexts. This involves viewing an utterance against a background of who said it, where and when, what was being accomplished by saying it, and in the light of what possible considerations and in virtue of what motives it was said. An utterance is thus the starting point for a complicated process of interpretive inference. (p. 139-40, italics in original)

2.1.2 The formalist perspective of language and L2 learning

Within the formalist framework of language, learning a second language is viewed as gaining mastery of rule-governed linguistic form and structure of the language (Lantolf, 2006). However, how learners master the form and structure of a second language has been conceptualized in different ways in the field of second language instruction. Historically, two paradigms in second language instruction have drawn on a formalist perspective of language to theorize how learners develop a second language.
The first paradigm is informed by behavioral psychology, and the second paradigm is informed by Chomsky’s psycholinguistic perspective of language acquisition.

*The behaviorist paradigm*

The field of second language teaching from early to mid-1990s was influenced by behaviorism. Within the behaviorist paradigm, it was believed that the best way to master the form and structure of a second language was through habit formation (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). The formation of habit is viewed as a process of making a series of stimulus-response connections, which is fortified by means of imitation, repetition and reinforcement (Skinner, 1957). Popular from the 1940s to 1960s, the behavioristic paradigm was operationalized in practice in the audio-lingual approach to second language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). This approach focused on oral drilling and practice of formal elements and sentence patterns that were identified as causing difficulty for learners, such as tense forms, the use of prepositions, or the transformation of active to passive sentences or present into past (Lado, 1957). It separated language skills into listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with emphasis on the teaching of listening and speaking before reading and writing. This separation was based on the assumption that oral language should be developed in advance of written language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Learners’ errors were corrected right away in order to ensure accurate repetition and memorization of second language patterns (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

As applied to L2 writing instruction, the formalism-behaviorism oriented teaching methods regard writing as “an extension of grammar – a means of reinforcing language patterns through habit formation and testing learners’ ability to produce well-formed
sentences” (Hyland, 2003, p. 3). Conceptualizing writing in this way directs attention to writing as a product and encourages a focus on lexical and syntactic forms of texts (Hyland, 2003). An emphasis on language form as a basis for writing teaching is typically operationalized in practice in controlled writing activities. For example, learners are asked to use a grammatical form or sentence pattern they have just learned to fill in gaps, transform tenses, or complete other exercises aimed at reinforcing the pattern and training learners in producing the pattern. Formal accuracy is considered be the main criteria for measuring learning outcomes and writing abilities (Kern, 2000).

While L2 learners need to know how words and phrases are organized into sentences in a second language, instruction that emphasizes solely on formal features and sentence structure has been shown to be ineffective to develop learners’ ability to engage in goal-directed writing activities (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). Research has found that although learners were able to complete sentence pattern drills with a high level of accuracy, they frequently failed to use the patterns appropriately in writing meaningful texts (Andrews et al., 2006). In addition, exercises in decontextualized vocabulary and sentence structures in the absence of attention to discourse, purpose, and audience of text often resulted in learners knowing all the words but nevertheless failing to understand much of what they read or to produce extended texts to achieve various social and academic goals (Gebhard & Martin, 2009).

The psycholinguistic paradigm

The advent of the psycholinguistic paradigm was marked by Noam Chomsky’s rejection of the behaviorist perspective on language development in the late 1950s. Chomsky (1957) argues that the fact that children are able to produce novel and well-
formed utterances that they have never encountered before indicates that language
development is not mere imitation of adults’ speech as the behaviorist view held. Rather,
there must be a set of rules underlying all natural languages that enable children to
generate an infinite set of potential sentences in their native languages. Chomsky refers to
these generative rules as universal grammar, or UG, and maintains that human beings are
born with a mental capacity to discover themselves UG and produce utterances based on
it (Chomsky, 1957).

Following Chomsky, psycholinguists since 1960s have drawn on modern
computational technology as a metaphor to describe the mental language acquisition
mechanism (Chater & Christiansen, 2008; Lewis, 2006). The main assumption behind
this computational metaphor is that human brains are like a computer, which is pre-
programmed with UG. Once this mental computer is turned on, a child’s language
acquisition unfolds. The “switch” for this mental computer to be activated is the external
environment to which the child is exposed. The environment provides ‘input’ that
functions as a form of data entry to be processed in the child’s mental computer. Through
a series of processing the child’s innate language faculty grows in a genetically
predetermined way (Pinker, 2000).

To study language as a mental construct, Chomsky (1965) maintains it is
necessary to separate competence, an idealized language faculty located as a
psychological or mental function, and performance, the production of actual utterances at
a given moment. Based on this separation, Chomsky’s theory of first language acquisition
is confined to a child’s acquisition of “grammatical competence,” an implicit or intuitive
knowledge of a system of rules that generate sentences in the child’s first language
(Chomsky, 1980, p. 59). He adds that “knowledge of a language then, is knowledge of grammar, now analyzed in terms of a certain structure of rules, principles and representations in the mind” (p. 91). His theory does not attempt to explain the child’s ability to use this grammatical knowledge in real-life situations; that is, it does not deal with “pragmatic competence,” or “knowledge of conditions and manner of appropriate use, in conformity with various purposes” (p. 224). Chomsky maintains that pragmatic competence contains variability that cannot be approached in rule-governed, scientific methods, and therefore is not his focus of inquiry.

Informed by Chomsky’s perspective of first language acquisition, the field of second language teaching in the 1960s shifted emphasis from establishing learners’ new language habit to fostering the growth of learners’ mental capacity to acquire a second language (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Second language acquisition was considered to be an internal, mental process, and was mainly about the “acquisition of linguistic knowledge”, which Long (1997) associated with “the acquisition of phonology, lexicon, and morpho-syntactic rules” of a target language (p. 319).

Psycholinguists believe that learners acquire linguistic knowledge in a second language naturally through exposure to an environment rich in “comprehensible input” (Krashen, 1985, p. 2). This belief gave rise to the Natural Approach to second language teaching that focuses on immersing learners in the target language environment full of songs, games, kinetic movements, and hands-on activities (Krashen & Terell, 1988). Instruction on linguistic forms and grammatical rules is minimized, with the assumption that learners will pick up forms and rules themselves as they participate in a range of classroom activities (Krashen & Terell, 1988).
With regard to writing instruction, psycholinguistics-oriented writing approaches emphasize writing as a cognitive activity, and focus on building learners’ mental routines or procedures for composing a text. As exemplified in the *process writing approach* (Flower, 1989), the priority of writing teachers is to equip learners with strategies of good writers and to develop learners’ metacognitive awareness of their processes of using these strategies to write (e.g., activating and applying prior knowledge, making inferences, clarifying, questioning, monitoring, and summarizing; or planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing; Flower, 1989; White & Arndt, 1991). Teachers’ role is seen as a facilitator of the writing process, providing an encouraging environment with minimal interference (Stotsky, 1988).

Since the early 1980s, the Chomskian psycholinguistic paradigm in second language teaching has had many vocal critics. The most common complaint is its assumption about language acquisition as individualistic, mentalistic, and functioning independent of the context and use of language (Firth & Wagner, 1997; Lantolf, 1996). For example, Leontiev (1981) argues while the psycholinguistic paradigm overcomes the atomism of the behavioristic paradigm in its assertion about the existence of an overarching system of generative rules underlying human language acquisition, it maintains the individualism of the behavioristic paradigm. Both paradigms see the learners as “self-contained” and learning as occurring within an individual, with the difference that behaviorism views the learner as “an empty vessel waiting to be filled with appropriate knowledge,” while psycholinguistic approaches define the learner as “an unfolding intellect that will eventually reach its potential given the right environment” (Gibbons, 2015, p. 12).
In regard to the psycholinguistics-oriented writing instruction, Swales (1990) criticizes that the process writing approach “overemphasizes the cognitive relationship between the writer and the writer’s internal world,” and a result it fails to account for the social nature of writing or the role of purpose and audience in effective writing communication (p. 220). In addition, research has shown that simply equipping writers with the strategies of good writers does not necessarily lead to improvement (e.g., Grabbe, 2003; Polio, 2001). Students not only need help in learning how to generate and draft ideas, but also in understanding how texts are shaped by topic, audience, purpose, and cultural norm (Hyland, 2004).

Moreover, psycholinguistics-oriented second language teaching has been critiqued for its assimilation to the norms of ideal, monolingual native speaker communities (Firth & Wagner, 1997; Rampton, 1997). To describe the path of the unfolding second language acquisition, researchers working within the psycholinguistic paradigm have primarily adopted a target-language centered perspective (Sridhar, 1980), suggesting that learners progress through successive stages, with the end state being the most closest to the target language, usually defined as the standard dialect of educated native speakers (Corder, 1967; Selinker, 1971). Firth and Wagner (1997) criticize that such perspective “conceives of the second language speaker as a deficient communicator struggling to overcome an underdeveloped L2 competence, striving to reach the ‘target’ competence of an idealized native speaker (NS) (p. 285). Such deficient view of second language speakers, when practiced in educational settings, has resulted in the promotion of a particular set of linguistic practices (usually those of the dominant social groups); ignorance of learners’ first language knowledge, literacy, and identity; and
underestimation of learners’ intelligence and capability in learning content area knowledge (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Hall, 1997).

2.1.3 The formalist perspective of language and L2 teacher education

The field of L2 teacher education has drawn heavily from the disciplinary knowledge in linguistics and second language acquisition (SLA) to define what L2 teachers need to know about language and second language learning (Johnson, 2009). Informed by a dominant formalist-individualist perspective of language and language development, ESOL teacher education programs have long focused on improving teachers’ knowledge about the phonological, lexical, and syntactic elements of English, with the assumption that once teachers consciously gain that knowledge they should be able to help learners acquire it (Johnson, 2009; Hu, 2005; Scarino, 2014). Even with the advent of communicative language teaching (CLT) in the late 1970s that emphasized a shift in the instructional attention from grammatical well-formedness to the appropriateness of language use (Widdowson, 1978), the focus on improving teachers’ knowledge about the formal properties of English has remained relatively stable (Johnson, 2009). Under the influence of CLT, ELTs continue to be expected to have solid knowledge about language forms. The only difference is that rather than simply imparting the knowledge about forms in learners, ELTs are required to provide learners with opportunities to use the forms they have learned to carry out oral or written communicative tasks in classrooms (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

However, research has shown that teachers’ predominantly formalistic-individualistic understanding of language and language development limits their ability to design curriculum and instruction that support learners in using English for meaningful
communication (Luk & Wong, 2010; McConachy, 2009). While teachers are able to organize communicative activities that encourage learners to speak English in class, the ways these communicative activities are structured tend to require learners to merely use sets of English words and sentence-level expressions to carry out transactional dialogues that are assumed to take place in normalized native speaker contexts (e.g., asking for/giving directions; checking into a hotel; ordering food in a restaurant) (McConachy, 2009). This type of teaching poses few opportunities for learners to engage in meaningful, intellectually-demanded use of language that involves interpretation and production of extended oral and written texts for achieving various social, academic, and professional goals (Kramsch, 2006; Swaffar, 2006).

In response to these pressing issues, Kramsch (2006, 2010) calls for an expansion of the knowledge base of L2 teachers. She suggests that teachers focus less on the “tourist-like” communicative competence to exchange information in monolingual conversations with speakers of standard national language. Rather, the priority of teachers is to help learners develop “much more sophisticated competence in the manipulation of symbolic systems” (Kramsch, 2006, p. 252). Such more sophisticated competence, which Kramsch calls “symbolic competence”, involves a heightened awareness of the social nature of language and other symbolic systems (e.g., gestures, diagrams and graphs) and of symbolic value and consequences associated with the use of various symbolic systems. Symbolic competence also includes the ability to actively manipulate multiple symbolic systems to construct human experiences, reframe or create alternative realities, and take on appropriate subject positions (Kramsch, 2010; also see Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008 for a discussion of the components of symbolic competence).
Kramsch’s call for the teaching of symbolic competence echoes other scholars who propose meaning-oriented L2 instruction that aims at developing learners’ ability to make meaning and to think critically about how meaning is constructed in relation to purpose, audience, and context (e.g., Byrnes, 2009; Gebhard, 2010; Kern, 2000; Scarino, 2014). To prepare L2 teachers for meaning-oriented instruction requires an epistemologically different perspective of language, one that is often referred to as language as social practice (Duranti, 1997; Kramsch, 1994).

2.2 A reconceptualization of language as social practice

The perspective of language as social practice has appeared in various intellectual disciplines, most notably linguistic anthropology (Duranti, 1997; Gumperz & Hymes, 1972), literary studies (Bakhtin, 1981), socio-cognitive psychology (Leont’ev, 1981; Vygotsky, 1978), and applied linguistics (Gee, 1999; Halliday, 1978), for half century, but has only taken on significant legitimacy in second language learning in the past two decades (Firth & Wagner, 1997; Lantolf, 2000). In taking a position of language as social practice, scholars attempt to break the boundary that formal linguists have long placed on language, which separates language from its use, users and context, and to study language in relation to the society, that is, the sococultural, historical, and situational contexts in which language occurs and is used (Hanks, 1996). Language is not seen as an abstract system of code and rules, but as a medium through which we engage in social activities. Language allows us to communicate information with each other; establish and maintain interpersonal relationships; and make meaning of our actions and experiences (Halliday, 1978). The perspective of language as social practice holds that the nature of language is inextricably linked to the culturally framed and discursively patterned social activities in
which we participate (Hall, 1997; Hanks, 1996). By using language for social participation, we enact certain practices that involve “routinized” ways of saying and doing things (e.g., doctor-patient meetings; oral arguments in court; scientific journal writing; lunch table talk at school) (Gee, 1999, p. 49). These practices are always situated in particular social, cultural, or institutional communities organized through a set of expectations, beliefs, and values about the world. Therefore, when we enact these practices through language in use, we also bring particular systems of expectations, beliefs, and values about the world into existence, representing them, maintaining them, and continuously shaping them (Gee, 1999; Hanks, 1996). As Duranti (1997) makes clear, language is “a set of practices, which play an essential role in mediating the ideational and material aspects of human existence and, hence, in bringing about particular ways of being-in-the-world” (p. 4).

Gee’s (1990, 1999) theory of discourse explicates how our language use both reflect and construct larger social organization and cultural values. Gee distinguishes between discourses and Discourses. He argues that a discourse with a small ‘d’, or a stretch of language in use (spoken, written, signed), is always embedded within a Discourse with a capital ‘D’, which he describes as “a socially accepted association among ways of using language, other symbolic expressions and artifacts, of thinking, feeling, believing, and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or ‘social network’” (Gee, 1990, p. 143). To put it simply, Gee suggests we look at Discourses as “clubs” organized by particular ways of speaking, thinking, acting, and believing that keep the interactions within the control of the club and make it difficult for outsiders to participate (Gee, 1990, p. 143). To be accepted as a
member within a Discourse, one must display membership through words, actions, thoughts, and beliefs. For example, being a chemist means that one speaks, thinks, and acts like a chemist, and that he or she is likely to hold certain beliefs and attitudes about how chemical science should be done. Moreover, the patterns of acting, thinking, believing, and using language within a Discourse are always attuned or “in sync” (Gee, 1999, p. 53). A lab report a chemist writes, for example, is not merely a random collection of specialist lexis, complex structures, and diagrams, but reflects the ways in which reasoning and conceptual processes of ‘doing science’ is understood, implemented, and valued in the field of Chemistry.

Conceptualizing language from the perspective of social practice overturns the notion of language as a neutral message system – a conduit which transmits fixed meanings from sender to receiver (Reddy, 1979). Meaning is not derived simply from static correspondence between words and objects (i.e. the referential meaning derived from the signifier-signified relationship; see Saussure, 1959). Rather, meaning of a word, a sentence, or an utterance is always situated within a specific context of use and jointly constructed by participants involved, against a rich store of social, cultural, and historical knowledge (Hanks, 1996). Likewise, communication is rarely just a matter of transferring information from one person to another through encoding and decoding literal messages. Rather, communication involves expression and interpretation of situated meanings and the various subjective and social realities these situated meanings may construct (e.g., referential, indexical, affective, ironic, connotative) (Duranti, 1997; Hanks, 1996). Communicating effectively means being able to operate effectively within particular discourse/Discourse; that is, “to say the right things, to act appropriately, to share the
values, attitudes, belief systems, expectations, and assumptions embedded in the
Discourse – to play the appropriate ‘role’” (Kale, 2003, p. 11)

Moreover, in contrast to Chomskyan linguistics that focuses on genetically shared
language universals, researchers who embrace language as social practice emphasize
language variation in relation to social context (e.g., Biber & Finegan, 1994; Gee, 1999;
Hymes, 1974; Halliday, 1978; Labov, 1972). We vary our language to engage in socially
situated activities and enact socially situated identities as we move within and between
different Discourse communities – as a member of a family, a peer group, a sport team, a
religious organization, and a profession, for example. Language varies in ways we draw
on different constellations of phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic
resources our language offers to achieve particular purposes in particular contexts.
Halliday (1978, 1985) uses the notion of register to describe patterns of language use that
vary systematically in relation to the characteristics of the social context, that is, the
nature of the social action, the role relationship between participants, and the channel of
communication being used. Similarly, Hymes (1974) proposes an ethnographic
framework that takes into account the various contextual factors that shape individuals’
speech acts in particular communicative situations. He uses the word SPEAKING as an
acronym for the various factors he deems to be relevant: (1) setting; (2) participants; (3)
ends; (4) act sequence; (5) key; (6) instrumentalities; (7) norms of interaction and
interpretation; and (8) genre. Individuals’ speech acts reflect their interpretation of these
different layers of context and make appropriate language choices accordingly. Both
Halliday’s and Hymes’ contributions to understanding language variation highlights that
language use is an active and dynamic meaning-making/interpretation process, rather than something governed by static rules.

2.3 Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics (SFL)

Among the theories of language that draw on the perspective of language as social practice, Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics (SFL) has been increasingly adopted by scholars in both L1 and L2 studies to support the design, implementation, and research of language instruction that emphasizes meaning making and symbolic competence (e.g., Byrnes, Maxim, & Norris, 2010; Coffin & Donohue, 2014; Gebhard, Chen, & Britton, 2014; Martin & Rose, 2012). With its emphasis on describing the functional use of language, SFL seeks to explain how meanings are made through various lexical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic resources offered by the language but chosen by the user to achieve particular purposes in particular social contexts (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

In articulating this meaning-oriented conception of language, Halliday maintains that all human languages involve three metafunctions that act simultaneously to make meaning: the ideational metafunction realizes experiences; the interpersonal metafunction enacts self and other relations; and the textual metafunction manages the flow of information to make discourse cohesive and coherent (Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) explain this trinocular conception of meaning making by stating, “every message is both about something and addressing someone” and that the flow of information in a message is organized to create “cohesion and continuity as it moves along” (p.30).

Text-context dynamics
Similar to other scholars embracing a language-as-social-practice perspective, Halliday (1985) argues that texts (pieces of language in use), not isolated sentences, should be the basic unit of analysis, and that text and context are dynamically co-constructed one another. That is, the social context is realized in text and the text is itself activated by the context (Halliday, 1985). To theorize the notion of context, Halliday draws on the work of anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1923, 1935). Malinowski interprets context of interactions as stratified into two levels: the immediate situation in which the text was uttered and the broader cultural background. He refers to these two levels of context as context of situation and context of culture.

Drawing on Malinowski’s work, Halliday (1985) define context of situation as “the specific environment in which meanings are being exchanged” (p. 9). When we use language to communicate in a particular situation, we make particular semiotic choices depending on (a) the nature of the content we are trying to communicate (e.g., everyday or discipline specific); (b) who we are trying to communicate with and what relationship we are trying to establish or maintain (e.g., familiar or unfamiliar); and (c) the expectations for how given and new information is organized in different modalities of communication (spoken, written, or multimodal). Halliday refers to these three contextual dimensions as field, tenor, and mode, each of them corresponding to one of the language metafunctions (Halliday, 1985). Thus, the field of a text is realized by lexical and grammatical choices we make that construct the ideational meanings; the tenor is realized by the choices that construct the interpersonal meanings; and the mode is realized by the choices that construct the textual meanings (Halliday and Hasan, 1985). The constellation of lexical and grammatical choices that realizes a specific context of situation, or to be
more concise, a particular configuration of field, tenor, and mode, is referred to as “register” (Halliday, 1985, p. 38). The variation of register explains our intuition to make different linguistic choices in responding to the demands of various situational contexts (Schleppegrell, 2004).

In addition to the immediate context of situation, there is also a broader context of culture that enables, gives values to, and at the same time constrains the possible or potentially available ways that language is used in a particular situation in a given culture community (Halliday, 1985; Halliday, 1999). Halliday explains context of culture by stating.

Any actual context of situation, the particular configuration of field, tenor, and mode that has brought a text into being, is not just a random jumble of features but a totality – a package, so to speak, of things that typically go together in the culture. People do these things on these occasions and attach these meanings and values to them; this is what a culture is. (Halliday, 1985, p. 46)

Halliday’s context of culture was further elaborated by Martin’s theory of genre (Martin, 1992; Martin & Rose, 2008). In Martin’s framework, the notion of genre is used to specify how a given culture community organizes its meaning potential into recurrent configurations of meaning that enact social practices of the culture (Martin & Rose, 2008). In other words, as members of a cultural community, we engage in a range of social activities that involve recurring ways of using language to get things done. These socially-constituted language practices are conceptualized as different genres. Derewianka (2003) explicates the concept of genre nicely.
As we go about our daily lives, we engage in numerous situations that involve predictable and recurring patterns of language use, without which our interactions would be random and chaotic. As members of particular social groups and cultures, we recognize the generic expectations of various situations and are able to respond by deploying the appropriate genre. (p. 135)

To make the concept of genre more accessible to educational practitioners, Martin (1992) provides a succinct definition of genre. He defines genre as “staged, goal-oriented social processes (p. 505). Each genre has a particular social purpose; this purpose is typically achieved through a series of steps that are functional and recognizable by members of the culture. In conceptualizing culture using the notion of genre, Martin attempts to “map culture from a semiotic perspective as systems of genres, together with variations in field, tenor, and mode” (Martin & Rose, 2008, p. 17). This is to say, “culture involves a large but potentially definable set of genres, that are recognizable to members of the culture, rather than an unpredictable jungle of social situations” (Martin & Rose, 2008, p. 17).

In sum, as shown in Figure 1, any text realized in a particular configuration of linguistic choices is itself the realization of contexts, including the broader context of culture and the immediate context of situation (Halliday, 1999). In other words, the patterns of social organization in a cultural community is manifested as patterns of social interaction in each situation, which in turn are manifested as patterns of the lexical and grammatical choices that a speaker or writer makes in a text (Martin & Rose, 2008). Eggins (2004) has maintained that an SFL approach to text attempts to understand not only the linguistic features of a text but also how these features reflect and enact broader
sociocultural beliefs and assumptions, the nature of the activities occurring in the immediate situation, the participants’ roles and relations, and the expectation of how flow of information is organized in the text.

![Diagram of the relationship between text and context in the SFL framework.](image)

**Figure 1:** The relationship between text and context in the SFL framework.

*Language development as expansion of meaning potential*

From conceptualizing language as a resource for creating meaning, Halliday (1993) maintains that developing a language means expanding one’s meaning-making resource, or “meaning potential” (p. 101). This expansion of meaning potential is defined in terms of the extension of the ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings one is able to make throughout the span of his or her life (Halliday, 1993). As individuals grow up and participate in expanding contexts such as family, community, school and work, they learn to construe more areas of experiences, enact more forms of interpersonal relationships, and organize information in a wider variety of manners. Their repertoire of meaning making resource expands at the same time they engage in learning other things through the medium of language in the increasing diverse contexts. Therefore, Halliday
(1993) argues that language learning is embedded in all other aspects of learning. In articulating this language-based theory of learning, he writes,

> When children learn language, they are not simply engaging in one kind of learning among many; rather, they are learning the foundation of learning itself. The distinctive characteristic of human learning is that it is a process of making meaning – a semiotic process; and the prototypical form of human semiotic is language. Hence the ontogenesis of language is at the same time the ontogenesis of learning. (Halliday, 1993, p. 93)

Halliday defines the scope of language learning by proposing a threefold perspective of “learning language, learning through language, and learning about language” (Halliday, 1999, p. 288). Learning language means learning one’s first language, plus any second or foreign languages as the substance of the curriculum, including initial literacy, composition skills, and so on. Learning through language means using language as a resource for learning other subject content. Learning about language means studying the knowledge of language, commonly referred to as metalanguage, to understand how language works to make meaning (Halliday, 1999).

2.4 SFL and L2 writing instruction

2.4.1 Reconceptualizing the definition of writing

An SFL perspective of language as a resource for making meaning contributes to a reconceptualization of writing. Writing is not the demonstration of lexical and syntactic knowledge; nor is it a cognitive process of deploying good writing strategies. Rather, writing is a goal-oriented communicative activity (Hyland, 2004). Writers are seen as having certain purposes to achieve, certain ideas to convey, and certain relationships with
their readers (Hyland, 2004). To effectively present ideas to an intended audience for a specific purpose, writers must make functional semiotic choices that operate simultaneously at the lexical, syntactic, and discourse semantic levels (Gebhard, Chen, Graham, & Gunawan, 2013). These choices reflect and construct the ideas writers wish to express, the voice or stance they are trying to construct, and how they wish to manage the flow of information in a text. Using SFL terms, these choices are referred to as register choices, which reflect and construct the situational context of a text (i.e., the field, tenor, and mode of a text). Moreover, writers’ choices are influenced by genre, or socially-recognized ways of using language for specific purposes in a cultural community (Hyland, 2004). This does not mean the genre determines the choices that can be made. Rather, it indicates that certain choices are more probable than others (Derewianka, 2003). For example, narratives in English frequently use the past tense, contain dialogue, and make use of adjectives and adverbs to describe characters, settings, and sequence of events. Sets of instructions (e.g., recipes, assembly manuals, science experiment guides) often contain action verbs and make use of the imperative (Derewianka, 1990).

From an SFL perspective, learning to write involves learning to make choices from the language resources in constructing meaning for specific purposes, audience and contexts (Schleppegrell, 2004). Therefore, writing instruction is concerned with extending learners’ meaning-making potential, that is, expanding learners’ repertoire of language choices for accomplishing a wider variety of writing goals (Schleppegrell, 2004). In addition, an SFL orientation to writing instruction focuses on the creation of meaning at the level of the whole text, rather than on the acquisition of lexical-grammatical forms at the sentence level (Byrnes, 2009). While knowledge about
language forms is important, teaching forms at the sentence level separates the language from whole texts where the forms are meaningful. SFL-based writing instruction emphasizes teaching forms in context, aiming at helping learners become aware of how a specific form is creating particular meaning relevant to a writing task (Byrnes, 2009).

2.4.2 SFL metalanguage for writing instruction

Many L2 literacy scholars have argued that what makes Halliday’s SFL distinctive and well suited to informing writing instruction is that it offers a functional metalanguage for teachers and students to explore the linguistic choices writers make in constructing texts (e.g., Macken-Horark, 2008; Brisk, 2014; Gebhard, Chen, & Britton, 2014; Schleppegrell, 2013). In contrast to traditional, formal metalanguage that labels word classes (e.g., nouns, verbs, adverbs) and syntax (e.g., subject, object, adjunct), functional metalanguage “is a meaning- or content-oriented metalanguage, providing a vocabulary for raising language awareness that can be linked to the purposes for which language is being used and the goals of the writer” (Schleppegrell, 2013, p. 165). The functional terminology focuses on “the generalized meaning that the grammatical structures construct,” enabling teachers and students to analyze how meaning is made in different types of texts students are required to write in school (Schleppegrell, 2007, p. 531). The analysis focuses on three key aspects of meaning that are important to text construction: content (ideational meaning), voice (interpersonal meaning), and flow of information (textual meaning).

To understand how a text presents content, teachers and students can analyze how a writer uses the language resources to construct grammatical “participants,” “processes,” and “circumstances” at the clause level (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Unlike the
traditional term “verb,” the functional term “process” captures the semiotic difference between types of verbs such as material, mental, verbal, and relational verbs that construe different types of actions, ways of sensing, ways of saying, and ways of being. Likewise, the functional term “participant” captures more precisely the lexical-grammatical relationships that exist between nominal groups and types of processes within a text. Last, the term “circumstance” captures how specific grammatical resources enable writers in constructing meanings related to the time, place, and manner in which events in the text unfold (Gebhard, Gunawan, Chen, 2014, p. 4; see also Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

To understand the voice of a text, teachers and students can analyze how a writer makes grammatical “mood” choices by using interrogatives, imperatives, or declaratives. These mood choices construct social distance and power dynamics in texts (e.g., Could you please send me your resume? versus I want your resume or Send me your resume). In addition, teachers and students can analyze how a writer makes “modality” choices to express the degree of truth, probability, or obligation of a proposition (e.g., Decision should be made after careful thoughts compared to Careless actions may lead to disastrous results). Last, teachers and students can explore how a writer exploits “appraisal” resources to construct attitudinal or evaluative meanings (e.g., This is the best novel I have ever read; Gebhard, Gunawan, Chen, 2014, p. 5; see also Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

Last, to understand how the flow of information is organized in a text, teachers and students can analyze how a writer grammatically weaves together given and new information to move a text forward. In SFL terms, the given information in a clause is referred to as the “theme” and the new information is referred to as the “rheme.” In
addition, teachers and students can analyze how a writer makes use of cohesive devises to construct logical relationships between clauses (e.g., *and, moreover, because, as a result*; Gebhard, Gunawan, Chen, 2014, p. 5; see also Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

A functional approach to text analysis supports the teaching and learning of writing in various ways. For example, teachers can use functional text analysis to investigate the language choices students have made in their writing, and identify how students have drawn on the resources of English in making meaning and where they need further development (Fang & Wang, 2012; Schleppegrell, 2007). Teachers can also engage students in analyzing the register choices expert writers make in the types of texts, or genres they assign student to write, and raise students’ awareness of the linguistic features that are most functional for specific writing tasks (Brisk, 2014; Gebhard, Britton, & Chen, 2014; Harman, 2013).

2.4.3 SFL-based writing pedagogy

As a way of supporting teachers in making the genre and register features transparent for students, Martin and his colleagues began collaborating with teachers in the 1980s to develop an SFL-based approach to designing curriculum and instruction (Martin & Rothery, 1986; Christie & Martin, 1997). This approach, known as “the Teaching and Learning Cycle” (or the Curriculum Cycle) brings together a Hallidayan conception of language as meaning making and a Vygotskian perspective of learning as a socially-mediated activity (Martin & Rose, 2005). Specifically, Martin and his colleagues adopted a Vygotskian concept of ‘guidance through interaction in the context of shared experience’ in designing the pedagogical cycle (Martin & Rose, 2005, p. 251). The goal of this cycle is to expand students’ repertoire of meaning-making resources through
explicit instruction, modeling, and guided practice. The steps of this cycle include: 1) building students’ understanding about the field they will be reading and writing about and the language needed to express this knowledge; 2) deconstructing model texts using functional metalanguage to name genre and register features; 3) jointly constructing texts with students to make linguistic know-how visible and the nature of linguistic choices available to authors explicit; and 4) gradually apprenticing students to produce written texts more independently by providing less scaffolding as students become more knowledgeable users of a particular genre over time (Martin & Rose, 2005; Martin & Rose, 2012).
CHAPTER 3

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This chapter provides information about the context in which the study took place and the participants involved in the study. The first part of the chapter describes the TESOL teacher education program and two focal professional development courses informed by systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and genre-based pedagogy. The second part describes the participants of the study, including the course instructor and three focal Asian English language teachers (ELTs).

3.1 The TESOL teacher education program

This study took place in a two-year TESOL teacher education program in the United States that offered a 33-credit Master’s Degree in Education to prepare pre- and in-service teachers to teach ESL (English as a second language) in K-12 contexts in the U.S. or EFL (English as a foreign language) in international contexts. At the time when the study was conducted, 47% of the teachers enrolled in the TESOL program were from international contexts, particularly from East Asian (e.g., China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan). This large number of Asian ELT population could be attributed to the escalating demands for English instruction brought about by globalization. An increasing number of pre- and in-service ELTs from Asia have sought to earn a degree in TESOL from a university in the U.S., Canada, Britain, or Australia, where English is used as the primary language (Liu, 1999; Llurda, 2005). Asian ELTs’ desire to participate in TESOL teacher education programs in these countries often centers on wanting to improve their English language proficiency, acquire cross-cultural life experiences, and gain advantage in the international job market (Phakiti & Li, 2011).
Moreover, the high percentage of international ELT population in the focal TESOL program reflected the trend of growing international student enrollment in U.S. higher education institutions. According to the Institute of International Education (2016), between 2005/6 and 2015/16, the number of international students in U.S. colleges and universities increased by 45% to reach 1,043,839 students. International student enrollment often serves as a critical marker of a higher education institution’s awareness and response to globalization, internationalization, and diversity (Parker, 2011). As a result, U.S. colleges and universities are increasing their efforts to attract international students (Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007). Another key motivation for American colleges and universities to host overseas students is financial benefit (Lee, 2010). The continued growth in international students coming to U.S. for higher education has had a significant positive economic impact on the U.S. In 2015, for example, international students and their dependents contributed more than $30.5 billion to the U.S. economy, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

A review of institutional documents makes clear that the focal TESOL teacher education program draws on a sociocultural perspective of language and literacy development (Hall, 1997; Halliday, 1978; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991). This perspective is explicitly stated in the program handbook.

[This] concentration draws upon and contributes to theoretical perspectives which view culture as central to the understanding of language and literacy and which examine language, literacy, and culture as products of historical and sociopolitical structures and processes. We conceptualize language, literacy, and cultural practices as social and political action, drawing on perspectives from fields such
as anthropology, sociology, linguistics, social psychology, multicultural education, and critical studies in a variety of disciplines. Consequently, we understand language and literacy as the negotiation of participation in communities, the construction and expression of social identities, and the reproduction or transformation of ideologies and power relations in schools, communities, and societies (Program Handbook, 2009, p. 3)

This understanding of language and literacy through sociocultural lenses guides the work of teacher preparation in this program. According to the handbook, this program aims at preparing teachers who are able to:

- support all students in learning to use literacies to accomplish meaningful academic, social, and political work in schools, communities, and societies;
- attend to and act upon learners’ social, cultural, developmental, and personal contexts;
- examine how larger historical and sociopolitical influences impact institutional and cultural systems in which they work;
- develop empirically-based practices, critically examining relevant research and scientific evidence in the field of education and examining data on their students’ learning through multiple sources of assessment; and
- conduct critical inquiry to support socially just teaching practices and educational policies. (Program Handbook, 2009, p. 5-7)

To achieve these teacher preparation goals, this program offers a range of courses.
Based on a review of the program handbook and course syllabi, these courses can be broadly categorized into five domains, including (1) understanding language and language development; (2) planning curriculum and instruction; (3) assessments; (4) culture and language education; and (5) leadership and professionalism. Table 1 summarizes the domains, domain goals, and the main courses associated with each domain. Some courses are categorized into multiple domains because of the extended course objectives.

Table 1: Summary of the program core courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Associated Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Domain 1: Understanding language and language development | • To develop an understanding of language as a system of communication and social practice  
• To demonstrate an ability to analyze how sociocultural and situational contexts influence how language is used  
• To gain familiarity with a range of perspectives on language development, including a sociocultural perspective  
• To develop an understanding of language as an integral part of learners’ overall development, including social, cultural, and cognitive development | • Theories of Second Language Learning  
• Second Language Literacy Development  
• Introduction to Functional Grammar |
| Domain 2: Planning curriculum and           | • To develop an understanding of principles and practices related to planning content-based curriculum | • Second Language Literacy Development |

54
| Domain 3: Assessments | • To gain an understanding of issues, concepts, and techniques of assessment for second language learners  
• To demonstrate ability to design, select, and/or use assessment tools to monitor student progress, diagnose individual strengths and weaknesses, and facilitate on-going learning.  
• Curriculum Development in Second Language Teaching  
• Theories & Methods for Second Language Instruction | • Assessment & Evaluation in Second Language Teaching |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Domain 4: Culture and Language Education | • To become aware of the influence of sociocultural and sociopolitical variables in education such as race, ethnicity, language, gender, and social class  
• To gain an understanding of a range of perspectives on cultural and linguistic diversity and its role in language education  
• To explore ways educators can support the development of equitable and democratic classrooms and communities | • Foundations of Multicultural Education  
• Multicultural Children’s Literature  
• Seminar in intercultural communication in education |
| Domain 5: Leadership and | • To gain ability to apply principles and practices to plan, implement, | • Practicum Teaching  
• Workshop in |
professionals and reflect on second language instruction in real-world educational settings
• To develop an inquiry-based project that addresses current educational needs drawing on research, field experiences, and concepts learned from the program

Leadership Project Development

3.2. The focal courses in systemic functional linguistics

This study investigates Asian ELTs’ professional experiences in two focal courses informed by SFL and genre-based pedagogy. The first course, Second Language Literacy Development (SLLD) is a required course offered in the fall semester. The second course, Introduction to Functional Grammar (IFG) is an elective course offered in the subsequent spring semester. Both courses are taught by the same instructor. This section presents the goals, content, and structure of both courses based on a review of the course syllabi, instructional materials, lecture, and the researcher’s observational fieldnotes.

SLLD

SLLD aims to support ELTs in developing an understanding of a sociocultural perspective of L2 literacy development and practical ways of using this understanding to design and reflect on L2 literacy instruction. To achieve these goals, this course was organized into four modules.

Module One provided ELTs with a forum for examining and reflecting upon their personal and professional experiences with regard to L2 literacy. This module began by
asking ELTs to recall how they learned to read and write in an L2, describe how they taught or envisioned to teach reading and writing as an L2 teacher, and state their conceptions about what L2 literacy instruction is about. Next, ELTs were introduced to three major perspectives of literacy development that have informed the fields of L2 literacy studies and teaching – the behavioral, the psycholinguistic, and the sociocultural perspectives. The lecture provided an overview of each perspective by identifying main assumptions regarding language, literacy, and literacy development, and highlighting representative instructional methods and activities. Last, in class discussion and their reflection journal, ELTs were asked to relate their learning experiences and teaching practices to three perspectives under exploration, and discuss the strengths, challenges, and issues related to various approaches to L2 literacy instruction.

Module Two centered on supporting ELTs in gaining an in-depth understanding of a sociocultural perspective of literacy development. The lectures, course readings, and class discussion engaged ELTs in exploring the theoretical underpinnings and pedagogical implications of a sociocultural perspective of literacy development. For example, ELTs were assigned the introductory chapter of Lantolf’s (2000) *Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning* to explore key concepts of Vygotsky’s theory of development, including semiotic mediation, internalization, and zone of proximal development (ZPD), and learn about how L2 researchers have drawn on these concepts to understand L2 language and literacy development.

Moreover, ELTs read and discussed Kern’s (2000) *Literacy and Language Teaching*. Kern criticizes the formalist view of language for having resulted in approaches to literacy instruction that focus primarily on mastery of vocabulary and
grammar in the absence of attention to discourse, purpose, and audience. Drawing on the work of Halliday (1993) and the New London Group (1996), Kern argues that even the most basic, ordinary acts of communication require interpretation and construction of meaning, involving the use of resources that extend beyond the vocabulary and grammar of a language. He justifies this argument by providing examples of how language learners draw upon linguistic and non-linguistic meaning-making resources associated with their first and subsequent languages (i.e. Available Design) – lexical items, syntactic structures, aspects of style, genre conventions, and so on – as they engage in particular acts of reading and writing. Moreover, he makes clear that meaning-making resources and ways of using these resources for interpreting and constructing meanings are tied to and shaped by social practices of language use, in particular communicative context and cultural context. One implication of Kern’s point for literacy teaching is that language learners’ reading and writing difficulties cannot be attributed simply to a lack of lexical and syntactic knowledge. Rather, teachers must take into account how various contextual factors influence learners’ textual practices (e.g., purpose and audience, nature of task, social role, sociocultural practices in L1 and L2 communities).

Building on Kern’s viewpoint, Module Three apprenticed ELTs to analyze text-context dynamics to understand the literacy development of L2 learners in diverse educational settings. ELTs were required to work in groups for collecting, discussing, and analyzing data with regard to textual practices of a focal student and related classroom and institutional practices (e.g., teachers’ curriculum, instruction, and assessment; classroom interaction; school/state standards). To support ELTs in conducting data collection and analysis, this module provided a series of instructional activities.
First, ELTs were assigned to read Dyson’s (1993) *Social Worlds of Children Learning to Write*. Dyson provides a model for researching the literacy practices of multilingual/multicultural learners from a sociocultural perspective. She demonstrates how to use qualitative data collection methods and the tools of discourse analysis to examine how acts of reading and writing are multimodal, social events. Following Dyson’s model, ELTs were required to develop a detailed plan for how they would gain access to a classroom, acquire informed consent from focal students and their teachers, collect student texts and related curricular materials, and conduct classroom observations if needed.

Second, this module introduced teachers to genre theory from the SFL orientation. The purpose of this introduction to genre was to develop ELTs’ awareness of language variation and provide them with insights and tools for analyzing how texts vary in relation to context. ELTs were required to read Hyland’s (2004) *Genre and Second Language Writing* to examine the notion of genre as social practice of language use in context, and also to explore ways of using genre theory to support the writing development of L2 learners. ELTs also read Derewianka’s (1990) *Exploring How Text Works* to investigate how various school-based genres are constructed in distinct and recognizable ways to meet specific social purposes (e.g., narrating, explaining, arguing). Drawing on the insights gained from the readings and accompanying lectures, ELTs were asked to identify the core genres their students need to know how to read and write in school (,), and explore the key linguistic features of these genres (e.g., organizational, syntactical, lexical, and graphic elements).

Third, ELTs were guided to conduct genre-based analysis of student texts to
understand students’ emergent academic literacy practices. They were also instructed how to interpret findings about students’ textual practices in light of classroom practices. For example, in one of the data analysis workshops, ELTs were given a sample data set collected from a fifth-grade, English Language Arts (ELA) unit on biographic writing. This data set comprised a sample of student writing and selected instructional materials, including an assigned reading about Sonia Sotomayor, the first Latina Supreme Court Justice in U.S. history; a reading/writing guide; a teacher created model text; and an interview guide for students to use to interview the person they would write about. To model how to analyze classroom data, the course instructor, Dr. O’Connell (pseudonym) first asked ELTs to spend a few minutes reviewing the sample data set and recording comments and questions. Next, she highlighted that the first step of data analysis was to describe texts. She asked ELTs to re-read the student writing sample and describe what they noticed about the text. One ELT responded that the text was organized “by time.” Dr. O’Connell further asked this ELT to point out specific sentences that showed a chronologic organization of the text. The ELT read aloud two sentences that included temporal connectives (\textit{Sonia Sotomayor was born on June 25, 1954 in New York. When Sonia was 3 years old, she moved to a project.}). Another ELT in the seminar also contributed to the discussion by identifying another sentence with a time marker (\textit{Sonia’s first job after law school was asst D.A.})

Dr. O’Connell then asked ELTs to examine how the student writer’s ability to organize a biographic recount chronologically was a result of the instructional scaffolding provided by her teacher. Dr. O’Connell first drew ELTs’ attention to the teacher-created reading/writing guide in the data set. This reading/writing guide was titled “I am a critical
text analyst,” and used by the classroom teacher to jointly deconstruct an assigned reading. It guided students to identify the genre of the text they just read and the key organizational features of the text. In discussing how this reading/writing guide supported students in writing a biographic recount, one ELT remarked that this guide “modeled the genre stages of a biography,” namely, “orientation, record of events, and evaluation of person.” She also found that the classroom teacher appeared to have explicitly taught students to use time order words to describe the sequence of events. During the rest of the workshop time, ELTs continued to identify key linguistic features of the student writing sample and discuss aspects of teacher support related to these features. In the end, Dr. O’Connell highlighted that one approach to analyzing students’ literacy development was to examine a teacher’s scaffolding practices as evidenced in his or her instructional materials, and then analyze samples of student writing to identify how the teacher's guidance had influenced the student's writing.

Last, in Module Four, ELTs were guided to explore the implications of their analysis of text-context dynamics for their teaching of academic writing to L2 learners. They were asked to reflect on their analysis and plan responsive curriculum, instruction, and assessment. In this module, ELTs were introduced to the Teaching and Learning Cycle, a genre-based approach to literacy instruction. ELTs were facilitated in exploring the instructional purpose of each stage of the cycle and in designing explicit, concrete instructional activities. These activities could in turn be used to support their focus students in learning to write more effectively within a targeted genre.

Moreover, this module assigned several case studies that provide examples of how classroom teachers at different grade levels in diverse educational contexts have
connected their analysis of students’ textual practices with curriculum planning. For example, ELTs read a case study conducted by Gebhard, Willett, Jimenez, and Piedra (2011) to learn about how Amy, an elementary school teacher in the United States, negotiated the demands of mandated curricula and high-stakes exams in designing curriculum, instruction, and assessment aligned with students’ needs and interest. This article described Amy’s participation in a teacher education graduate program at the time when the study was conducted. For her graduate coursework, Amy analyzed a writing sample produced by one of her students, Eloy, who was following a mandated textbook unit on personal narrative. Amy found that despite Eloy’s ability to use some “key features” of personal narrative as stipulated by the textbook (e.g., use I and me; have a beginning, middle, and end), his narrative did not provide information about the characters, time, and social context in which the story took place, and lacked a central event or sequence of events typical of a narrative text. Moreover, his text did not flow from the beginning to the end due to a lack of cohesive devices. This analysis made Amy aware that her adherence to the prescribed curriculum and teacher’s manual did little to support Eloy in improving his ability to write a more coherent and developed narrative. To help Eloy and other students in her class learn to write narratives more expertly and use narratives to explore topics that matter to them and their community, Amy designed a curricular intervention using Puerto Rican children’s literature. Drawing on the Teaching and Learning Cycle, Amy developed writing projects with authentic purposes and audiences from students’ perspectives; jointly analyzed, with the students, the genre features of the assigned children’s literature and model narratives; provided explicit instruction in the key linguistic resources for constructing the genre of narrative; and
provided focused feedback on multiple drafts of student writing using self-designed rubrics.

With the support of assigned readings, lecture, class discussion, and text-context dynamics analysis workshops throughout the four modules, ELTs were required to produce a case study on the literacy development of L2 learners at the end of the course. This case study required ELTs to identify issues related to L2 literacy instruction in the context they were teaching or envisioned to teach; state one or two research questions they would like to explore through their studies; articulate a conceptual framework for how they understand L2 literacy and literacy development; describe how they collected and analyzed classroom data, particularly student writing samples and teachers’ instructional materials; report findings; and state implications for teaching practices.

Table 2 summarizes the content of the course by module.

Table 2: Summary of SLLD content.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Summary of SLLD content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Module 1 (2 weeks) | • Reflection on personal and professional experiences related to L2 literacy  
• Introduction to three major perspectives of L2 literacy development: behavioral, psycholinguistics, sociocultural  
• Discussion of strengths, limitations, and issues related to various approaches to understanding, researching, and implementing instruction for L2 literacy development |
<p>| Module 2 (3 weeks) | • In-depth discussion about the theoretical underpinnings and pedagogical implications of a sociocultural perspective of literacy development |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 3</th>
<th>(6 weeks)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Exploration of key concepts of Vygotsky’s theory of development – semiotic mediation, internalization, ZPD, scaffolding.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Exploration of the notion of literacy as a way of meaning making and negotiation tied to and shaped by sociocultural practices of language use in a particular context.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussion of the contextual factors that influence L2 learners’ textual practices and literacy development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Analysis of text-context dynamics to understand the literacy development of focal L2 learners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction to qualitative data collection and analysis methods for classroom-based literacy case studies (e.g., Dyson, 1993)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction to genre theory from the SFL orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exploration of the notion of genre as social practice of language use in context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identification of key linguistic features of high-stakes school-based genres (i.e., organizational, syntactical, lexical, and graphic elements)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Guided data analysis workshops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Analysis of student writing samples to understand their emergent literacy practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interpretation of findings about students’ textual practices in light of classroom instructional practices.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 4</th>
<th>(3 weeks)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Implications of text-context analysis for the teaching of academic writing to L2 learners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction to the Teaching and Learning Cycle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reflection on analysis and planning responsive teaching practices using the Teaching and Learning Cycle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading and discussions of sample case studies that provided examples of how classroom teachers have connected their analysis of students’ textual practices with curriculum planning.

**IFG**

IFG built on SLLD’s goal of preparing ELTs for becoming critical text analysts by introducing them to Halliday’s functional grammar. IFG aimed to support ELTs in developing a functional understanding of grammar as a meaning-making resource, and to equip them with an ability to use functional metalanguage to analyze and teach how language works in constructing texts for (a) specific purpose, audience, and context. For this course, ELTs were required to complete a series of assignments, including (a) weekly reading logs that documented and explored key concepts of Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics (SFL), (b) a functional linguistic analysis of a discipline-specific text in a genre their students will need to know how to read and write in their learning context (e.g., a chapter in a novel, an explanatory passage in a science textbook, a sample TOEFL argumentative essay), (c) a functional linguistics analysis of an L2 student writing sample, and (d) an instructional plan for how they would support the academic writing development of L2 students based on their analysis.

Core readings for the course included *The Language of Schooling: A Functional Linguistics Perspective* (Schleppegrell, 2004), and *Genre, Text, Grammar: Technologies for Teaching and Assessing Writing* (Knapp & Watkin’s 2005), as well as a collection of journal articles about how functional grammar has been used to assess, respond to, and
teach L2 academic writing (e.g., Gebhard, Harman, & Seger, 2007; Schleppegrell & Go, 2007). The Schleppegrell (2004) textbook presents a functional linguistic analysis of the language of schooling, revealing the grammatical differences between ordinary conversational interaction and the kinds of texts students are expected to read and write about at school. It also reviews some discipline-specific literacy demands of science and history, and shows how grammatical choices are functional for constructing knowledge of these disciplines. The Knapp & Watkins (2005) textbook presents a genre-based approach to teaching and assessing writing. The first three chapters of the book introduce the theoretical framework and pedagogical principles of genre-based pedagogy. The subsequent chapters introduce five genres typically associated with high-stakes assessment: describing, explaining, instructing, arguing, and narrative. Each chapter reviews the discourse and grammatical features of one genre, and provides genre-based strategies for teaching and assessing the genre.

This course was organized into three modules. Module One introduced ELTs to Halliday’s functional grammar and compared it to other more formal conceptions of grammar (i.e., traditional grammar, Chomsky’s formal grammar). Using a series of lectures, Dr. O’Connell exposed ELTs to the primary concerns, unit of analysis, focus of analysis, associated scholarship and key concepts of the three conceptions of grammar (see Table 3 for a summary of the lecture content). To make each conception of grammar more explicit to ELTs, Dr. O’Connell also engaged them in analyzing e-mail messages. For example, ELTs were asked to analyze a sample enrollment request email with different conceptions of grammar, and discuss the strengths and limitations of applying each conception of grammar to teaching L2 writing.
Table 3: Summary of the lectures on conceptions of grammar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary concern</th>
<th>Traditional grammar</th>
<th>Formal grammar</th>
<th>Functional grammar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus of analysis</td>
<td>Parts of speech and prescriptive rules regarding correct usage</td>
<td>The structure of individual sentences and universal rules for generating sentences</td>
<td>Actual language use in context and semiotic resources for making meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit of analysis</td>
<td>Individual sentences</td>
<td>Individual sentences</td>
<td>Whole texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associated scholarship</td>
<td>Classical Greek and Latin philology</td>
<td>Chomskian linguistics</td>
<td>Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key concepts</td>
<td>• School grammar</td>
<td>• Universal grammar</td>
<td>• Functions of language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Syntactic categories</td>
<td>• Native speaker intuitions</td>
<td>• Context of culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Part of speech</td>
<td>• Natural order of acquisition</td>
<td>• Context of situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples in</td>
<td>• Grammar</td>
<td>• Grammatical competence</td>
<td>• Register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The natural</td>
<td>• Field, tenor, mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Discourse-oriented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Module Two introduced ELTs to functional metalanguage and apprenticed them to using functional metalanguage to analyze how language works to make meaning in the types of texts they routinely assigned students to read and write. In this module, ELTs were first asked to select a text or portion of a text for a closed linguistic analysis. Dr. O’Connell advised ELTs to select a published, discipline-specific text that represents a particular genre their students need to know how to read and write in their learning context (e.g., a chapter in a novel, an explanatory passage in a science textbook, a sample TOEFL argumentative essay). After they settled on a text, ELTs were required to conduct a brief analysis of the context in which the text is situated. They were asked to analyze both the broader ‘context of culture’ and the immediate ‘context of situation.’ For analyzing the context of culture, they were asked to describe the system of beliefs, values, and assumptions that shape how the text was produced and interpreted in this cultural context. Specifically, they needed to identify the genre their text represents, the social purpose for which this genre is used in this cultural context, and the genre stages this text moves through to achieve its social purpose. For analyzing the context of situation, ELTs
were required to identify specific characteristics of the text in terms of three dimensions: field, or the content of the text; tenor, or the attitudes of the writer toward the reader (e.g., authoritative and formal, less distanced and informal); and mode, the channel through which the communication takes place (e.g., face to face, written, text-messaging).

Next, ELTs were guided in conducting register analysis of their selected text using functional metalanguage. Register analysis refers to description of linguistic features in a text that realize its context of situation. To support ELTs in analyzing text register, Dr. O’Connell offered a series of workshops. These workshops were organized around the three dimensions of the context of situation (i.e., field, tenor, mode). For analyzing each dimension, Dr. O’Connell posed a set of related questions to be answered, and introduced a set of related functional metalanguage for talking about the workings of language in text. Table 4 presents the analytical questions and functional metalanguage introduced in this module to support ELTs in analyzing each contextual dimension of a text.
Table 4: Register analysis resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contextual dimension of text</th>
<th>Related questions for text analysis</th>
<th>Functional metalanguage for text analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Field**                    | • What is the subject matter or content of the text?  
• How does the author use ideational grammatical resources to present the content of the text? | • *Process* (material, mental, relational, verbal; realized by verbal groups)  
• *Participants* (realized by noun phrases)  
• *Circumstances* (realized by prepositional phrases, adverbs, and other resources for information about time, place, manner, etc.) |
| **Tenor**                    | • What is the voice/tone of the text?  
• How does the author use interpersonal grammatical resources to construct social relationships with readers? | • *Mood* (declarative, interrogative, imperative)  
• *Modality* (realized by modal verbs and adverbs)  
• *Appraisal* (realized by linguistic resources for evaluative and attitudinal meaning) |
| **Mode**                     | • What is the channel through which communication takes place in the text?  
• How does the author use textual grammatical resources to organize the flow of information in this mode of communication? | • *Theme and Rheme*  
• Nominalization  
• Reference  
• Lexical chaining  
• Cohesive devices (including conjunctions and connectors) |
To make the know-how of register analysis explicit to ELTs, Dr. O’Connell engaged ELTs in joint analysis of texts during the workshop time. For example, Dr. O’Connell and ELTs analyzed together Shel Silverstein’s (1964) *The Giving Tree*, a children’s picture book that describes the lives of a female apple tree and a boy, who develop a relationship with one another. To analyze the theme of this story, Dr. O’Connell guided ELTs to look specifically at the processes constructed in the author’s verb choices, and identify the patterns in terms of the dominant process types associated with the tree and the boy. Many ELTs noticed that the processes associated with the boy were mostly material ones that construct action (e.g., *climb, gather, buy, cut down*) and mental ones realized by two repeated verbs *want* and *need*. On the other hand, the processes associated with the tree were mostly verbal ones (e.g., *said, speak, whisper*) and relational ones that construct the tree’s characteristics or attributes in the story (e.g., The tree *was* happy). These patterns led ELTs to recognize how the boy was linguistically constructed as a selfish person who always wants to take something from the tree, while the tree was constructed as a caring person who always gives. ELTs interpreted the relationship between the boy and the tree as the one between human being and Mother Nature, or as the classic parent-child relationship.

At the end of Module Two, ELTs were required, as a mid-term assignment, to complete and submit their functional linguistic analysis of a selected text. For this assignment, ELTs needed to draw on their context analysis of a selected text to discuss what their students would need to know about the context to gain understanding of the text, and also to determine how this text might be relatively accessible or particularly challenging for their students. They were required to draw on their register analysis of
their selected text to explain how the author’s ideational, interpersonal, and textual grammatical choices work simultaneously in the text to support its purpose and audience, and to discuss the implications of their analysis for designing reading/writing instruction for their students.

Module Three asked ELTs to use the analytical method and tools of SFL to analyze L2 student writing and outline an instructional plan for how they would address the issues they identify in the student’s writing by using the principles of genre-based pedagogy. This module was organized around a series of text analysis activities. First, ELTs were asked to describe the lesson or unit in which their selected writing sample was produced (e.g., lesson/unit goals, writing task requirements). Next, ELTs were asked to identify the genre that the student writer of the selected text was attempting to produce, and then describe the main genre and register features that the student would be expected to use in producing this type of text effectively. After identifying both genre- and register-level expectations, ELTs were guided to analyze the linguistic features of their student writing sample. Specifically, they were required to: identify the genre stages the student writer used that made the text more or less successful; analyze the register resources the student writer used to construct the field, tenor, and mode of the text effectively; and identify the resources he or she needed to develop to become a more expert writer of this particular genre. Last, ELTs were asked to summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the student writing based on their analysis, and provide instructional ideas for how they would help their focal student and other struggling student writers expand their repertoire of linguistic resources to construct the targeted genre more successfully. Table 5 summarizes each module of the course.
Table 5: Summary of IFG content by module.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 1</th>
<th>Summary of modules</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(3 weeks)</td>
<td>• Conceptions of grammar: traditional grammar, formal grammar, functional grammar</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Definitions and primary concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Associated scholarship and key concepts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Implications for teaching practices</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduction to SFL theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Functions of language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conception of context: context of culture, context of situation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Register: Field, tenor, mode</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 2</th>
<th>Summary of modules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(6 weeks)</td>
<td>• Introduction to functional metalanguage for text analysis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Metalanguage for analyzing the field of a text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Metalanguage for analyzing the tenor of a text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Metalanguage for analyzing the mode of a text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Functional linguistic analysis of model discipline-specific texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Context analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Genre analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Register analysis</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 3</th>
<th>Summary of modules</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(5 weeks)</td>
<td>• Functional linguistics analysis of L2 student writing samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identification of genre- and register-level expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Analysis of genre stages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Analysis of register features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Field choices</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tenor choices</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Mode choices</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Diagnostic assessment of strengths and weaknesses of student writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Curricular unit design drawing on SFL -based pedagogy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 Participants

The participants of the study include the instructor of the focal TESOL courses, Dr. O’Connell, and three focal Asian ELTs, Lin, Jiwon, and Pei-Ying (all pseudonyms). This section provides the background information of the participants, with a specific description of their personal and/or professional experiences with regard to L2 literacy. More information will be included in the methodology chapter, including information related to how the participants were selected, how they gave permission to participate in the study, as well as the connection between the researcher and the participants.

3.3.1 Course instructor: Dr. O’Connell

Dr. O’Connell is a professor of Applied Linguistics and a former middle school ESL teacher in the U.S. A review of the university’s faculty website indicates that Dr. O’Connell’s research interests lie in understanding second language literacy development and teachers’ professional development in the context of educational reform in the U.S. Her research is informed by a critical sociocultural perspective of language, literacy, and learning, with a focus on analyzing the dynamic relationships between textual practices of L2 learners and the broader institutional, sociocultural, historical contexts of L2 literacy education.

Dr. O’Connell’s approach to designing and implementing graduate-level TESOL teacher education courses was also influenced by a sociocultural perspective of language development, with a specific focus on SFL and genre-based pedagogy. Based on an interview with Dr. O’Connell about how she designed SLLD and IFG, three key concepts from a sociocultural perspective of language development appeared to have informed her approach in supporting teacher professional development. First, Dr. O’Connell believed
that any form of learning, including learning to teach, is need-oriented and context-specific. She engaged ELTs in exploring the issues facing them and their English language learners in a particular educational context given current demographic, economic, social, and political changes in education in the U.S. and internationally. In the following interview excerpt, Dr. O’Connell stated how she attempted to support teachers’ inquiry into their professional contexts using case study methods.

I try to have teachers, per-service and in-service teachers in my class, think about a problem. Really think about something that is a burning reason why they are in this program; what they are trying to learn or accomplish; where they are going next... For example, there is a Korean teacher who talks about a national assessment which is now really pushing more on writing. That’s the problem in Korea. That’s a real problem so then turn that into the focus of your case study. How is what you’re doing relevant to Korean context? So when you go on the job market, you’re ready saying, “Well, in my Master’s program this is the kind of questions that were guiding my work. Here is how I think about those questions. Here are some examples of student learning that show how I’m trying to get a handle on those.” So make it relevant for where you’re going. (Interview, 11/20/2012)

Second, drawing on Halliday’s social semiotic perspective of language, Dr. O’Connell conceptualized literacy as the social practice of making and interpreting meaning in context, and she attempted to make this concept explicit to ELTs by supporting them in conducting case studies of text-context dynamics in specific language learning settings. Dr. O’Connell was aware that an educational case study is a new genre
to ELTs. ELTs needed to learn how language works in an effective case study in a graduate school, in much the same way as their students needed instruction in how to write a particular school-based genre for a specific purpose and audience. She supported ELTs in learning to read and write like teacher researchers by jointly analyzing model case studies with them to make the workings of language explicit.

I ask them to analyze existing texts in genres hopefully critically to see how language works and how language varies. And the students can appropriate these genre moves and some fine-grained linguistic features in producing a text…So the 684 case study is an example. They read case study. We do analysis of different types of case study in terms of genre moves of case studies. Then we look at specific language features of a case study to see how authors use certain clause-level grammar to do that. We do a lot of that in 670, too. If they have 684 and 670 together, they have metalanguage that helps them critically analyze texts they ask their students to read and write. (Interview, 11/20/2012)

Last, Dr. O’Connell drew on Vygotsky’s concepts of socially-mediated learning to design her instructional activities. Specifically, she provided different kinds of instructional scaffolding to support ELTs in learning new ways of thinking about literacy and new ways of teaching literacy. In the same interview Dr. O’Connell said,

I’m heavily influenced by Vygotsky’s scaffolding approach. By scaffolding I mean… for me sociocultural theory means that most of what you come to know, how you know, and who you are is a result of social interaction in which you participate. So if you are learning how to do something new, you have a model;
you have activities where you are taking certain parts in completing a larger task where you are not just learning the content but you are also learning how to be. So there are some identity works that involve in that. (Interview, 11/20/2012)

Dr. O’Connell mentioned that providing ELTs with model case studies to read and analyze was one of the examples of her instructional scaffolding. Other examples included guiding ELTs to keep a series of “case study memos” in SLID and “text analysis memos” in IFG as a way of sub-goaling for their final projects; jointly constructing with ELTs a section of a case study to make the process of writing and the know-how of making semiotic choices explicit; and organizing group work and peer feedback activities for ELTs to engage in collaborative interaction with others in the learning community.

3.3.2 Focal Asian ELTs

Lin

Lin was born in 1988 in China, where she attended elementary school, secondary school, and college. During college, Lin chose double majors in Software Engineering and English, believing that having two areas of specialty would gain advantages in the job market. In her senior year of college, Lin had an opportunity to work as a volunteer English teacher in an elementary afterschool program that served students from low-income families. In designing curriculum and instruction for her third-grade students, Lin drew on her computer skills to create a set of multimodal lessons that focused on teaching English vocabulary using songs, fresh cards, and interactive games. She described how this volunteer experience of designing curriculum and instruction aroused her interest in English teaching. To be better prepared for a teaching career, she decided to pursue a
Master’s degree in TESOL in the United States. She reported in an interview that her intention to study abroad was to improve her “English proficiency, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills” as well as to learn “practical teaching strategies” that she could use in her future teaching.

In the fall of 2012, Lin attended the TESOL teacher education program where the study was conducted. She entered the program with a strong knowledge of traditional grammar and many aspects of formal grammar (e.g., syntactic rules, types of sentence structures), which she reported learning in school in China. She described most of her English lessons from the fifth through the twelfth grades as consisting of the following set of activities for each textbook chapter: learning vocabulary and targeted grammatical structures through exemplary sentences; doing vocabulary and grammar exercises; reading and reciting the main passage of the chapter; and making sentences using the targeted grammatical structures. Reflecting on her English learning experience in an interview, Lin reported that she was good at memorizing vocabulary and grammar quickly so that she usually did well on school English exams. However, she felt herself unable to use the words and grammatical structures she had learned “skillfully” in working with texts.

靈活運用不太行。就是說這些東西我學完之後，老師怎麼告訴我，我就怎麼記，我都不太會問為什麼，就是說不太會產生問題，但是我很快就記起來，然後作題什麼都對。但是就是不太會用。特別是閱讀，很多字我都懂，但就不太能做對題。所以我覺得我得閱讀特別不好 (I couldn’t use these things skillfully. I mean I didn’t know how to use them after I learned them. I just
followed what my teachers said were correct, but I never asked why. When my
teacher taught me a grammatical rule, I just memorized it quickly, and then used it
for a test. I was always able to answer test questions correctly. But when it came
to reading, I had trouble. Many times I felt I knew most of the words in a passage,
but I wasn’t able to answer the reading comprehension questions correctly;
Interview, 12/18/2012)

Lin’s struggle with reading intensified as she was required to read extended texts
during college. As an English major, she was required to read English literature. She also
needed to read many English-written textbooks for her Software Engineering study. To
make sense of these discipline-specific texts, Lin attempted to take a different approach
to reading following the advice of the instructor of her college reading course. Rather
than reading word by word and looking up every unfamiliar word, she began to use the
reading strategies, such as previewing, skimming, and summarizing. She remarked that
these strategies supported her in grasping the main idea of a text, which she previously
lacked an ability to accomplish. However, despite this improvement, she was still not
confident in her ability to read extended disciplinary texts. With regard to writing, Lin
reported that she never formally learned English writing in school. Most of the writing
she had done in school was in the form of sentence translation and sentence making using
the grammatical rules she had just learned. Occasionally, she was required to write short
passages in assigned topics. In those cases, she wrote Chinese first and then translated it
into English. Even in college, Lin remarked, writing instruction remained scarce. She
pointed out that she received writing instruction because she was an English major, while
students majoring in other disciplines typically did not have English writing classes
during their undergraduate years.

Lin’s experience of learning how to read and write academically made her particularly interested in exploring the linguistic differences between ordinary conversational interaction and discipline-specific texts during her TESOL study. She expressed that knowing how language varies according to purpose and context helped her understand and cope with her own academic reading and writing difficulty. For her future career, she planned to become a college English instructor in China after she graduated from the TESOL program. She explained that Chinese students, despite years of school English study, needed academic reading and writing support in college to accomplish a range of social, academic, and professional goals. Moreover, college instructors have more agency in designing their own curriculum than elementary and secondary school teachers do. School teachers in China were typically mandated to use prescribed curricula and teach for high-stakes tests. Lin believed that teaching at the college level would provide her with more opportunities to apply pedagogical ideas she learned from the TESOL program to her own teaching contexts.

Jiwon

Jiwon was born in 1985 in a Daegu, South Korea. She was an oboe player for many years, and received a Bachelor of Music degree from a university in Korea in 2007. During the summer of 2009, upon the completion of her first year of a master’s program in music education, Jiwon came to the U.S. to study English in a private language institute. In an interview, she reported feeling “frustrated” and “afraid” at the beginning of her summer English program because she was unable to “use English to communicate
with people in class at all after [having] studied English for more than ten years in Korea.” She recalled that most of the English classes she had attended in Korea were taught by teachers who typically had students “memorize grammatical rules such as subject and verb agreement, verb tenses, or adjective clauses, and practice them again and again in classrooms.” These lessons on traditional and formal grammar, Jiwon commented, provided her with a foundation for learning English but did not prepare her to use English outside the testing situations. She described feeling a “strong mismatch” between her syntactic knowledge and her ability to use English to express ideas orally and in writing.

During the two months of her study in the summer English program, Jiwon found that she “improved a lot” in her ability to speak and write in English. The gains she made within a short period of time in the summer program prompted her to think about how English could be taught differently in Korea. While she was unable to describe specifically how the instructional approaches she experienced in her summer English program differed from those in Korea, she was eager to make some contributions to English education in Korea by introducing new teaching strategies. In an interview she said,

I couldn’t really describe what good teaching strategies are, cause I didn’t have any background knowledge about teaching English at that time. But I could see many students, me and other students from Taiwan, Japan, and Korea, improved a lot. I mean our English speaking and writing skills developed a lot, compared to the previous English learning in our own countries. …So I think if I can learn how to teach English in the U.S. context, maybe I can bring the teaching strategies to the Korean context. If I can use them in Korea, why don’t they, I mean why do
they need to go to U.S. to learn English? Cause so many Korean are learning English or going to schools in the U.S. The reason is that the English strategies are not effective in Korean context. That’s the big reason why they want to study here. They want to improve their language skills. (Interview, 12/5/2012)

To learn approaches to teaching English, Jiwon quit her Master’s program in Music Education in Korea, and attended an intensive TESOL certificate program in the U.S. in the spring of 2010. This program introduced Jiwon to the principles of second language teaching and a variety of teaching strategies, such as turn and talk, role play, total physical response (TPR), and use of songs and games. Jiwon also had an opportunity to design and implement English lessons to teach adult beginner English language learners, and to work with an experienced ESL instructor in an intermediate-level class.

Reflecting on her adult ESL teaching experience in the U.S. in an interview, Jiwon felt that using songs, games, and hands-on activities to teach English was “very helpful, especially for the beginners who didn’t know how to speak English at all.” However, she was not sure if these strategies were amenable to the teaching of reading and writing to students who were above the beginner level. She explained that the ESL instructor she worked with in the intermediate level class taught reading and writing by drilling vocabulary and sentence patterns. Given that Jiwon was only a student teacher, she ended up following this instructor’s teaching methods. She described feeling surprised that drill and practice of vocabulary and sentence-level grammar was still a popular approach to teaching L2 literacy worldwide, even in the U.S.
The short experience of adult ESL teaching aroused Jiwon’s interest in pursuing graduate study in a more theoretically-grounded TESOL teacher education program. In 2012, she was admitted to the TESOL teacher education program where the study was conducted, with a concentration of reading and writing instruction. In her personal statement for graduate school application, she described her professional goal as becoming “a well-prepared EFL teacher with a specialty in teaching literacy at the elementary and secondary school levels in Korea.”

Pei-Ying

Pei-Ying grew up in Taiwan. She had been a vocational high school English teacher for 8 years before entering the focal TESOL teacher education program in September 2012. In an interview about her teaching history, Pei-Ying stated that vocational high school education in Taiwan had long been seen as a lower academic track compared to the traditional, comprehensive high school system. She added, “Students who get high scores on their high school entrance exams normally attend comprehensive high schools, while others go to vocational high schools. That’s why my students generally have low English proficiency, like between the beginner and intermediate levels.” (Interview, 10/6/2012). In her school, Pei-Ying taught two types of English course. The first type was the general English course, which was offered to all students across departments of study (e.g., Engineering; Accounting; Computer programming). The second type was designed specifically for students who majored in Applied Foreign Language. This type of course included several sub-courses that provided more advanced reading, writing, listening, and speaking instruction.
Pei-Ying reported that her approach to teaching was mainly exam-oriented, because she was under pressure to prepare students for passing exams to enter vocational colleges or universities of science and technology. She described her teaching practices in one of the course reflection journals for *SLLD*.

Restrained by the test-oriented educational system and heavy workloads, what English teachers are able to do is to catch up with fixed schedules, finish lessons on time, and introduce test-taking skills and strategies. Thus, for a long time I focused on translating texts, analyzing sentence structures, and teaching test-taking strategies to help my students pick correct answers quickly. I firmly believed these methods were the most effective ways to help them pass the entrance exam. (Course Reflection Journal, *SLLD*)

Reflecting on her teaching practice, Pei-Ying recalled feeling “tired” and “frustrated” by having to drill sentence fragments. She said,

Gradually not only did my students find learning English tedious but I also couldn’t gain any sense of achievement through the struggling process. I started to think whether that is the career I still want to do for another 20 years (maybe longer!). Three or four years ago, I started to think about how I could make my teaching more appealing to students. I formed a habit to participate some seminars for the hope of gaining new insightful information and inspiration in teaching. (Course Reflection Journal, *SLLD*)

According to Pei-Ying, the seminars she attended centered on introducing teachers to specific strategies for teaching English speaking, listening, reading, or writing.
When asked which aspect of English teaching she found most challenging and needed more professional support in, she answered "writing". She explained that writing had long been considered a skill that can be acquired naturally through extensive reading and intensive practice. Therefore, many English teachers in Taiwan, including herself, did not know how to teach writing. What they did was basically to “assign one writing assignment after another and correct students’ grammatical errors (Interview, 4/2/2013).

Giving corrective feedback to student writing, from Pei-Ying’s point of view, was “troublesome” and “time-consuming”, because it increased her workload and did not seem to be effective. She reported that she often ended up rewriting her students’ texts because she did not know what feedback besides error correction she could offer.

However, she also felt grammar-free instruction that many ‘natural approach’ scholars advocated impractical because L2 learners, particularly her students with low proficiency, needed basic syntactic knowledge to help them get started in carrying out reading and writing tasks. In an interview, she stated,

Pei-Ying: 像是我去參加一些研習，有些教授會提倡說不要文法教學，就讓學生多讀多寫，他們就會進步。這個 idea 是很創新沒錯啦，但是我們在底下的老師聽了就很驚慌啊。「不教文法我們還能教什麼？」…這樣聽起來好像很不 professional？（Some workshops I attended, like, some professors, advocated ‘no grammar’ in English teaching. They said just having students read and write and they would develop. This idea is kind of innovative, but all English teachers sitting down there felt panic when we heard about it. “What else can we do if we do not teach grammar?” …Am I sounding unprofessional?)
Researcher: 不會啦！我自己也曾經這樣想過。(No, not at all. I had the similar
question when I was teaching.)

Pei-Ying: 其實我也不是說英文老師只要教文法。像我自己教到後來…也是
很，覺得很煩。但是學生考試需要，而且我覺得第二外語的學生還是必須懂
一點文法才有辦法讀寫，至少他們要知道句子結構。像我很多學生，一年級
新生，他們可能連基本句子構造都不曉得，那要怎麼進一步去讀或寫？所以
我覺得文法還是要教，只是說要怎麼教。(I am not saying that teachers should
just focus on grammar. I myself often feel teaching grammar tedious. But students
need to take grammatical tests. Also, I think second language students need to
learn basic sentence structure. Many of my students, especially first year students,
do not know what makes a sentence. How could they begin to read and write if
they do not know sentences? So I think it is necessary to teach grammar. The
question is how; Interview, 3/2/2013)

Pei-Ying’s question regarding how to teach grammar in a way that is supportive
of students’ literacy development became her major inquiry during her TESOL program.
She reported that her goal for TESOL study was to find ways to negotiate demands of
high-stakes assessment and at the same time provide English instruction that is effective
for her students and reflective of her professional interest and commitment. She was
immediately intrigued by a functional perspective of grammar and a genre-based
approach to writing at the beginning of her participation in SLLD, as these concepts
provided her with new insights into conceptualizing and teaching language. However, as
an experienced teacher, she was also aware of the institutional forces that shaped her
work in Taiwan, such as mandated school curricula and the assessment system that were more reflective of a formalist perspective of language and language learning. Therefore, compared with Jiwon and Lin, Pei-Ying was more reserved and skeptical regarding the potential of applying genre-based pedagogy or other teaching methods she learned from the TESOL program to her local teaching context.
CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

This chapter is organized into six main sections. The first section describes the approach to inquiry this study uses, and provides the rationale for using this approach. The second section poses the central question and associated sub-questions this study aims to answer. The third section defines the unit of analysis of this study, and reports the strategies used for binding the unit of analysis to ensure that the study remains reasonable in scope. The forth section describes the researcher’s role and discusses the issues involved in this role that may influence data collection and interpretation. The fifth section delineates the data sources and data collection phases. The sixth section describes data analysis procedures. Last, the seventh section discusses the limitations of this study.

4.1 Research approach

This study uses a qualitative case study design to explore the research question of how professional development (PD) coursework in systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and genre based pedagogy (GBP) influences East Asian ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing (Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). A qualitative case study is an approach to inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals in order to describe and explain a phenomenon of interest (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). A qualitative case study is an approach to inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals in order to describe and explain a phenomenon of interest (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). Yin (1994) provides a more technical definition of a case study, referring to it as a way of investigating “a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). This definition highlights the important role that contextual conditions play in a qualitative case study researcher’s
attempt to understand the phenomenon of interest. It also helps distinguish qualitative case studies from other approaches to inquiry. For example, experimental research typically divorces a phenomenon from its context, or normalizes the context within the laboratory environment so that attention can be focused on only a few variables. Likewise, survey studies, despite their ability to deal with phenomenon and context, allow only limited contextual conditions to be covered in survey questions, leading to limited investigation of context (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 1994).

Creswell (2003), Stake (1995), and Yin (2003) all situate qualitative case studies within a social constructivist paradigm. Social constructivists hold assumptions that individuals construct meanings of their experiences in the world. These meanings are subjective, varied, and multiple (Yin, 1994). Thus, rather than examining meanings based on pre-established categories, qualitative case study researchers use open-ended questions to understand the complexity of views or meanings their research participants hold about the world (Yin, 1994). They also tend to maintain a collaborative relationship with the research participants throughout the entire research process. This close relationship enables research participants to tell their stories, and allows the researcher to better understand the participants’ views and actions (Creswell, 2009). Moreover, social constructivists believe that the generation of meaning is always social, arising in and out of individuals’ interaction with other members of their cultural communities (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Therefore, qualitative case study researchers emphasize in-depth description of the contexts in which the participants live and work, seeking to understand the social, cultural, and historical influences that shape participants’ meaning making and negotiation (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). To gain the sensitivity to the social processes of
interaction and meaning making among participants, qualitative case study researchers, like ethnographers, typically visit the context of their research participants and participate in various activities within the context for an extended period of time (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). They also recognize that their own background shapes their interpretation of the meanings others hold about the world, and thus position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation is shaped by their own personal, cultural, and historical experiences (Creswell, 2009; Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

This dissertation research chose a qualitative case study approach for two reasons. First, the research question this study aims to answer is open-ended and exploratory in nature. According to Yin (1994), a qualitative case study is a preferred approach to inquiry when the focus of a study is to answer a “how” or “why” question. Second, this study attempts to cover contextual conditions because they are relevant to the phenomenon under study. In other words, the boundaries between the phenomenon under study and its context are not evident. The phenomenon to be explored in this study is the influence of SFL-based PD on East Asian ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing. However, the phenomenon would not be understood without the context, that is, one specific TESOL teacher education program informed by a sociocultural perspective of language, and two focal courses in this program informed by SFL and GBP. It was in this context that ELTs developed and reflected on their approaches to responding to student writing. For the abovementioned reasons, this study adopts case study as the approach to inquiry.
4.2. Research questions

The central question posed for this study is: How does professional development (PD) coursework in systemic functional linguistics (SFL) influence Asian ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing?

This central question was further narrowed down into three sub-questions to guide the exploration of the complex phenomenon of interest.

1. Based on their previous socialization as language learners and language teachers in Asia, what conceptions of language tend to inform Asian ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing?

2. Over the course of their participation in the SFL-informed PD, how do Asian ELTs’ approaches to responding to student writing change (or not)?

3. After completion of the PD, how do Asian ELTs respond to student writing during their teaching practicum? In what ways are their response practices influenced by SFL and GBP (or not)?

4.3 The unit of analysis

A major step in designing and conducting a case study is defining its unit of analysis (Yin, 1994). A unit of analysis is the major entity that a researcher wants to “express something about when the study is completed and is, therefore, the focus of all data collection efforts” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 169). For a case study, the unit of analysis is also the ‘case’ (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 1994). It is of great importance for the case study researcher to define what the case, or unit of analysis is, and to place
boundaries on the case so that the study remains reasonable in scope and the data
collection stays focused and relevant (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 1994).

This study attempts to explore how an SFL/GBP-based PD influences East Asian
ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing. The case, or the unit of analysis of this
study, is East Asian ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing over time. This
general definition of the unit of analysis is further bound by place and time (Dyson &
Genishi, 2005). First, this study only investigates East Asian ELTs who participated in
one particular TESOL teacher education program informed by a sociocultural perspective
of language development. Second, this study only examines ELTs’ response practices
over the course of their participation in the TESOL program, focusing on two specific
timeframes – first, over 28 weeks, two semesters of the SFL/GBP-based PD between
October 2012 and May 2013 (14 weeks in SLLD and 14 weeks in IFG); and second, over
ELTs’ non-licensure teaching practicum conducted eight months after the completion of
the SFL/GBP-based PD (January 2014 – April 2014).

The non-licensure teaching practicum was a 3-credit course designed for teacher
candidates who plan to teach EFL in international contexts and do not need state
licensure, as well as for teacher candidates who come from diverse countries and plan to
gain a field experience in a US school or university. Teachers participating in non-
licensure practicum were required to implement a unit of instruction in a formal or
informal classroom context and reflect on their students’ learning using assessment tools
they created. In addition, they were required to reflect on their emerging teaching
practices in a course reflection paper. The purpose of including ELTs’ non-licensure
teaching practicum in this case study is to understand how the SFL/GBP-based PD
impacted ELTs’ feedback practices in real instructional contexts where ELTs were not required to use the tools of SFL and GBP to respond to student writing.

4.4 The researcher’s role

Qualitative research is interpretive research, with the researcher typically involved in a sustained and intensive experience with research participants (Creswell, 2009). As a result, qualitative researchers’ personal backgrounds, lived experiences, values, and biases hold the potential for shaping the kinds of research questions they formulate, the types of the data they are able to gather, and the interpretations they make during the studies (Creswell, 2009).

As a researcher for this present qualitative case study, I am aware that my personal background shaped the development of my research interest and research questions. The idea behind this study stemmed from my past experience as a former EFL teacher in Taiwan. From 2003 to 2005, I worked in an elementary school remedial program to provide students with additional support in English. In 2006, I began to teach English in a private language school. This school served high school students who were seeking extra English instruction in order to be prepared for college applications as well as for local or international English proficiency tests.

From these two jobs, I observed a phenomenon – while most of the Taiwanese students had learned English since the first grade in school, they continued to enter high schools with only the most rudimentary level of academic reading and writing abilities. A large number of high school students entered my classes with an intermediate to advanced knowledge of vocabulary items and sentence-level grammar. Many of them
were even quite fluent in everyday, oral conversation in English, because they attended so-called ‘bilingual’ kindergarten or elementary schools. However, their ability to read and write dense, extended academic texts was considerably limited. I had to spend the majority of my instructional time helping them improve English reading and writing, as these two areas of English learning played an essential role in determining their academic achievement in high school and the potential for higher education.

Teaching academic reading and writing in English was a challenging job that I did not feel well prepared for. Especially, I did not know what constituted academic language and how I could break it down into meaningful and manageable instructional lessons. Therefore, I mainly followed the textbooks and teachers’ manuals stipulated by the language institute where I worked. In these mandated materials, reading lessons were organized around a set of steps: introducing key vocabulary and phrases, reading aloud a passage with students, explaining the passage sentence by sentence, giving a comprehension check, and, optionally, leading a class discussion about issues related to the reading passage. Gradually, I found that my reading instruction was basically vocabulary instruction, which bored my students and did not seem to help them become better and critical readers.

In regard to teaching writing, I encountered even greater challenges. Besides instructing students in sentence combination and expansion strategies, assigning writing prompts for them to respond (to), and brainstorming with them ideas, words, and phrases for writing, I did not know what else I could do to support their writing development. In addition, giving feedback on student writing was a challenging task fraught with frustration and uncertainty. When I looked at a student paper, I was often overwhelmed
by its obvious grammatical errors and then spent a great amount of time correcting them. This tendency to correct errors also stemmed from my lack of confidence in writing English. As a non-native English speaking teacher, I often was not completely sure of how to most effectively use English to compose a text in response to a specific prompt. Therefore, I tended to focus on something I had better control over – parts of speech and sentence structures.

During two years of teaching in the language school, my daily work was filled with explaining, drilling, and correcting vocabulary items and sentence-level grammar. I became very unsatisfied with my teaching job and wanted to pursue professional development. In 2007, I participated in a MA TESOL teacher education program in the United States. Similar to my research participants in the study, my desire to earn a Master’s degree in TESOL from a U.S. university centered on wanting to improve my English, learn a variety of teaching practices, and gain advantage in the international job market. During my program, I was introduced to a sociocultural perspective of second language development. This perspective defines language as the social practice of meaning construction and interpretation rather than as a set of rules for structuring linguistic elements into sentences (Duranti, 1997; Halliday, 1978). It also conceptualizes second language development as a process of becoming acculturated into socially-constituted webs of communicative practices rather than merely mastering grammatical forms in a new language (Hall, 1997). Given my prior experience with form-focused language learning and teaching, a sociocultural perspective was new to me. I became very interested in exploring its theoretical basis and implications for EFL teaching. At the same time I also encountered considerable challenges as I tried to tackle the complexity
of different perspectives of language, literacy, and learning. Moreover, I, myself, wrestled with issues pertaining to academic reading and writing as I attempted to make sense of discipline-specific readings while also constructing graduate-level written projects.

In 2010, I began my doctoral study, with a specific interest in further exploring the implications of a sociocultural perspective of second language development for EFL literacy instruction. During my doctoral program, I was introduced to Halliday’s social semiotic theory of language and Martin’s theory of genre as social practice of language use in context. These theories helped me develop a deeper understanding of a sociocultural perspective of second language development. They also provided me with an insightful avenue to examine and reflect on my own ways of using English. I became more linguistically aware and contextually sensitive when I used English to accomplish various social, academic, and professional goals. I observed a steady progress in my own English proficiency, especially my ability to read and write dense, discipline-specific texts. This personal improvement in English aroused my interest in exploring the potential of SFL to design and research EFL literacy instruction.

As I continued to develop a deeper understanding of SFL during my doctoral study, I also worked as a teaching assistant in several Master’s level TESOL courses informed by SFL and genre-based pedagogy, including the two focal courses for this study. In these courses, I had opportunities to work with ELTs from various East Asian countries. Through participation with weekly seminar meetings and small group discussions, I became aware of the academic and professional challenges facing these East Asian ELTs. Many of them were frustrated with their approach to English
instruction or the way English was taught in their own educational contexts, and desired to explore potentially more effective approaches to teaching. In addition, the majority of them struggled with understanding and negotiating various perspectives of language, literacy, and learning during their program of study.

From assisting these East Asian ELTs in their TESOL courses I came to know that their experiences were intricately interwoven with my own. I had dealt with many of the same issues with which they were dealing on a personal, academic, and professional level. Gradually, I developed an interest in researching the professional development of East Asian ELTs who participated in an alternative approach to teacher education informed by a sociocultural perspective of second language development. Specifically, I was interested in understanding how East Asian ELTs made sense of SFL and genre-based pedagogy and how their understanding informed their approach to respond to student writing and designing writing instruction. Based on this area of interest I generated the research questions for this study. In fact, this study has become an “extension of [my] understanding of the world [I] seek to more fully comprehend” (Ramanathan, 2005, p. 291). It, in-and-of-itself, is a summation of my personal and professional experience.

I am aware that my personal background and experiences not only influenced the generation of my research questions but also affected my fieldwork relationships with individual research participants and ultimately, shaped my data collection and analysis. First, being a research assistant for the focal TESOL courses under study enabled me to gain access to the research site, get quick acquaintance with East Asian ELTs, and conduct fieldwork in a consistent, ongoing basis. However, while data collection was
more convenient, my role as a teaching assistant raised difficult issues related to power relations. I was aware that the East Asian ELTs enrolled in the focal TESOL courses might agree to participate in my study because they perceived I had institutional power. They might also tend to behave in a certain way or express a specific position toward the topics related to my study because they wanted to be seen as ‘good students’ in the courses. As a result, the information I gained from the fieldwork might not accurately reflect ELTs’ true perspectives or feelings. I attempted to address these issues by reiterating, during informed consent meetings and throughout the entire study, that their participation in the study would not affect their course grades in any way and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time they wanted. I also planned a follow-up data collection phase during their non-licensure teaching practicum in which I was not an instructor and had no control over the texts they produced (e.g., teaching materials, student writing samples, reflection papers for the practicum course).

Second, while my role as a teaching assistant might create an institutional hierarchical relationship between me and the participating East Asian ELTs, my ethnic background and cultural identity made establishing rapport relatively easily. I shared with focal ELTs a common ground in that we all self-identified as East Asian women who learned English as a foreign language. We all also went through TESOL teacher education programs in the U.S. and had similar study abroad experiences. As a Mandarin speaker, I shared another common bond with ELTs from Taiwan and China, as we could communicate with each other in our first language. These commonalities enabled me to build a close, reciprocal relationship with the participating ELTs that facilitated my fieldwork (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). I had little problem collecting interview and
document data from the participating ELTs. Sometimes they even took the initiative for data collection when they contacted me to tell stories that they thought I might be interested in hearing. Their willingness to share their private experiences and thoughts with me was, in part, due to a feeling of importance from being studied. They felt that their academic and professional experiences in the TESOL teacher education program were important but were often neglected. Having an opportunity to engage in conversations about their experiences and to express their voices was perceived by them as beneficial.

Third, my relationship with the focal course instructor, Dr. O’Connell, also influenced my fieldwork and interpretation of findings. Dr. O’Connell was my academic advisor and teaching supervisor. At the emergent stage of the study, Dr. O’Connell served as a ‘gatekeeper,’ an individual at the research site who controls “avenues of opportunity” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 38). A gatekeeper holds a formal position to grant or withdraw permission for the research to be done. My academic connection with Dr. O’Connell eased my entry to the research site, as I was able to communicate with her about my research idea and data collection plan, and obtain fieldwork permission in a timely manner. However, as my study proceeded, Dr. O’Connell became a key source of information and was not merely a gatekeeper. I collected data regarding her curriculum design and instructional practices, and documented her interactions with East Asian ELTs in seminar meetings. Conducting fieldwork in my own advisor’s courses where I worked as a teaching assistant led to several issues commonly associated with “backyard” research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992), meaning research that involves studying the researcher’s own organization, or friends, or
immediate work setting. I was aware that my other roles as an advisee and as a graduate employee held the potential for compromising my ability to disclose information or creating favorable conclusions about the site or participants. I attempted to address these issues by using rich, thick description to report events and convey findings. This description may “transport readers to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experience,” adding to the validity of the findings (Cresswell, 2009, p. 192). I also attempted to provide multiple perspectives about a theme, if any, including negative or discrepant information that runs counter to a theme.

Finally, I am aware that my own perception of SFL and genre based pedagogy may influence my interpretation of findings. Given my deep involvement with SFL theory and research during my doctoral study as well as my perceived gains in English academic reading and writing as a result of engagement with SFL, I tended to hold a position that SFL has a potential to support literacy instruction and teacher professional development. I am aware that my position bias toward the research topic might cause me to lean toward certain themes, for example, improvement in East Asian ELTs’ ability to respond to student writing. I might also consciously or unconsciously look for evidence to support my position. To address these issues I attempted to collect multiple data sources of information and examine evidence from different sources. This data triangulate allowed me to build a coherent justification for themes or challenge their strength (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). I also paid close attention to contradictory evidence, for example, evidence that showed how ELTs re-inscribed SFL concepts with a more formal and structural understanding. Last, I used the peer debriefing strategy (Creswell, 2009) to enhance the accuracy of my interpretations. I presented my work-in-progress
findings to a number of doctoral students in writing groups. These graduate peers reviewed my work and asked questions. They helped me identify where my interpretations might be biased, incomplete, or compromised, and provided suggestions for what other sources of information I could seek out to strengthen my findings.

4.5 Data collection procedures

4.5.1 Strategies of selecting participants

The selection of focal East Asian ELTs for this case study involves “purposive sampling techniques” (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p. 173). As its name suggests, purposive sampling refers to selecting research participants “based on a specific purpose rather than randomly” (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p. 173). Purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research to help researchers understand specific problems and research questions (Creswell, 2009). Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) identify four key features of purposive sampling. First, purposive samples are often selected because they are information rich in regard to research questions. Second, researchers’ or informants’ judgment is often used to determine purposive samples. Third, purposive sampling procedures focus on the depth of information that can be generated by individual sample. Finally, purposive samples are typically small (usually 30 or fewer samples).

In conducting purposive sampling for this study, I used four criteria to judge my selection of focal research participants. These criteria were developed based on my purpose of selecting participants who represented a broader group of East Asian pre- and in-service ELTs as well as participants who could provide a wealth of details for describing the case being studied, that is, ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing over time. The first criterion was that a participant must have grown up and
received most of his or her education in one of the four East Asian countries – China, Japan, Taiwan, or Korea. Second, a participant must complete 28 weeks of the SFL/GBP-based PD (i.e. *SLLD* and *IFG*). Third, a participant must participate in non-licensure teaching practicum and implement a unit of instruction on writing. It should be noted that teachers who participated in their non-licensure practicum were allowed to design an English language unit of any kind based on their own interest and permission from their cooperative teachers. Given that the focus of this study is on teachers’ approaches to responding to student writing, it is essential to select a participant who covers writing in his or her unit of instruction.

4.5.2 Sources of data

Qualitative case studies rely on multiple sources of evidence, with data converging in a triangulating fashion, to ensure the phenomenon of study is well explored and the essence of the phenomenon is revealed (Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Yin, 1994). This study draws on the following three types of data collection methods to gain a holistic understanding of how teacher professional development courses in SFL and GBP influenced East Asian ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing.

*Participant Observations*

The first source of data came from participant observation of weekly seminar meetings. Participant observation is one type of qualitative observation in which researchers participate in ongoing activities of people being studied and record observations (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). Compared to nonparticipant observation, participant observation enables researchers to build rapport with their research participants more naturally and easily, and to gain more complete understanding of
activities and interactions occurring in the research sites (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). However, participant observation has a number of limitations. First, it allows less time and privacy for researchers to record observations. Researchers often need to wait until breaks between activities or until they are alone to record observations. This poses challenges as researchers may forget details and are unlikely to remember direct quotations. Second, researchers may become too involved with the activities or the group of people being studied, and become biased in data recording (Creswell, 2009). They may selectively record information instead of noting everything they observe. This study addresses these limitations by triangulating observational data with other sources of data to strengthen the findings.

In this study, 26 three-hour seminar meetings were observed between September 2012 and May 2013 (13 in SLLD and 13 in IFG). During each participant observation, I jotted down what Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) refer to as “scratch notes” (p. 19). These scratch notes used abbreviated words and phrases to record information about time, setting, lectures, activities, discussions, and participants’ behavior at each seminar meeting. Upon completion of each seminar meeting, I constructed a more detailed account of my observations at home using the scratch notes I took in the classroom. These detailed accounts became my observational fieldnotes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 1995). In constructing these observational fieldnotes, I drew on the format and structure suggested by Bogdan & Biklen (2006). Each set of fieldnotes contained information about time and setting, an abstract of events that were observed, detailed description of what had occurred in the field, and my reflection on particular field experiences. The reflective parts of fieldnotes recorded my speculation, feelings,
impressions, hunches, and questions (see Appendix A for an example of fieldnotes). The observations rendered a total of 127-page, single-spaced fieldnotes.

**Documentation**

The second source of data came from documents. Documents are broadly defined as any written, visual, and numerical records, for example, personal journals, newsletters, family photo albums, the brochure of a program, demographic statistics, and government policy statements (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Yin, 1994). Documents are an important source of data for qualitative case studies because they help corroborate and augment evidence from other sources (Yin, 1994). For instance, they help verify names of people or organizations that might have been mentioned in an interview, or provide specific details to increase researchers’ understanding of an observed event. While use of documents as a supplement is most common, increasingly, qualitative researchers, particularly those who work in discourse analysis and cultural studies, are turning to documents as their primary source of data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). These researchers may use interviews or observation as supplemental data to understand how the documents are produced or interpreted by their research participants.

Documents play an important role in this study, because they provide rich information about the research context, ELTs’ actions in the context, and the perspectives ELTs held toward their actions. This study included four types of documents. The first type of document provided descriptive material about the focal TESOL teacher education program. The documents collected for this purpose included the program webpage that provided an overview of the program; the electronic program handbook that describes the
program’s philosophy, goals, standards, policies, and coursework guidelines; and a hard
copy of program course descriptions obtained from the administrative office.

The second type of document included the course syllabi, lecture slides, and
instructional materials collected from two focal PD courses (SLLD and IFG). These
documents revealed the content, organization, and activity details of the courses, serving
as valuable supplementary data to classroom observations.

The third type of document consisted of course assignments produced by
individual focal ELT in SLLD and IFG. These assignments included reading logs,
responses to workshop tasks, and course projects. The course project for SLLD was a
report of a case study in which ELTs analyzed the dynamic relationship between a focal
ESL or EFL learner’s emergent textual practice and the larger contextual influences that
might have supported and/or constrained the student’s academic literacy development.
The course projects for IFG included a midterm and a final. The midterm project
consisted of a functional linguistic analysis of a model disciplinary text and a discussion
of central linguistic features that students need to know to be able to read and write this
particular type of texts. The final project involved a functional linguistic analysis of
student writing samples and an instructional plan that addressed the issues identified in
the analysis.

The forth type of document provided information about ELT’s instructional
practices during their non-licensure teaching practicum. Documents collected from each
focal ELT included one unit plan, instructional materials, assessment tools, samples of
student writing, and two reflection papers each of them submitted at the end of the
practicum.
Interviews

The third source of information for this case study came from interviews. Interviews have a variety of forms, including face-to-faced individual interviews, face-to-face group interviews, and interviews that are mediated by the telephone or other electronic devices (e.g., phone interviews, e-mail interviews). Interviews also vary in the degree to which they are structured. Bogdan and Biklen (2006) identify three types of interviews: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured. Structured interviews focus around particular topics and are guided by a series of questions that often have a limited set of response categories. The ordering and phrasing of the questions are kept consistent from interview to interview. The researcher usually does not deviate from the interview guide or probe beyond the answer received (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). On the other hand, unstructured interviews are relatively open-ended. The researcher has a plan in mind regarding the focus and goal of the interview, but does not control the interview using the structured interview guide. Instead, the researcher encourages respondents to talk in an area of interest in their own way, allowing for the possibility of the respondents shaping the content of the interview and the direction of the study (Bogdan and Biklen, 2006). In the middle of the structured/unstructured continuum is the semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews “combine the flexibility of the unstructured, open-ended interview with the directionality and agenda of the survey instrument to produce focused, qualitative, textual data” (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999, p. 149). When conducting semi-structured interviews, the interviewer develops and uses a ‘loose’ guide that contains key questions needed to be covered during the conversation (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). This guide often includes a series of follow-up questions or probes in
order to elicit certain types of information from the respondents. The interviewer follows
the guide, but allows the conversation to flow naturally. It requires the interviewer to be
well-prepared to follow topical trajectories in the conversation that may stray from the
interview guide when it seems appropriate (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

In collecting interview data for this study, I chose the face-to-face, semi-
structured interview strategy, because I wanted to focus on particular topics during each
interview while also giving interviewees freedom to respond to each open-ended question
in more or less detail depending on their experiences or willingness to share perspectives.
The procedure for each formal interview involved the following steps. First, I generated
an interview guide that stated the purpose of the interview and listed a set of main
questions (e.g., *Can you describe your English learning experience in school?*) and
potential probing questions (e.g., *You just said ...can you give me some examples of the
activities you did in class?*). Second, I scheduled the interview at a time and place
convenient for an interviewee. Third, before the interviewee and I got started with the
interview, I explained the purpose and the format of the interview, indicated how long the
interview would probably take, and informed her that the interview would be audiotaped.
Fourth, during the interview, I tried to keep track of terms, points, and ideas that the
participant had mentioned by taking notes. These notes allowed me to identify and return
to unclear or incomplete information. Finally, after the interview was completed, I
thanked the interviewee and told her I would share with her the interview transcript and a
duplicate copy of the interview tape.

The interviews conducted for this study included one interview with Dr.
O’Connell and four interviews with each focal East Asian ELT. The interview with Dr.
O’Connell took place in November 2012, in the middle of the first PD course, SLLD, and was aimed at understanding her approach to designing and implementing PD courses for ELTs. This interview asked Dr. O’Connell to describe the conceptual framework which informed her work in language teacher education and how she designed and implemented the focal PD courses based on the principles she embraced (see Appendix B for the guide used for the interview with Dr. O’Connell).

Over the course of the study, each focal East Asian ELT was interviewed formally and individually four times (see Appendix C for the guides used for the interviews with focal ELTs). The first interview focused on gaining information about ELTs’ backgrounds as well as their personal and professional experiences in regard to EFL literacy. Specifically, ELTs were asked to describe in detail how they learned and/or taught English reading and writing in their home countries and then to reflect on their experiences. These ‘background’ interviews were conducted in October and November 2012, in the second half of SLLD depending on ELTs’ availability.

The second interview was conducted in December 2012 and January 2013, during the break between the semesters of SLLD and IFG. This second round of interviews aimed at understanding ELTs’ experiences in SLLD. The first part of the Round Two interview asked ELTs to reflect on what they did in SLLD and describe what they considered the most useful and most challenging concepts, activities, or instructional strategies they experienced in the course. The second part of the interview asked ELTs to share their perceptions of a sociocultural perspective of second language development specifically. In some situations the first and second rounds of interviews were combined for some ELTs due to the issue of availability.
The third round of interviews was conducted in April and May 2013, in the second half of IFG. The purpose of this interview was to understand ELTs’ perceived change (or not) in their beliefs about literacy instruction as well as their experiences and perspectives of using SFL tools in analyzing model discipline texts and responding to samples of student writing.

Finally, the fourth round of interviews focused on understanding how ELTs designed and implemented their units of instruction during non-licensure teaching practicum. Each focal ELT was interviewed after she completed her unit of instruction. This post-instruction interview consisted of three parts. The first part asked an ELT to describe the school and classroom contexts in which her unit was implemented as well as her rationale for designing this particular unit. The second part asked the ELT to describe, step by step, what she did in the unit. The related instructional materials were collected to corroborate the description during the interview. The third part of the interview asked the ELT to reflect on the influence of her teaching on students’ learning, especially students’ writing development. Samples of student writing were collected and discussed. This post-instruction interview concluded with the ELT’s reflection on her teaching practices, focusing on the benefits as well as the challenges she experienced during the unit.

4.5.3 Data collection phases

*Phase One: Entering the field and conducting a pilot study*

This dissertation research project originated from a pilot study I conducted for a research methodology course I was enrolled in during the fall semester of 2012. My research interest at that time was to understand, broadly, the experiences of East Asian ELTs who participated in an alternative approach to teacher education informed by a
sociocultural perspective of second language development. During the same semester, I worked as a teaching assistant for SLLD, one of the required courses in the program that introduced ELTs to a sociocultural perspective of second language development. Given the access to weekly seminar meetings, I selected the SLLD course as my research site.

I entered the research field in September 2012. My research plan for this pilot study reflected what Creswell (2009) refers to as an “emergent design” (p. 175). An emergent design means that the research questions and the initial data collection plan are not tightly prescribed but flexible and revisable. As described by Bogdan and Biklen (2003), it is important for qualitative researchers to “hang loose or loose enough so that questions can change in response to the researchers’ experience or observations” (p. 49).

My initial goal for this pilot study was to understand, broadly, East Asian ELTs’ experiences in the course, and more specifically, to understand how they made sense of theoretical assumptions and practical implications of a sociocultural perspective of second language development.

Data collection for this pilot study was carried out between October 2012 and January 2013. I began data collection by pooling prospective research participants and acquiring informed consent. In October 2012, I informed all teachers enrolled in SLLD (both domestic and international) of my research ideas and data collection plan orally and using a written consent form (see Appendix D for the consent form for the pilot study). I explained to them that although my study focused on the experiences of East Asian teachers, it was important for me to observe the entire class to gain information about the course and to learn about how interactions occurring in the course shaped East Asian teachers’ understanding of the course content. I went through all items on the consent
form regarding how their rights and welfare would be protected. In addition, due to my role as a teaching assistant for the course, I made it explicit that their participation in the study would not affect their course grades in any way. All teachers enrolled in the course signed the consent forms, which gave me permission to observe weekly seminar meetings, take fieldnotes, and collect samples of their course assignments.

Among the twenty-two teachers enrolled in the course, ten were from East Asian contexts. These ten ELTs became the potential participants for my pilot study. I started making contacts with them, individually or in small groups, in October and November 2012 to get better acquainted and to provide them with more details of my research. In each research meeting, I first introduced my personal background and described how my lived experience as a former English teacher in Taiwan and a former graduate student in a US-based MA TESOL teacher education program shaped my research idea. Next, I explained that my research was qualitative in nature; therefore, the research questions might change and the forms of data collection might shift as my fieldwork progressed. Third, I told them that I was interested in conducting follow-up interviews and field observations in their other courses as they progressed through their TESOL program.

During this data collection phase, I conducted participant observations in weekly SLLD seminar meetings and took fieldnotes. I also collected course instructional materials and samples of ELTs’ course assignments. Interviews included one formal interview with Dr. O’Connell about her course design as well as two rounds of individual interviews with East Asian ELTs. The first round of interviews focused on gathering information about ELTs’ personal and professional backgrounds. The second round of interviews aimed at understanding ELTs’ experiences in SLLD and their perceptions of a
sociocultural perspective of second language development. Six out of ten East Asian ELTs enrolled in the course were able to participate in both rounds of interviews. The reasons for the four ELTs not completing both rounds of interviews varied, including my inability to locate them during the semester break, their unavailability for participation in both rounds of interviews within the designated data collection phases, and their decision to drop from the study. Given that interviews are one of the important sources of data for this study, I excluded the ELTs who did not complete both rounds of interviews from my pilot study. The number of participating ELTs was reduced to six.

Phase Two: Conducting fieldwork in IFG and revising the pilot study

In late January 2013, I began to collect follow-up data for my pilot study. I chose the IFG course as the main site for follow-up field observations, because five out of the six East Asian ELTs from my pilot study registered for IFG. However, I also tried to gather information about ELTs’ experiences in other courses through informal interviews and email exchanges. Between February 2013 and May 2013, I participated in the weekly seminar meetings in IFG and took observational fieldnotes. I also collected course instructional materials and samples of ELTs’ course assignments.

Through fieldwork in IFG I observed that the focal ELTs began to redefine the meaning of literacy and rethink what literacy instruction is all about as they developed deeper understanding of a functional perspective of language and a sociocultural perspective of second language and literacy development. Based on this emerging theme, I revisited the research plan of my pilot study. I extended my pilot study to a longitudinal case study on East Asian ELTs’ professional development over the course of their participation in the TESOL teacher education program. I also revised my research
question to address ELTs’ professional development in a more specific way. The new question explored how East Asian ELTs who participated in professional development coursework in SFL and genre-based pedagogy developed an ability to analyze the linguistic features of students’ emergent literacy practices and to design responsive instruction for ESL/EFL learners. To answer the new research question, I designed a third round of interviews with focal East Asian ELTs. The Round Three interviews, conducted in April and May 2013, aimed at understanding ELTs’ experiences and perspectives of using the tools of SFL in analyzing student writing and designing instruction. Four out of the five East Asian ELTs from my pilot study participant pool completed this round of interviews. One ELT dropped out of the study at the end of the IFG, because she decided not to pursue a teaching career and planned to transfer to another graduate program. The number of participating East Asian ELTs was now reduced to four. From May 2013 to December 2013, I remained in contact with the four focal ELTs – Lin, Jiwon, Pei-Ying, and Mingyang – through email exchanges and informal meetings outside the TESOL program. Through these interactions I was able to gather information regarding their ongoing learning experiences in the program and the kinds of course projects they had completed or planned to conduct. In the meantime, I continued to review and analyze the data I had collected between October 2012 and May 2013. I also began to develop my dissertation project based on my revised pilot study and the seven months of fieldwork I had completed. To strengthen my longitudinal case study on East Asian ELTs’ professional development, I decided to add one more data collection phase in the spring semester of 2014 when the focal ELTs were required to participate in non-licensure teaching practicum. The purpose of conducting this additional phase of data collection
was to investigate how focal ELTs designed instruction and responded to student writing in real teaching contexts, and in what ways their professional practices were influenced by SFL and genre-based pedagogy (or not).

*Phase Three: Determining the final participant pool and collecting practicum data*

I began my third phase of data collection by creating a new consent form for my updated longitudinal case study (see Appendix E). This new consent form included an updated statement of research purpose, an updated plan for data collection, and a description of how participants’ rights and welfare would be protected. After obtaining permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) in February 2014, I scheduled individual meetings with the four focal East Asian ELTs, Lin, Jiwon, Pei-Ying, and Mingyang. During the informed consent meetings, I explained my updated research plan by going through the information on the consent form, particularly pointing out the additional data collection phase that would take place during their non-licensure teaching practicum. All four ELTs gave me permission to use the data I had collected from them during their participation in *SLLD* and *IFG*, between October 2012 and May 2013, as well as to collect follow-up data regarding their non-licensure practicum experiences from February to May 2014.

At every informed consent meeting, I also asked each focal ELT where she was conducting her teaching practicum, how she had been doing so far, and what kind of unit of instruction she was implementing or planned to implement. Through these informal interviews I learned that Mingyang was doing her practicum teaching in an elementary after school program where she had already been required to lead a set of cooking activities for ESL students as a way of improving their oral conversation in English. She
would not be able to design a unit of instruction that included writing tasks during her non-licensure teaching practicum. Given that an ELT’s classroom practices related to writing is an essential aspect of the data for this study, I decided to exclude Mingyang from the final participant pool. The purposive sampling procedures led to three final focal East Asian ELTs for this study (i.e., Lin, Jiwon, Pei-Ying).

Data collection for Phase Three relied primarily on interviews and documentation. Throughout focal ELTs’ non-licensure practicum, I had short, informal email exchanges or Skype conversations with them once a month to gather information about their unit planning ideas and implementation processes. I also collected their unit/lesson plans, lecture slides, instructional worksheets, and assessment or feedback tools as these documents appeared during their units of instruction. After each ELT completed her unit, I conducted one formal, face-to-face interview with her to gain a deeper understanding of how she designed and implemented her unit, how she assessed or provided feedback on student writing, and what she thought about her teaching practice and about the impact of her instruction on student learning. During the post-instruction interviews, I collected remaining instructional materials and samples of student writing. Finally, at the end of ELTs’ teaching practicum, I collected required reflection papers they turned in for their practicum course in the TESOL program.

4.5.4 Summary of data collection

The entire process of data collection for this study is recursive, with all phases informing one another and with data collection planning continually modified as the research proceeded. In addition, efforts were made to build redundancy into the data collection methods in order to produce multiple sources of data and ensure corroboration
or triangulation of evidence (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Table 6 presents a data collection matrix that summarizes how multiple sources of data were systematically collected to address research questions. In addition, Table 7 provides an overview of the data collected from each focal East Asian ELT.

Table 6: Data collection matrix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research questions</th>
<th>Unit of analysis</th>
<th>Data collection phase</th>
<th>Source of data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Based on their previous socialization as language learners and language teachers in Asia, what conceptions of language and language learning tend to inform focal Asian ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing?</td>
<td>East Asian ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing over time</td>
<td>I Oct. 2012 – Dec. 2012</td>
<td>• Observation of participants during SLLD weekly meetings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Binding the unit of analysis (case) I. By place: East Asian ELTs who participated in the focal TESOL program</td>
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<td>• ELTs’ course assignments (SLLD reading logs &amp; responses to workshop tasks)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>II. By time:</td>
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<td>• Face-to-face, individual semi-structured interviews about ELTs’ personal and professional experiences related to L2 literacy (conducted in Oct. and Nov. 2012)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Over ELTs’ non-licensure teaching practicum conducted eight months after the completion of the PD (Jan. 2014 – April 2014).</td>
<td>Jan. 2013 – May 2013</td>
<td>• SLLD and IFG syllabi and instructional materials</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• ELTs’ course assignments (SLLD &amp; IFG reading logs, workshop tasks, course projects)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Face-to-face, individual semi-structured interview</td>
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<td>2. Over the course of their participation in the PD informed by SFL and GBP, how did Asian ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing change (or not) and in what ways?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dec. 2012 – Jan. 2013 on ELTs’ perceptions of a sociocultural perspective of</td>
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3. After completion of the PD, how did Asian ELTs respond to student writing during their teaching practicum? In what ways were their response practices influenced by SFL and GBP (or not)?

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Table 7: Collected data from individual focal ELT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Phase One</th>
<th>Phase Two</th>
<th>Phase Three</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lin</td>
<td><strong>SLLD assignments</strong>&lt;br&gt;• 10 reading logs&lt;br&gt;• 8 responses to workshop tasks&lt;br&gt;• 1 case study report</td>
<td><strong>IFG assignments</strong>&lt;br&gt;• 11 reading logs&lt;br&gt;• 9 responses to workshop tasks&lt;br&gt;• 1 analysis of a model discipline text&lt;br&gt;• 1 analysis of student writing</td>
<td><strong>Practicum materials</strong>&lt;br&gt;• 1 unit plan&lt;br&gt;• 22 lecture slides&lt;br&gt;• 2 instructional handouts&lt;br&gt;• 1 self-created assessment rubric&lt;br&gt;• 2 samples of student writing&lt;br&gt;• 1 written reflection on unit implementation&lt;br&gt;• 1 written reflection on student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal interviews</td>
<td>• Round One: 10/25/2012&lt;br&gt;• Round Two: 12/18/2012</td>
<td>• Round Three: 4/22/2013</td>
<td>• Round Four: 4/2/2014</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### 4.6. Data analysis procedures

Qualitative data analysis involves a series of activities that help researchers work with the data, organize them, make sense out of them, search for patterns, and make an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data. For this study, I synthesized the qualitative analysis guidelines suggested by Bodgan and Biklen (2006), Creswell (2009), and Rossman and Rallis (2003) to develop my own data analysis procedures. My data analysis procedures include five steps: (1) organizing and preparing the data for analysis;
(2) reading through all the data; (3) developing the initial coding categories; (4) coding the data and re-assigning the coding categories; and (5) interpreting the larger meanings of the data. In what follows, I describe each step in detail.

**Step 1: Organizing and preparing the data for analysis**

The first stage of my data analysis involved transcribing interviews and organizing the data. In typing a transcript of an interview, I began with creating a heading that consisted of the person interviewed, the time the interview occurred, the site of the interview, and the purpose of the interview. This helped me retrieve specific segments when I needed them during the later stages of data analysis (e.g., the round one ‘background information’ interview, the round four post-instruction interview). Next, I transcribed all words spoken by me and by an interviewee exactly the way the words were said. This means that a transcript might include run-on sentences or exclamations that a speaker used to express a range of emotions (e.g., uh, wow). I also tried to make notes of the nonverbal signals, such as laughs, sighs, and pauses. However, given that my purpose was to capture a research participant’s view and opinion on a topic, I focused more on transcribing verbal information than recording nonverbal signals. Every time a change of a speaker occurred, I started a new line, noting on the left who the speaker was.

In regard to punctuation, I made my own judgment, based on English written conventions, in using commas, periods, question marks, and other punctuation markers to indicate separation of ideas or elements within the structure of a sentence.

It is noteworthy that some interviews were conducted in Mandarin and thus required translation. Inhetveen (2012) identifies two major translation strategies commonly used in qualitative research. The first strategy is “verbatim translation” in
which a researcher translates an interview as literally as possible, looking for the closest lexical equivalent (Inhetveen, 2012, p. 34). The second strategy is to translate “the practical meaning of an utterance to secure the continuation of an ongoing communication” (Inhetveen, 2012, p. 34). For this study, I chose the second strategy, because I am more interested in understanding how a participant made sense of her experience, and how these meanings were shaped. A translation strategy that focuses on practical meaning of an utterance enabled me to grasp the content of the utterance and connect follow-up utterance to it. However, I am aware that there is no one perfect method of translation. Regardless of what strategy I used, I must accept some losses due to the translation process. I attempted to address this limitation by having my participants review my transcripts, in both the original and translated versions. This member check procedure enabled me to identify areas of translation that my participants considered not representative of their original meanings and to discuss alternative wordings that enhanced the accuracy of translation.

In addition to transcribing interviews, I also sorted and arranged the data during this preliminary stage of analysis. I sorted all the data into two general groups – the ‘context’ group and the ‘participant’ group. The context group contained all the data that provided information about the focal TESOL teacher education program and the two SFL-informed PD courses. I sorted these context data into different types depending on the sources of information, including ‘institutional documents,’ ‘SLLD curricula documents,’ ‘SLLD field notes,’ ‘IFG curricula documents,’ and ‘IFG field notes.’

The participant group contained the data related to the PD course instructor and three focal ELTs. Four data sets were established within the participant group: Dr.
O’Connell data set, Lin data set, Jiwon data set, and Pei-Ying data set. Each data set was further categorized according to the sources of information and the time the data were collected. For example, the Jiwon data set, similar to the other two ELTs data sets, consisted of the following data files: ‘background interview,’ ‘SLLD assignments’, ‘SLLD field notes’, ‘SLLD interviews’, ‘IFG assignments,’ ‘IFG field notes,’ ‘IFG interviews,’ ‘practicum curricular materials,’ ‘practicum student writing samples,’ and ‘practicum post-instruction interviews.’

Step 2: Reading through all the data and conducting initial open coding

After all the data were organized into data sets, I read through the context data set and participant data sets to obtain a general sense of the information. Specifically, I read through each ELT data set in the time sequence of data collection to gain a general idea of an ELT’s developmental trajectory and some key events in her experience.

Next, I re-read each data set more closely and analytically. As I was reading, I broke data into statements or ‘natural meaning units,’ and labeled these units with preliminary codes that captured substance or meaning of the units (Bazeley, 2013, p. 55). To name a code, I asked some guiding questions; for example, “What is going on in this segment?” “What is the participant doing?” “How does she do this?” and “What assumptions is she making?” Most of the codes were named based on the actual language of the participants, while some were named by using the terms of the guiding theory, SFL; for instance, “identifying genre moves,” and “analyzing types of grammatical processes.” The preliminary codes continued to be reviewed and revised as analysis proceeded.

I used three-column tables to support my initial open coding. As exemplified in Figure 2, I entered meaning units in the right-hand column, the preliminary codes in the
middle column, and topic categories in the left-hand column. The topic categories are initial, broad categories used for identifying and organizing larger chunks of data. The purpose of sorting data into topic categories was to obtain an overview of the data on various topics. These broad topic categories were later refined, deleted, or combined, rendering more specific coding categories.

Figure 2: Sample open coding table.

Step 3: Developing a coding system

After I finished initial open coding for the first ELT data set and gained a clearer idea about various aspects of the ELT’s professional development, I began to develop my coding system, or “a hierarchically organized catalogue” (Bazeley, 2013, p. 179) to sort the codes into categories and subcategories. Some initial, broad topic categories were retained as they covered points of interest that had been defined by the research questions (e.g., ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing, ELTs’ prior experiences of learning to write, ELTs’ experiences during the PD). The finer subcategories were developed based on my continuous review and grouping of the data. Basically, the coding
and development of coding categories went hand in hand. I continued to revise and refine my coding categories as my coding of the second and third ELT data sets proceeded. In addition, I looked for ways of reducing my total list of categories by grouping topics that related to each other. For example, I combined two originally separated categories, ‘conceptions of language’ and ‘conceptions of writing’, into one new category, ‘guiding conceptions for assessing writing and giving feedback’. I then assigned this new category as a subcategory of ‘ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing.’ Table 8 presents a summary list of my final coding categories with example codes.

Table 8: Summary of coding categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central categories</th>
<th>Subcategories</th>
<th>Example codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELTs’ prior experience of learning to write</td>
<td>Types of writing activities ELTs experienced at school</td>
<td>“memorizing grammatical rules” “practicing sentence patterns”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ELTs’ perceptions about the writing activities</td>
<td>“prerequisite for nonnative speakers learning to write” “not contributing to skillful use of language”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELTs’ prior experience of teaching writing</td>
<td>Types of activities ELTs used to teach writing</td>
<td>“focusing on analyzing sentence structures” “using games to teach vocabulary”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Issues and challenges related to teaching writing</td>
<td>“demand of college entrance exams” “heavy workload”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD activities</td>
<td>SLLD activities</td>
<td>“discussing various perspectives of literacy development” “identifying types of texts students are required to read and write”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IFG activities</td>
<td>“introducing functional metalanguage” “analyzing emails using functional metalanguage”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELTs’ experiences in the PD</td>
<td>Events in which ELTs actively participated</td>
<td>“raising a question – “why focus on writing?”” “identifying a tenor resource for a joint text analysis”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ELTs’ self-reported take-away from the PD</td>
<td>“making future writing assignments more purposeful” “starting to see language choices”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges and issues facing ELTs during the PD</td>
<td>“concepts too abstract” “a lot of terms”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELTs’ experiences during the practicum</td>
<td>Rationales for unit planning</td>
<td>“responding to new assessment policy” “enhancing Chinese students’ academic writing ability”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional activities</td>
<td>“comparing persuasive writing with other types of writing” “providing graphic organizers for outlining ideas”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of SFL in the unit of instruction</td>
<td>“identifying genre-specific language expectations” “analyze register features of student writing”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues and challenges facing ELTs during the practicum unit</td>
<td>“lack of time” “students’ persistent errors”</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| ELTs’ initial approach to responding to student writing (Stage 1) | Types of feedback | Corrective feedback | “underlying verb tenses errors” “correcting spelling” |
| | Vocabulary-oriented feedback | “judging connectives ‘too simple’” “calling for a wider vocabulary” |
| | Feedback that assesses syntactic knowledge | “praising use of relative clauses to construct complex sentences” |
| | Vague feedback on text organization | “feeling text not well organized” |
| Guiding conceptions for assessing writing and giving feedback | “good writing ability = ability to produce complex sentences” |

| ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing at the end of PD (Stage 2) | Types of feedback | Feedback that addresses genre-specific expectations | “judging text not fulfilling expected purpose – ‘expressing points of view’ ” “give evidence to persuade ” |
| | Feedback that identifies effective use of language resources | “Praising use of ‘but’ to create climax of the story” |
| | Feedback that identifies ineffectual use of language resources | “noting use of few prepositional phrases for information about time” “commenting unclear pronoun references ” |
| | Feedback that suggests specific resources to add/learn | “suggesting use of a wider range of cohesive devices to create causal relations” |
| Guiding conceptions for assessing writing and giving feedback | “more than grammatically-correct sentences” “writing has a purpose” |
| ELTs’ approach to | Types of feedback | Feedback that “a checklist assessment on” |
responding to student writing during the practicum (Stage 3) feedback evaluates the presence or absence of specific genre stages ‘elements of argument’’ Feedback that addresses genre-specific language expectations “highlighting 3 features to improve first draft argument” Feedback that identifies ineffectual use of language resources “commenting use of few words that express position” Corrective feedback “missing ‘s’ in a plural noun” “punctuation mistakes” Guiding conceptions for assessing writing and giving feedback “using text structure to support content development”

ELTs’ perceptions about an SFL approach to analyzing student writing “has structural tools” “see interrelations inside the language”” “time-consuming” “doesn’t help address syntactic accuracy”

**Step 4: Identifying emergent themes**

In qualitative research, themes refer to “the dominant features or characteristics of a phenomenon under study” (Teddli & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 252). Qualitative researchers generally choose to define features as themes where they recur several times in the data set. In other words, themes are patterns or trends across data that are associated with a specific research question. According to Bazeley (2013), themes differ from codes in that themes are “integrating, relational statements” that identify what the data means (p. 190). They are “outcomes of coding, categorization, and analytic reflection” (Saldana, 2009, p. 13).

In this study, I used the initial coding to generate a set of emergent themes that identified focal ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing at different stages of their professional development – stage 1: before the TESOL program or at the beginning
of the PD; stage 2: at the end of the PD; and stage 3: during the practicum. For example, ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing during stage 1 was summarized in a thematic statement that read “ELTs tended to provide feedback that addressed decontextualized lexical and syntactic issues.” In addition, I also searched for themes that delineate ways in which ELTs made sense of SFL and took up its tools for teaching and responding to student writing (e.g., “ELTs tended to think of genre moves as a prescriptive formula”; “ELTs tended to avoid addressing the issues related to tenor/voice of a text”).

The process of generating a theme involved the following steps. First, I noted repetition of a code or a set of codes in an analytic memo. For example, in analyzing ELTs’ initial (stage 1) approach to responding to student writing, I noticed a recurrence of codes across all three ELT data sets. These codes fell into the categories of “corrective feedback,” “vocabulary-oriented feedback,” and “feedback that assesses syntactic knowledge.” I then wrote a memo that described this emergent pattern. I wrote, “In responding to student writing samples at the beginning of the PD, all three focal ELTs gave error correction and vague vocabulary-oriented feedback. They also looked for evidence of complex sentences in student texts to assess students’ syntactic knowledge.” Next, I compiled segments of the fieldnotes, document, and interview data that exemplified the pattern. I tested the generality and validity of this pattern by ensuring each ELT data set provided exemplar data of this feature. Third, while I was compiling the exemplar data of this pattern, I reviewed and refined the codes/coding categories associated with these data to ensure they captured necessary and relevant information.

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1 A complex sentence is made up of an independent clause and one or more dependent clauses connected to it. For example, *The great pyramids of Egypt, which reached their highest development around 2500 B.C., are perhaps the most famous of the world’s ancient mysteries.*
Forth, I developed a more concise thematic statement to name this pattern (e.g., ELTs’ original approach to responding to student writing focused on decontextualized lexical and syntactic issues). Figure 3 provides a visual illustration showing how I combined codes and coding categories to form an over-arching theme.

**Figure 3:** A code-to-theme visual illustration

*Step 5: Conducting focused coding and relational analysis*

At this stage of analysis, I went beyond identifying emergent themes to consider how the various themes connect to one another. Maxwell and Miller (2008) refer to this level of analysis as “relational analysis,” which aims at “identifying key relationships that tie the data together into a narrative or sequence and eliminating information that is not
germane to these relationships” (p. 467). Specifically, relational analysis reveals 1) causal links between coding categories or emergent themes; 2) the processes, or the flow of events over time; and 3) the conditions and/or consequences of those processes (Bazeley, 2013). Using relational analysis, qualitative researchers build a coherent understanding of the phenomenon under study.

To facilitate my relational analysis of the data, I conducted focused coding that reintegrated categories or themes generated through initial coding into a systematic explanatory framework (Bazely, 2013). I developed focused codes that delineated the changes in ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing over the duration of their participation in the PD (e.g., “shifting from giving decontextualized reactions to lexical and syntactic issues to providing feedback aimed at strengthening meaning in a text for a specific purpose and writing task”). I also generated focused codes that suggested causes or explanations (e.g., “shift occurs as ELTs developed an ability to identify the language features that are functional for a specific genre”). Last, I developed focused codes that explored interrelationships between themes (e.g., “ELTs’ emphasis on word-level register features suggests they retained a tendency to provide vocabulary-oriented feedback”).

**Step 6: Creating case study narratives**

As an extension of relational analysis, I created a case study narrative for each focal ELT. These case study narratives contextualize the relational sequence or causal linkage among themes generated from focused coding. They tell stories about ELTs’ professional development over a specific timeframe defined by the study. Simultaneously, through writing these narratives I became clearer about the primary elements of ELTs’
experiences and their interconnections. A case study narrative, therefore, is both an analysis process and a product of analysis.

Step 7: Making an interpretation of the findings

According to Patton (2002), “interpretation means attaching significance to what was found, making sense of findings, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, considering meanings, and otherwise imposing order” (p. 480). In making an interpretation of the findings, I drew on my personal understanding of the phenomenon under study. I was aware that my personal history, experience, and interest would influence my interpretation of the findings. In addition, I attempted to make meaning of the findings by comparing them with information gleaned from the literature or theories, pointing out where the findings confirm past information or diverge from it. Finally, I explored implications of my findings for teacher education practice and future research.

4.7 Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study relate to the researcher’s role, a lack of classroom observations as a data source for understanding ELTs’ actual classroom practices, and the generalizability of this study. First, as mentioned in section 4.4, my primary role as a teaching assistant in the two focal PD courses contributes to the limitations of the study. I am aware that the texts constructed by the focal East Asian ELTs during the two PD courses were in part influenced by me in my institutional role as a teacher vis-à-vis their roles as students. In addition, my role as an advisee of the PD course instructor, Dr. O’Connell, also introduces a power issue into the study. I am aware that my role as an advisee may lead to compromises in my ability to disclose information and could cause
me to create favorable conclusions about the research site or participants. I attempted to address this limitation by employing multiple strategies of validity to enhance the accuracy of my interpretations. These strategies included: (1) collecting data regarding ELTs’ instructional and feedback practices in their non-licensure teaching practicum in which I was not personally and institutionally involved; (2) collecting multiple sources of data and examining evidence from different sources; (3) presenting negative or discrepant information that run counter to the general perspectives of the themes; (4) using rich, thick description to report events and convey findings; and (5) using peer debriefing strategy to add validity to an account.

A second limitation is a lack of classroom observations as a data source for understanding East Asian ELTs’ actual classroom practices. I did not conduct direct and systematic classroom observations in the focal ELTs’ practicum due to some time and space constraints. For example, Jiwon implemented her curriculum unit with a group of middle school students in Korea as part of meeting the practicum requirements of her degree. I was not able to participate in her class in Korea and conduct classroom observations. Similarly, Lin offered an online class to Chinese high school students. She taught her unit by using a self-established teaching blog and WeChat, an instant messaging and video calling app widely used in China. Due to the time difference between U.S. and China, she taught her online lessons at night and at her own apartment, which posed challenges for my visits and observations. The only direct observations I was able to conduct were in Pei-Ying’s classroom. Pei-Ying did her practicum teaching in an U.S. elementary school near her TESOL teacher education program. I was able to participate in a number of her classes after I acquired permission from the IRB and from
the institutional gatekeepers (i.e., the school superintendent, the principal, and the
classroom teacher). However, due to the lengthy process of gaining permission, I entered
her classroom at the very end of her practicum and after she had completed her
instructional unit. While I was able to observe a number of classes in her practicum
setting, her role in these observed classes was not as the main instructor. As a result, I
was not involved in a sustained experience with Pei-Yin in her teaching practicum.

Given this lack of direct and sustained classroom observations in the focal ELTs’
non-licensure practicums, I cannot make strong claims about their actual classroom
practices. While interviews and documentations also served as valuable sources of
information about ELTs’ classroom practices, they introduced several issues commonly
associated with self-report data. According to Borg (2006), self-reported data may reflect
research participants’ ideals, as they have been given the time to reflect on something
they did and try to make sense of their behavior by rationalizing their actions (p. 184,
original emphasis). For example, interviewees might tend to give answers that they
thought were desired, or they might choose not to reveal certain private or negative
details because of a concern for how they would be evaluated. I attempted to address this
limitation by avoiding asking leading questions that might suggest particular directions of
answers (e.g., Did you perceive any change in your approach to teaching writing after
the PD?). Rather, I used very open questions that allowed ELTs to describe their
practicum experiences in whatever way they wanted (e.g., Can you briefly describe what
you do in this unit?). In addition, I used documents as the primary source of data for
understanding ELTs’ teaching practices (e.g., lesson plans, lecture slides, instructional
materials), with interviews serving as a supplemental source that helped corroborate and augment evidence from documentation.

The last limitation of this study relates to issues of generalizability of qualitative case studies. The intent of a qualitative case study is to investigate a phenomenon within its context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2003). Therefore, the findings from a qualitative case study are normally not generalizable to other contexts (Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Yin, 1994). However, Greene and Caracelli (1997) argue that the issue of generalizability should not be considered a limitation. In fact, the value of qualitative research lies in the particular description and themes developed in context of a specific site. Particularity rather than generalizability is the hallmark of qualitative research.

In another piece of qualitative literature about generalizability, Yin (2003) maintains that generalization in qualitative case studies should be defined as “analytic generalization” rather than “statistical generalization” (p. 30). Yin argues that qualitative case study results can be generalized to some “broader theory” (p. 31). A previously developed theory is used as a model with which to compare the empirical results of the case study. If two or more cases are shown to support the same theory, replication may be claimed. Analytic generalization can also occur when qualitative researchers study additional cases and generalize findings to the new cases. It is the same as the replication logic used in experimental research. Yin suggests that qualitative case study researchers should try to aim toward analytic generalization in doing case studies.
CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

This chapter is organized into two sections. The first section provides an overview of the findings about the influence of SFL-informed PD courses on Asian ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing. General trends that emerged from the data across all three focal ELTs are highlighted. The second section provides three case study narratives about three ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing over time. These case study narratives illustrate and discuss the general trends seen across all ELTs, but also present noteworthy contrasts to one another.

5.1 Overview of the findings

The findings indicate that the three focal ELTs entered the TESOL teacher education program with unarticulated, yet deeply ingrained, notions of writing. They tended to see writing as an arrangement of lexical and syntactic forms structured according to a set of rules, and they equated writing ability with the ability to produce structurally-correct and structurally-complex sentences. These notions of writing were found to be shaped by ELTs’ prior experiences as English learners in Asia, where they learned to write through structure-oriented, behaviorism-informed instructional practices. These instructional practices focused on developing students’ control over the structural units, or building blocks of writing – words, clauses, sentences – through drilling and practice. For example, all ELTs reported that they began learning to write by studying vocabulary words, sentence patterns, and the rules associated with the patterns (e.g., Subjects and verbs must agree in person (first, second, or third): I sing/he cries/they laugh). In addition, ELTs were routinely asked to practice the words and patterns they
just learned in a range of controlled writing activities, such as filling in blanks in sentences, reordering words in scrambled sentences, or reproducing a sentence pattern with different sets of given words. Both Lin and Pei-Ying recalled they were also asked to memorize good expressions or sentences in sample texts, and reproduce these fixed patterns in their own writing. All the writing activities emphasized good writing as demonstration of lexical and syntactic knowledge. Formal accuracy was the main criteria for measuring students’ learning outcomes.

ELTs’ conceptions of writing stemming from their English learning experiences greatly influenced how they responded to student writing. The data suggest that ELTs’ original approach to responding to student writing focused on decontextualized lexical and syntactic issues. This approach can be characterized by three predominant types of feedback ELTs gave to student writing at the beginning of their TESOL program. First, all ELTs gave comprehensive error correction. They identified types of errors students made, underlined or highlighted these errors, and provided correct answers (e.g., inconsistent tense: *In my ESL class I meet new people from all over the world and learned about new things* \(\rightarrow\) *met*, singular/plural problem: *She is a smart women (woman) and a good person*). Second, all ELTs gave vague vocabulary-oriented feedback that asked students to use a wider and more advanced vocabulary to improve their writing (e.g., *For better writing, she needed to know a great deal of vocabulary or The connectives she used are too simple. She needed to use more academic ones*). Third, both Lin and Pei-Ying looked for evidence of syntactic complexity in student texts, and they judged students’ writing ability based on their ability to produce complex sentence structures (e.g., *The student tries to use complex sentences in her writing. They really*
show her ability to write academically). These types of feedback emphasized accuracy and grammatical well-formedness, without considering the effectiveness of students’ lexical and syntactic choices in producing a text for a specific purpose, audience, and topic. In addition, these types of feedback lacked concrete advice for revisions or informed directions for subsequent learning.

Following two semesters of the SFL-informed PD courses, ELTs made some shifts in their approach to responding to student writing. First, ELTs began to recognize and address a wider range of issues in student writing, including the purpose of writing, overall text organization, coherence/cohesion, content, lexical choices, sentence-level grammar, and writing mechanics such as punctuation and capitalization. Second, ELTs shifted toward the use of feedback that identified students’ ineffectual linguistic choices and suggested concrete directions for improvement (e.g., Christopher needs to diversify ways of expressing cause-and-effect relationships. The way he expressed causal relationship was just through ‘because…so’. One drawback of this is the text sounds too colloquial…To be more accomplished, he can draw on causal connectives, such as due to, therefore, as a result, consequently, or verbs, like lead to, result in/from, to express causal relationships). These two shifts occurred as ELTs developed an ability to identify the genre a student was asked to produce; the organizational stages or moves that are most functional for achieving the purpose of this genre; and the register features, or the constellation of lexical-grammatical resources which realize a set of meanings that is appropriate to the genre. This ability to highlight genre- and register-specific expectations enabled ELTs to identify what students were able to accomplish and where they needed
further help to write a text more effectively. It also allowed ELTs to provide feedback that linked form with meaning in the context of a specific genre.

However, the data reveal that while ELTs moved beyond addressing solely lexical and syntactic issues to considering text-organizational issues, their approach to addressing text organization seemed to be based on a notion of genre moves as a prescriptive formula. Two examples illustrate this finding. First, the written comments all ELTs gave on text organization tended to convey the genre moves as rigid external structures (e.g., Ting’s text missed the required moves (argument/elaboration & summing-up) and added the structures of other genres, such as narrative and description). Second, during the practicum, all ELTs responded to text organization of student writing using summative assessment tools such as a checklist. These tools evaluated text organization according to a prefabricated formula ELTs had adopted rather than the students’ ability to make organizational choices appropriate to the purpose of the writing. These written comments and assessment methods showed ELTs’ tendency to reinscribe the concept of genre with a more structural understanding. They tended to think of genre moves as structural units that must be employed and arranged in a correct order, and they emphasized students’ ability to ‘follow the recipe’ in reproducing a specific format of writing.

Moreover, the findings suggest that ELTs tended to focus on word-level problems in their response to register features of a student text. For example, ELTs primarily addressed the issues related to cohesive devices (e.g., conjunctions and connectives), types of grammatical participants (e.g., abstract noun phrases that name argument, personal noun phrases that describe characters in narratives), and lexical chains (e.g., use
Relatively fewer comments were made to address clause-level issues, for instance, the issue related to how students built arguments from clause to clause through the use of Thematic progression, or a zig-zagging pattern that enables accumulation of information and creation of discursive flow. ELTs’ emphasis on word-level register features indicates that they retained a tendency to provide vocabulary-oriented feedback. The change, however, was that ELTs were now better able to link students’ lexical choices to the meanings these choices express in the context of a specific genre, rather than simply giving decontextualized, vague calls for a wider vocabulary.

Last, while ELTs developed an ability to link form and meaning in responding to student writing, they tended to focus on the ideational and textual aspects of meaning. In other words, their feedback addressed primarily the issues related to field/content and mode/flow of a text (e.g., *the text lacks circumstances to give specific time and setting about the series of events in the story; or the organization is not quite clear, because the internal cohesive links between three points are not established*). Few comments were found in relation to the interpersonal meaning, or the tenor/voice of a text. The data reveal that while ELTs could recognize language resources for constructing interpersonal meaning, they were often unable to provide informed feedback on students’ use of these resources in constructing the voice of their texts. Table 9 summarizes ELTs’ approaches to responding to student writing during three different periods of time – at the beginning of PD, at the end of PD, during the teaching practicum.
Table 9: ELTs’ approaches to responding to student writing over time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing at the beginning of PD</th>
<th>ELTs’ approaches to responding to student writing at the end of PD</th>
<th>ELTs’ approach to responding to student writing during the practicum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lin</strong></td>
<td>- Identify and correct syntactic errors</td>
<td>- Consider the organizational stages in a text</td>
<td>- Identify genre-specific expectations, including organizational stages and language features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identify types of sentence structures</td>
<td>- Analyze students’ use of conjunctions in constructing narrative sequence</td>
<td>- Evaluate student writing according to the expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Judge students’ writing ability based on their ability to produce complex sentence structures</td>
<td>- Suggest improvements in introducing and tracking narrative characters through pronoun reference and lexical chains</td>
<td>- Focus on issues related to organizational stages, content-specific nouns and verbs, causal links, and lexical chains for building cohesion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Evaluate students’ word choices based on the level of difficulty (i.e., vocabulary frequency)</td>
<td>- Suggest using grammatical circumstance to construct meaning regarding time and place</td>
<td>- Correct syntactic errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jiwon</strong></td>
<td>- Correct spelling</td>
<td>- Consider the purpose of writing</td>
<td>- Identify genre-specific expectations, including organizational stages and key language features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Address writing mechanics such as punctuation and capitalization</td>
<td>- Consider the organizational stages in a text</td>
<td>- Evaluate student writing according to the expectations using a feedback chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Give vague calls for more vocabulary and added details</td>
<td>- Analyze the effectiveness of students’ use of grammatical participants and processes in presenting argument</td>
<td>- Focus on issues related to organizational stages, causal links, content-specific nouns and verbs, and modality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Address issues regarding students’ use of cohesive devices to create logical links in a text</td>
<td>- Correct syntactic and mechanical errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pei-Ying</strong></td>
<td>- Correct syntactic and mechanical errors</td>
<td>- Consider the purpose and intended audience of student writing</td>
<td>- Identify genre-specific expectations, including organizational stages and key language features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Judge students’ writing ability based on their use of relative clauses to construct complex sentences</td>
<td>- Identify language features that are more functional for a specific writing task</td>
<td>- Evaluate student writing according to the expectations using an assessment checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Give vague feedback on text organization</td>
<td>- Pinpoint text organizational problems and offer specific language resources for student revision</td>
<td>- Focus on organizational stages</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</table>
5.2 Three case study narratives

5.2.1 Lin

*Initial approach to responding to student writing as influenced by her prior learning experience*

Lin was a pre-service teacher in her first semester in the TESOL teacher education program. Before attending the program, she had only a few weeks of volunteer teaching experience in China, where she taught English vocabulary and basic conversation to third-grade EFL learners attending an afterschool program. Teaching writing was a completely new endeavor to her. Her initial approaches to teaching writing and responding to student work were, therefore, based on “apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie, 1975) – that is, she was influenced by the ways her own English teachers approached writing. In her first journal entry for the *SLLD* course, she described how she learned to write in English in school.

As for learning writing, we followed such steps: rule-example-exercise and sentence-paragraph-passage. First, we had to learn grammatical rules point by point, and memorize the examples teachers gave us. Then we needed to do a lot of exercises. As we got more practice, we began to write sentences using the grammar we had learned…Our teachers also encouraged us to memorize good articles, and to learn some fixed expressions that could be used in our own writing. Gradually, we could write English passages with little grammatical errors.

(Reflective Journal, *SLLD*, September 2012)
There are several aspects of this excerpt which are of particular importance. First is the way Lin sequenced her learning experience. She began her account by identifying the structural units, or the building blocks of writing (grammatical points, sentences, expressions, and paragraphs). Next she described how she learned each unit in ways that moved from the lower level (grammatical points, sentences) to the higher level (expressions, paragraphs). Finally, she concluded with a statement about her abilities to write after having learned all the units. The sequence Lin used in recounting her learning histories suggested that she had been deeply socialized into a structure-oriented approach to writing. She seemed to see writing as an intricate structure that could only be learned by gaining mastery of each of its structural unit.

The second noteworthy aspect of this excerpt is the words Lin used to describe her writing classroom practices. Words such as follow, memorize, practice, exercise, rules, and fix expressions indicated that Lin had been socialized into a behavioral way of learning. To Lin, rote learning of language forms was essential to learning English as a foreign language. She expressed her attitude toward behavioral learning strategies in her first interview, saying “I think, for second language learners, memorizing vocabulary items and grammatical rules are necessary, because they are the basic knowledge to be acquired through intensive practice. We can’t pick them up naturally during activities” (我覺得對學第二外語的學生來說，背單詞和語法訓練還是很必要的，不能說在活動中學或是在不經意當中學。因為那真的是基礎，需要花時間下功夫學).

Finally, what is notable about Lin’s written account of her school writing experience is that she said “Gradually, we could write English passages with little grammatical errors.” This statement indicated that she tended to conceptualize good
writing ability as the ability to produce structurally-correct sentences which demonstrate syntactic knowledge. This conception of writing was implicitly articulated elsewhere in her course assignments for SLLD. For example, in a reading log she stated her own definition of academic literacy: “As far as I am concerned, academic literacy means comprehensive knowledge of many aspects, including good knowledge of reading, writing, words, and so on, which can be applied to academic context.” While not explicitly stated, Lin’s definition of writing as demonstration of lexical and syntactic knowledge was evident in this statement.

Lin’s conceptualization of writing stemming from her English learning experience shaped her initial approach to responding to student writing. Her early response to student writing focused mainly on formal accuracy and syntactic complexity. She also tended to evaluate students’ writing ability based on their lexical and syntactic knowledge. The evidence came from one of Lin’s workshop reports for SLLD in October 2012. For this assignment, Lin was required to analyze a student writing sample she collected for her final case study project, and report her preliminary findings about the strengths and weaknesses in the student’s paper. The writing sample Lin analyzed was an editorial essay produced by ‘Emily’, a 10th-grade ESL student enrolled in a journal writing class in a U.S. high school. To report Emily’s strengths and weaknesses, Lin created two tables (Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2). With regard to strengths, Lin noted that the text included multiple types of sentence structure, some rhetoric strategies, and technical vocabulary items (see Figure 4)
Lin commented that the feature of complex sentences in the writing sample demonstrated Emily’s academic writing ability. She stated,

Emily tried to use complex sentences in her writing. Although there are some grammatical mistakes in these sentences, they really show her knowledge of grammar and her ability to write academically. (Workshop report, SLLD, October 2012)

Another criterion Lin used to measure Emily’s academic writing skills was the demonstration of lexical knowledge. Lin remarked,

She uses some technical terms such as *racism, culture, belief,* and *percentage of races.* This shows she has acquired vocabulary words with respect to racism and discrimination. It seems to be hard for young adults to know such kind of difficult

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Draft</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Types of sentence structures | • Simple:  
  1. I moved to America from Portugal in 2006.  
  2. Sometimes I feel lonely. 
  • Compound:  
  1. During my ELL classes I meet new people from all over the world and learned about new cultures every day.  
  • Complex  
  1. It also makes you more comfortable and confident about yourself because you know that there are people going thru the same situation as you.  
  2. The facts show that more than half of the school is composed by Caucasian students, which lead to the probability of not having a lot of colored students in a classroom. |
| Rhetoric | • Simile: It is like being left in a jungle...
• Parallelism: Am I…? Are there…? Is this…? |
| Word choices | Technical words | • racism, by gender, percentage of races, culture, belief… |
| | Emotive words | • sad, disappointing, confusing |

Figure 4: Lin’s report on the strengths in Emily’s text.
words. This makes her article more professional. (Workshop report, SLLD, October 2012)

Lin’s comment on Emily’s use of vocabulary indicated that she tended to evaluate students’ word choices based on the levels of difficulty. The assumption behind this evaluative criterion was that the more ‘difficult’ words a student can use, the more advanced writing skills he or she has developed. This assumption neglected the ‘meaning-making’ function of words in constructing a text. While Lin did mention that Emily used some vocabulary items to express the notions of racism and discrimination, she did not relate these word choices to the issue Emily was attempting to discuss in her editorial essay. Neither did she evaluate Emily’s word choices in terms of the appropriateness of meaning making. Her decontextualized reactions to vocabulary indicated that she did not seem to be aware of the connection between form and meaning.

With regard to weaknesses, Lin identified issues related to tense shift, transitional words, and sentence-level grammar (see Figure 5). She noted that Emily had a problem with keeping tenses consistent in sentences, especially in compound sentences linked by the conjunction ‘and’ (e.g., I meet new people from all over the world and learned about new culture every day and feel more comfortable). She also highlighted and corrected several other syntactic errors such as noun-verb pairs (e.g., They belief versus They believe) and use of pronouns (It feel lonely versus I feel lonely).
Figure 5: Lin’s report on the weaknesses in Emily’s text.

Moreover, Lin commented that, while Emily was able to use some connectives in her text, the majority of them were “simple.”

The connectives she used are simple, for example, *so, but, and*. She needed to use more academic ones, like *in addition, as a matter of fact, what’s more, first of all* and so on. (Workshop report, *SLLD*, October 2012)

Lin’s comment on connectives illustrated once again her lack of awareness of the relationship between form and meaning. She evaluated Emily’s use of connectives in terms of how advanced these transitional words are, rather than how effectively these connectives organized the flow of information and constructed text cohesion. In addition,
the comment about ‘simple’ versus ‘academic’ transitional words reflected Lin’s conception of good writing as demonstration of lexical knowledge. The meaning of ‘academic’ language seemed to be defined here as the use of more difficult vocabulary items.

In sum, Lin’s early response to student writing focused on syntactic errors, sentence structures, and vocabulary, which were shown to be the influence of her prior learning experience. In addition, the feedback Lin gave on Emily’s writing sample indicated that she lacked an awareness of the connection between form and meaning. She responded to Emily’s word choices based on decontextualized criteria such as the difficulty levels of vocabulary, without considering how these choices constructed meanings effectively or less effectively in producing a text for specific purpose, audience, and topic (e.g., use of words related to racism to present the issue for an editorial discussion; use of connectives associated with reasoning to organize argument about racism and discrimination in a public school in the U.S.).

Approach to responding to student writing during SFL-informed PD courses

The data indicated that Lin began to notice the connection between form and meaning as she learned to analyze student writing from a functional linguistics approach. The following fieldnote excerpt provides an example of how Lin attempted to link form and meaning as she participated in a class joint analysis of student writing in IFG in February 2013.

After discussing with ELTs about the key language features for constructing the voice/tone of a text, Dr. O’Connell passed out a student writing sample. This writing sample is a literary response produced by an English speaking student
taking a Freshman English class at a U.S. university. Dr. O’Connell explained to
the ELTs from the international contexts that a literary response is one of the
school-based genres that students in the U.S. are frequently assigned to write. A
literary response requires students to reflect on the themes of the literature they
have just read, presenting a point of view and supporting it with evidence from
the literature. Dr. O’Connell asked ELTs to read the sample literary response and
identify the writer’s language choices that made the text assume a formal,
academic tone as opposed to an informal, interactive tone that is more typical of
spontaneous speech.

One ELT said she noticed the writer turned the verb attempt into a noun his
attempt in the clause that read His attempt to connect his son falls apart. A
number of ELTs in the class said that this was an example of ‘nominalization.’ Dr.
O’Connell nodded and said that nominalization is “a hallmark of academic
writing.” It enabled the writer to present the content in a style featuring density
and technicality. Next, Lin raised her hand and said, “The text is written from a
third person perspective – the man, the characters, he. This produces a
relationship between reader and writer. Is this an example of tenor?” Dr.
O’Connell did not seem to fully understand Lin’s point. She responded by saying
“Okay, the relationship. You are on something about the relationship. Let’s make
this clear.” One ELT in the class tried to help Lin clarify her point. She said
something like, “There is no I in this text. The participants are more
impersonal…This takes agency away from the person who is writing the text, and
make it sounds more objective.” Dr. O’Connell built on this ELT’s comment
about impersonal grammatical participants, and further pointed out that the writer’s avoidance of mental verbs also helped construct textual authoritativeness.

“There is no I. There is no mental verb. The writer never said, “I think.” So it’s detached. There is a sort of authority that is created in the text.” (Research Fieldnotes, IFG, February 2013)

This excerpt shows that learning to use SFL metalanguage to analyze student writing helped Lin move beyond offering decontextualized vocabulary-oriented feedback on student writing, and enabled her to see and make connection between the lexical-grammatical features in a student text and the meanings being constructed through these features (e.g., use of third person nominal phrases to realize impersonality). By looking at student writing in this way, Lin was able to identify where students were effectively drawing on the resources of English for writing a text and where they needed further development. In addition, the SFL metalanguage enabled Lin to offer more precise feedback regarding resources students could add or use more effectively to improve their disciplinary meaning.

Lin’s response to a student writing sample for her IFG final paper provided an example of her emerging ability to offer feedback with greater linguistic precision. The writing sample Lin responded to was a personal narrative produced by Liliga, a community college ESL student from Ukraine. Liliga was required to write a story about her name after reading a literary book chapter titled My Name (see Figure 6 for the writing sample). Lin noticed that Liliga had a basic idea of using conjunctions in the grammatical theme position to “support the organization of the story” as well as to “create climax.”
Some themes construct textual meanings, which is a way of logically organizing the flow of information in text. In this text, some conjunctions are used to achieve this, such as *but, when, after*…For instance, in clause # 8 Liliga uses “when my father” as a marked theme. By using this thematic structure, she emphasizes a narrative nature [of the text]…Another example can be found in clause #21, 22, and 23: *my parents wanted to give me the name of Olga, // but my grandmother came from Kiev // and thought about another name for me*. By using the marked textual theme “but,” it draws readers’ attention that the conflict will arise, and then we can see the topical theme changes from “my parents” to “my grandmother.” Hence, the climax appears. She performs well in considering themes in the text. (Final Paper, *IFG*, May 2013)

My name is the name of a flower. I like my name. This is a beautiful flower and has a good scent. My short name in America is Lili. My family call me Lilya. I have a story about my name. When my father was 10 years old, his mother died. Her name was Olga. He loved his mother, and always thought, “When I get married and have a daughter, I will name her after my mother” I was the first daughter born, but I have three older brothers. My mother always asked him “Are you happy you have three sons?” He told her, “I am happy, but I want girl.” After 7 years’ marriage I was born. My parents wanted give me the name Olga, but my grandmother came from Kiev and thought of another name for me. This name was Liliga. My parents loved my grandmother and couldn’t say no to her. My parents waited 8 years for another daughter, who they named Olga. This is what I know about my name and how I got it.

Figure 6: Transcript of Liliga’s personal narrative.
However, Lin noticed that the text lacked details because Liliga used few resources to construct circumstantial meanings regarding the time and place as events unfolded. She stated,

Most of the clauses lack circumstances to give specific time and setting about the series of events. Only 5 out of 32 clauses (28.1%) have circumstances. They are adverbs and prepositional phrases such as after 7 years of marriage and from Kieve... Circumstance is an effective way to add more information into a clause with specific description. Liliga has the conception of this approach, but she lacks proficiency in applying them into her text. From this analysis, we can see that she needs some help to improve using circumstances to build the sequence of events in her story. (Final Paper, IFG, May 2013)

Another area in which Lin noticed Liliga needed improvement was introducing and tracking grammatical participants through pronouns and lexical chains. Lin noted that the majority of the grammatical participants in the text were pronouns (e.g., he, she, him, her, I, this). However, some of these pronouns did not “refer clearly to things or people that [had] been mentioned.” For example, Lin pointed out that the demonstrative pronoun this was used “vaguely and unclearly” in the sentences that read “This is a beautiful flower and has a good scent” and “This is what I know about my name and how I got it.” Lin commented that these unclear references “result[ed] in problems in the mode of the text, because readers [had] a hard time following the story.”

Moreover, Lin remarked that simply using pronouns to track grammatical participants made the story “bland” and lacking in detail. She stated that Liliga needed to
learn to use the strategy of lexical chaining more productively to enrich the content and move the storyline forward.

There is one major lexical chain: my name = the name of a flower = a beautiful flower = Lily = Liliga. She does not use ‘my name’ all the time, but rather conveys the same meaning in multiple word choices. This lexical chain not only makes the information rich but also arouses readers’ interest in continuing reading. However, while ‘my father’ and ‘my grandmother’ are also important participants in the story, she only uses pronouns to track them. For example, when mentioning her father, the lexical chain is: my father = he. This analysis shows she needs some help to improve using lexical chains to build the story. (Final Paper, IFG, May 2013)

Indeed, Lin’s analysis of Liliga’s writing sample was scaffolded by the course project guidelines (e.g., “Identify the genre moves/stages”; “analyze the student’s use of register resources”; “Give a summary of patterns”). However, the feedback points Lin offered demonstrated her developing ability to respond to student writing in ways that linked the language forms students used with the meanings made possible by the forms. This new ability enabled her to see and point out where students’ meaning making potential could be strengthened. In an interview where she was asked to reflect on her experience of using SFL tools to analyze student writing, Lin mentioned her heightened awareness of the relationship between form and meaning.

Lin: 我覺得了學了 SFL 之後，幫助我看到 interrelations inside the language.

(After learning SFL, I feel I can see the interrelations inside the language.)
Researcher: Interrelations inside the language?

Lin:就像是conjunctions.以前我學得時候不會去想說原來conjunctions有這個作用。(Yes, like conjunctions. I didn’t think about the functions of conjunctions when I was learning them.)

Researcher:你是說以前老師也會教你conjunctions，但是// (You meant you were taught English conjunctions in school before, but//)

Lin://但以前不覺得那有什麼作用。比如說你可以用不同的conjunctions去build cause and effect,或者是build time sequence.//(But I didn’t know they have functions. For example, you use different conjunctions to build cause and effect or build time sequence.)

Researcher:所以SFL是幫助你看到那些conjunctions的功能 (So SFL helps you understand the functions of those conjunctions.)

Lin:對，我覺得就是see inside the language.看到這個interrelation. (Yes. I think it’s to see inside the language, see the interrelations; Interview, 4/22/2013)

While Lin developed an ability to link form and meaning in responding to student writing, her feedback tended to focus on the ideational and textual aspects of meaning. In other words, Lin’s comments addressed primarily the issues related to the field and mode of a text (e.g., lack of grammatical circumstances to construct details of events; lack of lexical chains to introduce characters and move the storyline forward). Fewer comments were made in relation to the interpersonal meaning, or the tenor of a text. For example, in analyzing the tenor of Liliga’s text as part of meeting the project requirements for IFG,
Lin mainly conducted technical identification of tenor resources that Liliga used. Lin noted that Liliga’s text contained “mostly declarative mood and some interrogative mood within dialogue;” resources of “appraisal” (e.g., love, beautiful, good); and “few modality.” However, Lin did not analyze how these resources were used effectively or less effectively to construct the voice of the text. Neither did she offer feedback regarding how Liliga could improve her interpersonal meaning making ability. This data suggest that Lin seemed to be less clear about how language works to construct the voice of a text.

**Approach to responding to student writing during the practicum**

In February 2014, as part of meeting the practicum requirements for her TESOL degree, Lin designed and implemented a unit of instruction to teach Chinese high school EFL students how to write arguments. In her curriculum report, Lin stated that she chose to teach argument writing for three reasons. First, she observed that Chinese EFL students “generally lacked an ability to write academically because English instruction in China rarely focused on writing.” Second, she noticed that “there had been an increasing demand for academic English writing skills” as Chinese students pursued higher education and job opportunities nationally and internationally. Third, an argument was a “high-stakes genre” that Chinese EFL learners were frequently asked to write for “the college entrance exams.”

To implement her unit with EFL learners in China, Lin created eight online lessons using a blog, PowerPoint slides, and the WeChat, an instant messaging and video calling app. One Chinese student, “Xinxin,” volunteered to participate in the entire eight online lessons. Xinxin was in her last year of high school and would be taking a college entrance exam in a few months. To ensure the online lessons would meet Xinxin’s
learning need, Lin conducted a pre-assessment to understand Xinxin’s current writing ability. Before the first lesson, Lin asked Xinxin to respond to a visual writing prompt (see Figure 7) and write a persuasive essay about environment problems without assistance. Later, Lin carried out a close analysis of Xinxin’s pre-assessment essay to identify strengths and weaknesses.

Figure 7: Visual writing prompt for the pre-assessment.

The data indicated that Lin tended to draw on the functional text analysis approach she learned from *IFG* to analyze Xinxin’s essay. In her curriculum report, she described how she referred to previous course readings (e.g., Derewianka, 1990; Hyland, 2004) to understand the key organizational patterns and register features of an argument. For example, she recognized that an argument usually begins with a “statement of position” that is “often accompanied by some background information about the issue in question.” The subsequent sections each consist of a “point of argument supported by evidence.” In addition, some writers may suggest “resolution of the issue,” but it is
“optional.” Last, an argument typically concludes by “summing up the position.” In terms of register features, Lin identified that effective argumentative essays generally consist of “generalized (grammatical) participants,” “technical terms relating to the issue,” “timeless present tense,” “nominalization,” and “connectives associated with reasoning.”

Next, based on the genre-specific expectations she identified, Lin analyzed Xinxin’s pre-assessment essay (Figure 8) to identify the problem areas for the online instruction to target. In terms of text organization, Lin noticed that Xinxin “described the environment problems, but did not clearly present a statement of position.” In addition, the rest of the essay simply “gives suggestions” and “calls for action” without presenting any argument and supporting details. Lin summarized the organizational issues in her curriculum report.

Xinxin did not show a clear understanding of the structure of argument. There should be at least three parts: position, argument, and summing up. However, some genre moves were missing. She needed to learn what an argument is and how to organize it. (Curriculum Report, April 2014)

Nowadays, environmental problem is the most serious problem in our life. Because of the many car, the emissions is increasing. And the floors take up lots of space. All in all caused the Environment polluted which makes our health poorly.

So we should ask measures to solve these problems. First, on car emissions to take legal measures, because people are always punished when they wake up. Then, people should be more than by bus instead of driving a car, because this can reduce the atmosphere pollution for a clean Environment. What’s more, the government should increase floor height and prohibit the purchase of housing.

In a developed industrial era need our common Environment protection. So please go cherish our common home-----the earth.

Figure 8: Transcript of Xinxin’s pre-assessment essay.
It appeared that metalanguage about text organization such as “genre moves,” “statement of position,” and “points of argument” offered Lin a tool for recognizing and naming organizational patterns in Xinxin’s text. However, it is noteworthy that the ways Lin addressed the issue of genre moves in her analysis presented a notion of genre moves as a prescriptive formula. For example, Lin remarked Xinxin’s essay lacked required genre moves but nonetheless the visual prompt to which Xinxin responded did not specify any intended communicative purpose of the writing task. In other words, Lin tended to evaluate the organizational patterns in Xinxin’s text according to a prefabricated formula she adopted (e.g., position, argument, summing-up) rather than based on Xinxin’s ability to relate a writing purpose to appropriate organizational patterns. In addition, Lin frequently associated genre moves with “structure.” This association also signals that Lin tended to see and teach genre moves as if they were ‘given’ – structures imposed upon a text rather than moves arising naturally because of their functionality.

In regard to Lin’s analysis of the register features of Xinxin’s essay, the data suggest that Lin tended to focus predominantly on the word-level resources for constructing the field and mode of the text. Relatively less attention was paid to the features related to tenor. This pattern was consistent with a previous pattern regarding the ways in which Lin analyzed student writing during the IFG. For example, Lin noted that Xinxin used few “words that showed her knowledge about the environmental problems,” and few “noun and verb phrases that expressed her position.” As a result, Xinxin “failed to build a complete field of the text.” In addition, Lin noticed that Xinxin’s essay drew on
a narrow variety of cohesive devices for creating a logical flow of information. Lin commented,

[A] conjunction is a resource of cohesion. It can create links from one part of the text to another, but there are limited conjunctions used in this text, only “because,” “so,” and “and.” These conjunctions are usually used in informal writing and speech. Moreover, she used only one type of sentence structure “because…so” to present the cause-effect relationship, which is a big issue for her. Actually, there are three ways for expressing cause-effect relationship – material verbs (e.g., lead, result in, cause); conjunctions (e.g., because, as a result, therefore, hence); and nouns (e.g., the first reason, the second reason). (Curriculum report, April 2014)

Based on the pre-assessment, Lin designed several lessons that targeted Xinxin’s weaknesses. For example, Lin created a lesson to introduce the genre of argument and how it is typically organized. She showed Xinxin a video clip regarding a college student debate to raise Xinxin’s awareness of the purpose of argument (Figure 9). Lin also created a model text and engaged Xinxin in a discussion of the genre moves of an argument (Figure 10). In an email exchange, Lin described how she modeled genre moves of an argument.

After she read the article, I asked, “What do you think about the structure of this article?” At first she was confused. Her confusion was about what genre moves are. But after my guidance, she was able to identify the genre moves. Then we summarized the genre moves of the article together. I also taught her some typical ways of starting each move. (Email Exchange, March 2014)
Figure 9: Lin’s lecture slides on argument writing.

At register level, Lin created a series of lessons that guided Xinxin to deconstruct the model text and identify the specific language resources for constructing the content and the flow of an argument. For example, Lin asked Xinxin to “underline the key noun and verb phrases that present the author’s position and argument” (Instructional Slide, March 2014).

Recently, there has been a heated discussion about whether or not students should wear uniforms in school. Some students claim that they have their own choices to decide what to dress, while others think students should wear the same clothes in school. In my opinion, I agree students should wear uniforms in school.

There are three reasons to support my idea. First of all, wearing uniforms saves time for students, because they do not need to choose what to wear every day. Therefore, they can focus on their study. Second, a sense of responsibility and spirit of cooperation can be developed if students wear uniforms. They will feel they are part of a community. Finally, wearing different clothes can lead to comparison between students. As a result,
parents need to spend a lot of money on buying clothes for their children. This causes burden for poor families.

In conclusion, there are many benefits of wearing uniforms. Students should be encouraged to wear uniforms in school. However, in special situations, for example, the school fair, students can choose whatever they wear.

Figure 10: Lin’s instructional model text.

In addition, Lin asked Xinxin to identify the cohesive devices that constructed causal relationships in the model text. In an interview, she described how she facilitated this activity.

我讓她畫出 sample 裡面表達因果關係的詞，因為他的文章只有 because 和 so, 所以我讓他畫出來。做得不太好，因為有些東西她不知道。那我就給她講有三種方式表示。我主要給他講這個重點，給她講了兩個動詞，lead, cause. 然後給他總結一下，就是你看到的這張 slide.

I asked her to circle words and phrases that express the cause-effect relations in the sample, because she only used “because” and “so” in her text. She didn’t do well [on this activity], because there were many words she didn’t know. I explained to her that there are three different ways [to express the cause-effect relationship]. That’s the main point I taught her. I highlighted two verbs, lead and cause. Finally I gave her a summary, like the slide you saw (see Figure 11).

(Interview, 4/2/2014)
Upon the completion of all lessons, Lin asked Xinxin to rewrite her pre-assessment essay about the environmental problems in China (Figure 12). The data did not provide any information regarding what feedback Lin gave directly to Xinxin on her revised essay. However, she did identify some improvements Xinxin made in her revised essay and highlighted key areas for subsequent teaching. In her practicum reflection paper, Lin remarked that Xinxin developed some understanding of argument writing, and she made progress in her ability to use “clearer genre moves,” more “content words,” and a wider variety of “cohesive devices to express cause-effect relations.” In terms of areas for improvement, Lin noted that Xinxin’s revised essay did not show a clear “lexical chain related to the environmental problems.” She brought up this weakness again in her post-instructional interview.

Lin: 她說 many environmental problems 是人造成的對吧？然後她說有三個理由，但是她的文章只有講到一個 environmental problem – acid rain, 然後她卻講了兩個 human problems – strange disease, less space to live. 這就讓人有點 confused. (She said many environmental problems are caused by human, right? And she said there are three reasons. But her text only shows one environmental
problem – acid rain. After that, she switched topics to two human problems – strange disease, less space to live. This makes readers feel confused; Interview, 4/2/2014)

Nowadays, there are many environmental problem which become more and more serious. What’s more, all of this problems are caused by ourselves. Here are three reasons.

First of all, the emissions do harm to our health. Emission includes CO2, NO2, NO, SO2. The more cars, the more emissions. Therefore, our bodies have many strange diseases. In addition, a number of people die from being poisoned by SO2. Secondly, so many harmful gases cause the acid rain. Since the acid rain has huge destructive power, every year we have large losses. Finally, owing to the social is developing, many buildings and floors are built which cause a large number of space are taken. We have less and less space for our life.

In conclusion, we must take measures to solve these problems. Protecting environment is everyone responsibility. In a world, please go cherish our common home---the earth.

Figure 12: Transcript of Xinxin’s revised essay about environmental problems.

Another weakness Lin noted was persistent syntactic errors in Xinxin’s two texts. In her post-instructional interview, she highlighted some errors and remarked that one of the limitations she saw about an SFL/genre-based approach to writing instruction was its inability for teachers to address syntactic errors.

她進步挺大的，至少她還會用到這些東西，像是 genre moves, cohesive devices, 對吧？但句子很多還是有問題，比如說 owing to the social is developing, the more cars, the more emission. 而且也有很多文法錯誤，像是複數沒加 s, 或是指代詞，像她的文章裡就寫說 all of this problems. 像這種問題
没教啊，必須還是得用 traditional grammar 的方法阿。(She made a lot of progress, like in her use of genre moves and cohesive devices, right? But there were still many sentence problems. For example, she wrote owing to the social is developing, and the more cars, the more emission. There were also many grammatical errors, like missing “s” in a plural noun, and incorrect use of demonstrative pronouns. For example, she wrote all of this problems. Errors like these can’t be addressed [through a functional approach]. You have to use a traditional grammar approach; Interview, 4/2/2014)

Lin further explained how the assessment system in China that emphasized formal accuracy demanded teachers focus on sentence-level grammar in their teaching and feedback.

Lin: 我之前覺得用 SFL 教 writing 挺好的，但真的實踐起來發現還是有很多問題。(I used to think SFL was very good for teaching writing, but after I implemented the unit, I found many problems.)

Research: 比如說什麼問題？(Like what kinds of the problem?)

Lin: 比如說 grammar 的部分，基本的文法結構。我發現 SFL 就不太有幫助。但基礎還是要打好，不然他寫得再好，這麼多錯誤也不行啊！尤其是在中國的考試，錯誤幾個就直接 fail 了。(Like grammar, basic sentence structure. I found SFL was not helpful. But students need a good foundation. Without the foundation they make a lot of grammatical errors. Especially in China, no matter how well you can write, if you make certain number of errors, you fail the exams.) (Interview, 4/2/2014)
In response to the institutional forces such as the form-focused, accuracy-oriented assessment system, Lin maintained that a “combination of a traditional grammar approach and a functional grammar approach” would support students’ writing development (Practicum reflection paper, April 2014). However, as a pre-service teacher, Lin was unable to articulate any concrete plan for how she would integrate these two approaches in her future instructional and feedback practices.

5.2.2 Jiwon

*Initial approach to responding to student writing*

Before attending the focal MA TESOL teacher education program, Jiwon had completed a 140-hour TESOL certificate program in the U.S. She said that during the certificate program she learned many teaching strategies such as “turn and talk,” “role play,” and the “Bananagrams word game.” She learned these strategies through coursework and during teaching practicum where she worked with a certified teacher in an adult ESL classroom. She reported that these teaching strategies were very different from what she had experienced in her school English classrooms in Korea, where drilling and practice of grammatical forms was main instructional focus. In her first journal entry for *SLLD*, she stated,

In Korea, the majority of my English teachers ran a class in a behavioral way. They mainly taught grammar to make us able to read and write in English. For example, teachers drilled specific English grammatical patterns and asked us to write sentences using the patterns we learned on that day, such as focusing on subject and verb agreement, verb tenses, irregular verbs, or adjective clauses… In the U.S. I taught adult ESL students with a certified teacher in a language
institute…The certified teacher and I did a role-play to enhance students’ understanding of textbook dialogues. We used Bananagram word game to help them practice words, and we had them act out situations to learn different verb tenses. This [instructional approach] was in contrast to the behavioral way of teaching. (Reflective journal, *SLLD*, September 2012)

She added,

The behaviorist teaching strategies are not effective in Korean contexts, because I can see many Korean students who cannot communicate in English even though they have learned English for more than ten years… I believe that students learn language more effectively in a hands-on environment than in repetitive grammar activities. When students learn language through hands-on lessons, they are more likely to engage in communication with others socially. (Reflective journal, *SLLD*, September 2012)

Research has shown that pre-service teachers tended to promote or avoid specific instructional strategies on the basis of their positive or negative experience of these respective strategies as learners (e.g., Borg, 2006; Numrich, 1996). From this journal entry, it is evident that Jiwon’s unsatisfactory experience with behaviorist learning caused her to embrace communicatively-oriented, hands-on instruction. She tended to believe that teachers’ job was to develop learners’ ability to communicate in English and that this ability was most likely to be achieved through participation in hands-on activities.

However, what is notable about Jiwon’s conception of English teaching is an unclear definition of communication. From Jiwon’s report on her approach to develop adult ESL learners’ communicative ability, it seems that her definition of communication
was limited to word- and sentence-level exchange of information within a controlled conversational context. For example, she said she used games and hands-on activities to help students “practice words.” Likewise, she engaged students in acting out scenarios to “enhance students’ understanding of textbook dialogues” and help them “learn different verb tenses.” Despite using a variety of activities typically associated with communicative language teaching (CLT), very little was actually communicated in this classroom. It was obvious that the purpose of those activities was to review vocabulary words and grammatical forms targeted in a particular curriculum unit. In these ways, the instruction still strongly reflected structuralist learning. Moreover, the notion of communication was reduced to mean the ability to use specific sets of words and expressions to fit specific dialogic transitions that were assumed to take place in normalized context (Kramsch, 2006). Students participating in these communicative activities did not need to be sensitive to social features such as communicative purpose and audience. What students were required to do was merely to exchange information precisely using specific language forms and fixed expressions, which were later assessed in terms of their accuracy (Kramsch, 2006; McConachy, 2009).

Not surprisingly, Jiwon’s initial approach to responding to student writing focused on formal aspects of English. She paid particular attention to vocabulary, and tended to equate students’ ability to write with their ability to use a broad and advanced vocabulary. This approach reflected a conception of good writing as demonstration of lexical knowledge. For example, in one SLLD workshop report Jiwon constructed in October 2012, she analyzed a story written by a 2nd grade ESL student from Japan, who had been in the U.S. for one year (Figure 13). Jiwon provided a brief summary of the
strengths and weaknesses in this text. With regard to strengths, Jiwon commented that this text demonstrated the student’s knowledge of English writing conventions and her ability to stir readers’ curiosity by using vocabulary items that imitate sound. Jiwon stated,

From this text, we are able to assume that she had good education in Osaka, according to how she wrote the story in English. For instance, she showed an understanding of punctuations, like quotation marks, and capitalization. Also, she knew how to provoke curiosity and hold readers’ attention by starting her story with a verb, *slam*, and using quotation marks. (Workshop Report, October 2012)

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“Slam!” Polly was coming through the door of her room. She was trying to do piano. So her friend helped her. The friend’s name was Alexander. It was girl. Alexander said “let go” “okay” said Polly. So they leaped to piano. Then Polly started to play piano. She liked the piano but she can’t do it. So Alexander helped Polly again. Alexander can do piano. Alexander thinks that Polly can’t do at all! Then Polly tried again. But she can’t did it. So she tried and tried and tried. Then Polly asked Alexander that how can you do it? So Polly said “how can you do it?” And Alexander said “you have to plactas a lot. Polly can’t do it so Alexander plays the piano so that Polly can do it and Polly lisned to it. Polly wached carfaley and Polly thinks that she can do it. After that Polly tried again. So Polly tried again then she did it. She did it so she did many songs as Polly can do. The end!
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Figure 13: Transcript of the student writing sample Jiwon analyzed in *SLLD*.

In regard to weaknesses, Jiwon noted that the student “misspelled many words such as *plactas = practice, carfaley = carefully.*” In addition, Jiwon commented that this story contained simple and repetitive vocabulary items, which reduced the quality of writing. She remarked,
For better writing, she needed to know a great deal of vocabulary…Her repetition of verbs showed her limited vocabulary. For example, she used tried, do/did, and can many times. On the other hand, we can also notice that she tried to use new words, like slam and leaped. It is evident that she had the ability to gain more vocabulary…Teachers need to provide her with more opportunities to learn new words and enrich vocabulary. (Workshop Report, October 2012)

In sum, Jiwon’s initial approach to responding to student writing focused on decontextualized vocabulary items, without consideration of the effectiveness of a student’s lexical choices in producing meaningful text for a specific purpose, audience, and topic. This approach indicated that Jiwon was not aware of the connection between a writer’s lexical choices and the meanings these choices realize in a text. As a result, the feedback she provided was mostly vague calls for a wider vocabulary. This type of feedback lacked concrete and specific advice for student revisions and subsequent learning.

Approach to responding to student writing during the SFL-informed PD courses

Over two semesters of the SFL-informed PD, Jiwon made some shifts in her approach to responding to student writing. The data reveals two changes in Jiwon’s approach. First, Jiwon moved beyond just correcting spelling and offering decontextualized vocabulary-oriented feedback to noticing and responding to a wider variety of dimensions of student writing (e.g., purpose of a task, text organization, cohesive links, content, syntactic errors). For example, in one of her journal entries for IFG, she reflected on the predominantly error-focused feedback practice she had
absorbed in Korea, and then identified other aspects of writing she would consider in her own feedback.

English teachers in Korea have focused more on correcting grammar than teaching meaning making. Actually, composing grammatically correct sentences does not mean anything. Not knowing how to use English grammar appropriately prevented us from communicating with others in different discourses of English…In my future teaching, rather than focusing on correcting students’ errors (if they are not significantly serious), I will respond to my students’ writing with my comments focusing on the content and organization of their writing. I will also underline ways the meanings are conveyed and comment if they are appropriate. (Reflective Journal, IFG, March 2013)

Additional evidence that Jiwon expanded the focus of her feedback comes from a verbal comment she gave on a student writing sample during a workshop session in IFG. Jiwon and other ELTs in this workshop were asked to respond to a personal narrative about a family trip written by a third grade ESL student, and identify areas for improvement. The following fieldnote excerpt records Jiwon’s verbal comments.

Jiwon first said that this text included “many sequential words, like first, next, finally.” After that, she judged that this text was “hybrid.” She said something like “It mixes a narrative and an informational text.” I think she was trying to point out that the student writer simply listed one thing she saw during the trip after another without providing any description about the events she was involved. This list of things made the text read more like an information report than a story. Jiwon
ended her feedback by giving a suggestion: “I would ask her to choose one event and talk about the event deeper. (Researcher’s Fieldnotes, IFG, April 2013)

The preceding verbal comment shows Jiwon’s attempt at responding to the dimensions of genre, text organization, and content. She identified how information in the text was sequenced, and considered whether this organizational feature is effective for constructing the genre of narrative. In addition, drawing on an emerging understanding of the difference between narratives and information-based texts, she highlighted a key component that needed to be added or strengthened in order for the writer to construct a more successful narrative (i.e., “events”).

Final evidence regarding Jiwon’s ability to notice and respond to a wider range of issues comes from her analysis of a student writing sample for her IFG final project. This writing sample was produced by “Ting,” a seventh grade ESL student from Cambodia who had been in the U.S. for five years and was “mainstreamed” for English language arts. Ting was required to read a novel Out of My Mind by Sharon Draper, and write an argument on whether this novel was a good book for middle school students to read (see Figure 14 for the writing sample). In analyzing Ting’s text, Jiwon drew on her emerging genre and register knowledge to identify more global issues, such as task/content appropriateness and text organization, and more local issues, for instance, use of conjunctions, syntactic errors, and spelling.
I think this is a good book for middle school students to read this book because it’s about a little girl named melody and she is handicaped. She can’t walk or talk. It be good if students in this school know how it feels to be unable to walk or talk/handicaped. but this girl is supper smart even if she is handicaped. Usually people would think that people like melody would not be smart but this girl is smarter than you think. I learned a lot of new things from this book. I learned how she ignores people making fun of her. But the problem is that no one knows that she has a really clear mind. melody has never spoken a single word and shis almost 11 years old but then she finally can talk.

Figure 14: Transcript of Ting’s argumentative essay.

For example, Jiwon noted that Ting’s text did not thoroughly respond to the writing task. She commented,

The expected purpose of the text was to express her point of view. However, the analysis of the text shows that it did not fulfill the purpose. For instance, Ting presented a thesis statement (I think this is a good book) but expressed weak opinions. She lacked an understanding of the argument genre. (Final Paper, IFG, May 2013)

Jiwon further identified organizational issues that prevented the text from achieving its purpose. She stated,

The genre moves of argument deal with its structure: Statement of position (thesis statement), argument (Point/elaboration), and summing up the position (reiteration of the thesis). According to the analysis, Ting’s text missed the required moves (argument/elaboration & summing up) and added the structures of
other genres, such as narrative and description...She should be taught the purpose and genre moves of argument. (Final Paper, IFG, May 2013)

These comments illustrate Jiwon’s attempt at addressing the issues of purpose and organizational stages in her analysis of student writing. They also reveal how Jiwon made sense of the concept of genre moves. Like Lin, Jiwon tended to think of genre moves as a prescriptive formula, and she evaluated Ting’s text based on presence or absence of the required moves. While Jiwon highlighted the purpose of argument, she did not clearly relate the genre moves to their purpose to show the functionality of these moves. Rather, she tended to reinscribe the concept of genre with a more structural understanding, and see genre moves as structural units that must be employed and arranged in a correct order. This structural understanding of genre was also illustrated in an interview excerpt in which Jiwon articulated the benefits she saw about an SFL/genre-based approach to writing instruction. She associated genre moves with a “frame” for writing.

SFL has very structural and systematic tools to teach students within specific genres…I can see how SFL can help Korean teachers teach appropriate English. Once teachers teach, like, genre moves of a specific genre, students can include their thoughts in the structure. How can I say? Like the frame. They can focus on what they want to write, rather than spending a lot of time thinking about the structure. (Interview, 4/25/2013)

The second change in Jiwon’s approach to responding to student writing was her increasing ability to provide feedback with greater linguistic precision and clearer form-meaning connection. She was better able to identify ineffectual use of language resources and to provide more concrete advice for improvement. For example, in analyzing Ting’s
argumentative essay, Jiwon noted that the text relied on grammatical participants realized by personal nouns and pronouns related to the main character of the novel. In addition, the grammatical processes in the text were mainly realized by verbs which referred to what the character did, felt, and said. Jiwon commented that these features constructed a story while failing to present Ting’s position and argument on the issue in question.

The participants in her text are mostly personal ones, such as Melody, she, rather than abstract ones, such as ideas and issues. This makes her text become multi-generic, mixing description, narrative, and argument. If she could use abstract and generalized nominal groups, other linguistic features will be accomplished, like the use of passives or relational processes…From the analysis we can see the process types are mostly material (walk), mental (think, know, learn, feel, ignore), and verbal (speak, talk, name). However, these verbs are simple and simply describe the main character, Melody… She needs to learn to expand “verbs that link nominal structures to construct abstraction and generalization” (Schleppegrell, 2004, p. 94). (Final Paper, IFG, May 2013)

Moreover, Jiwon noticed that Ting used few “connectives associated with reasoning” to justify her position and create a logical flow of the text. She remarked,

In an argument, the connectives are often associated with reasoning (e.g., because, therefore, as a result, the first reason). Although Ting used because in her thesis statement (I think this is a good book for middle school students to read this book because it’s about a little girl named Melody), most of the connectives in the text are not related to reasoning. She used mostly “but” and “and” in the rest of her text… Her use of ‘but’ disrupted me several times when I was reading her
She needed a mini lesson on the appropriate use of connectives for building the logic flow of her text. (Final Paper, IFG, May 2013)

While Jiwon was able to analyze how Ting used language resources in making meaning, the data shows that her analysis focused mainly on word-level resources, for example, types of nouns and verbs for constructing grammatical participants and processes in a text, causal connectives, and lexical chains. Little to no attention was paid to resources for organizing and condensing clauses, such as thematic progression and nominalization. Jiwon’s emphasis on word-level resources indicates that she retained a tendency to respond to word-level problems. The change, however, was that she was now able to link students’ lexical choices to the meanings these choices express in the context of a specific genre rather than simply offering decontextualized vocabulary-oriented feedback such as “learn more words.”

Finally, the data shows that Jiwon provided relatively less feedback on the issue of voice than on the issues of content and flow. For example, in analyzing Ting’s essay, Jiwon identified key interpersonal resources of the grammar (e.g., “all declaratives” that “present statement and give information”; “strong modality: can/can’t, would”; “high appraisal, such as good, super, never”). This identification shows Jiwon’s attempt at following the project guidelines that required her to analyze the field, tenor, and mode of a student text. However, unlike her ability to offer precise content- and flow-related advice for improvement, Jiwon did not provide any feedback on Ting’s use of the interpersonal resources of the grammar for constructing the text’s voice.

Approach to responding to student writing during the practicum
In January 2014, as part of meeting the practicum requirements for her degree, Jiwon returned to Korea and implemented a unit of instruction with a group of eighth-grade students in an afterschool program. This unit focused on argument writing, and consisted of ten two-hour lessons. Jiwon’s decision to teach argument writing was motivated by a newly released English assessment policy in Korea. The Korean government planned to replace the existing English subject test in the college entrance exam with a new test named the National English Ability Test (NEAT). The NEAT changed the existing test format by adding the speaking and writing domains. This change, according to Jiwon, introduced significant challenges to teachers and students in Korea, because “writing has been considered the hardest domain to learn and to teach” (Practicum Report, April 2014). Therefore, Jiwon attempted to focus her unit on helping Korean EFL students learn how to write. In addition, she chose argument as the target genre for instruction for two reasons. First, “argument is one of the required genres students need to produce for the NEAT,” and second, “argument writing can teach students critical thinking” (Practicum Report, April 2014).

In designing her unit, Jiwon reported that she drew on “the Teaching and Learning Cycle,” a genre-based approach to writing instruction. To begin, Jiwon set up a unit goal, which was centered on developing students’ ability to “write an argumentative essay to express their opinions about the NEAT policy.” She believed that using this timely and debatable issue would “motivate students to express their opinions in class” and allow them to “explore the content of the unit using their personal experiences” (Practicum Report, April 2014). Next, she engaged students in a discussion of the pros and cons of the NEAT policy as a way of building their knowledge of the topic. Third,
she asked students to write a passage in response to a prompt (*Do you agree or disagree with replacing KSAT with NEAT? Please explain your answer*; Lesson plan, January 2014). She assessed all students’ texts to understand their current writing abilities and to use the assessment results to illuminate her subsequent lessons.

In assessing students’ initial writing, Jiwon created a feedback chart for each student. This chart identified “genre moves,” “linguistic features,” and “grammatical errors” in student writing. Figure 15 provides an example of how Jiwon used the chart to respond to one student’s writing.

![Image: Feedback Chart Example]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre moves</th>
<th>Linguistic features</th>
<th>Grammatical errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Thesis statement  
  • Only 1 point and weak elaboration  
  • No summing-up the points | • Personal subject: “I” and “we”  
  • Only use of ‘because’ and ‘but’ as cohesive devices  
  • Only one modality (can) | • The use of ‘Because’ in the beginning of the sentence  
  • The use of capital letters →english and the first words of every sentence  
  • ‘Have’ and ‘Have to’  
  • ‘Adverb’ and ‘Adjective’ → easily/easy  
  • Plural and singular  
  • Punctuation |

Figure 15: Jiwon’s feedback chart.

Drawing on all the feedback charts, Jiwon identified strengths and weaknesses her students had in common. In her practicum report, she stated,
Most of the students had a thesis statement, but they did not provide strong reasons. Other areas for improvement included grammatical skills, use of cohesive devices, structure of an argument, and its register features. (Practicum Report, April 2014)

Jiwon further highlighted the register features her students needed to improve. These features included “generalized and abstract participants,” “variety of verb types,” “modality (e.g., can, should, have to)” and “connectives associated with reasoning (e.g., because of, as a result, the first reasons).”

The feedback Jiwon gave on students’ first drafts show some characteristics about her approach to responding to student writing. First, Jiwon attempted to respond to multiple dimensions of writing, including the overall text organization, cohesion, lexical choices, sentence-level grammar, and writing mechanics such as punctuation and capitalization. Second, Jiwon tended to evaluate students’ writing according to a set of genre-specific expectations. These expectations included organizational stages and key language features she identified drawing on the concepts and tools of SFL. It is noteworthy that Jiwon appeared to focus mainly on the word-level features (i.e., nominal and verbal phrases, modal finites, connectives). This focus on word-level features was further shown in an instructional handout she created to support her students in using the key register features of argument (see Figure 16). This handout presented register features as if they were different categories of vocabulary items to be learned.
Finally, Jiwon used her feedback on student’s writing to target her instruction to specific student weaknesses. She focused her subsequent lessons on the “genre moves of argument” and “cohesive devices” in order to help students “organize their thoughts and improve the overall structure of their texts” (Practicum Report, April 2014). For example, she engaged students in deconstructing two model texts – an expert one and a novice one – to raise students’ awareness of the organizational stages and cohesive links. In
addition, she provided students with graphic organizers to help them brainstorm and outline information. Finally, she worked collaboratively with students to turn their graphic organizers into paragraphs by using cohesive devices. Figure 17 provides an example of how Jiwon facilitated one student, Daesung, in organizing his bullet points into a cohesive text.

![Graphic Organizer Example](image)

Figure 17: Daesung’s use of a graphic organizer for writing.

Reflecting on student learning her post-instructional interview, Jiwon said most of her students were able to produce a “longer” and “more structured” text at the end of the unit. She felt that instructing students in genre moves greatly facilitated this improvement, because they provided a structure for students to follow.
I went over the metalanguage, I mean, the description of genre moves, for example, thesis statement. After they knew what thesis was, they would think about what should be included in the thesis statement. They could just spend more time on their work instead of asking a lot of questions. It’s very structural. There are very specific features students should use under each genre move. So they don’t need to spend that much time to think about how to organize their writing, because there are already some features there. They can spend more time thinking about the content. (Interview, 3/31/2014)

This interview excerpt shows once again Jiwon reinscribed the concept of genre with a strong structural understanding. She conveyed the organizational stages of a genre as rigid external structures rather than natural moves corresponding to functionality. Students were given few opportunities to reflect on how a text is constructed and organized in response to its social purpose and context.

However, it is also interesting to note that Jiwon thought providing students with a text formula or template helped them produce ideas or “content” for their texts. She recalled that her students “couldn’t put forward their thoughts” at the beginning of the unit even after they had discussed the topic together as a group. Using a template helped students get started: “I gave them a graphic organizer. They started to think about their point 1, 2, and 3, and then wrote about them. This helped them put their ideas in the worksheet” (Interview, 3/31/2014). Jiwon maintained that helping students generate and formulate ideas was her priority given that these aspects of writing had long been neglected in Korea and that the new assessment system had introduced new demands for content development on writing.
5.2.3 Pei-Ying

*Initial approach to responding to student writing*

Before the MA TESOL program, Pei-Ying had taught EFL in vocational high schools in Taiwan for eight years. Reflecting on her teaching experience in a journal entry for *SLLD*, Pei-Ying stated, “At the early stage of my teaching career, I taught the same way as I was taught.” She further described how she learned to write in English in Taiwan.

In school, we were asked to memorize vocabulary for writing. We were also trained to translate words, phrases, and ultimately whole sentences. After learning the foundation of sentence structures, teachers provided some sample articles for us to imitate the formats. Then, drawing on my Chinese writing skills, I started to write English compositions. (Reflective Journal, *SLLD*, September 2012)

Pei-Ying recognized that her early teaching practices, which were shaped by her prior learning experience, “focused heavily on drilling sentence patterns and paid less attention to how to brainstorm ideas and how to organize ideas.” Therefore, in her later years of teaching, she attempted to include generation and organization of ideas into her instruction. She reported,

I divided my writing instruction into two domains: strengthening grammatical structures and brainstorming & organizing ideas. First, the grammatical part of instruction focused on how to use verbs properly, how to combine clauses, and how to write complete sentences. Equally important was the second part. That is,
brainstorming and organizing ideas. With the aid of concept maps or mind map organizers, I helped students brainstorm ideas and trained them to categorize their ideas into well-organized texts. (Reflective Journal, *SLLD*, September 2012)

The data further shows that the way Pei-Ying taught text organization seemed to be based on a formulaic model that is commonly referred to as the ‘five-paragraph essay structure’ (Millar, 2011). This model views texts as being composed of structural units such as Beginning-Middle-End or Introduction-Body-Conclusion. Each component is guided by some general principles, for example, “Begin your introductory paragraph with an interesting sentence,” “Develop body paragraphs by giving detailed information and examples,” “summarize your ideas in the concluding paragraph.” The following interview excerpt illustrates how Pei-Ying tended to draw on this model in teaching text organization.

Pei-Ying: I learned a writing strategy from a teaching workshop. It’s called the concept map. You give students a topic, and they have to brainstorm some ideas related to the topic. Then they fill in the boxes with the ideas. (我去研習的時候學到一個教 writing 的方法叫做 concept map. 就是你給學生一個主題，然後讓他們 brainstorm 一些想法，把想法寫在那些格子裡面。)

Researcher: That sounds a good method. Was it effective? (聽起來是蠻不錯的。有效嗎？)

Pei-Ying: I think so. At least it helped them generate ideas. After they had some ideas about the topic, we would talk about text structure, like what should be included in the beginning, what should be included in the conclusion, how to
write the middle parts, how to use topic sentences, and so on. (我覺得多少還是有。至少他們可以有一些想法出來。有了想法之後我們再來討論文章的架構，比如說開頭要怎麼寫，後面結尾怎麼樣，中間怎麼樣，要怎麼使用 topic sentences，什麼什麼的。)

Prior research has provided little empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of using the five-paragraph essay model to develop students’ writing ability. Rather, many writing researchers have criticized this model for presenting a misconception of texts as objects that can be taught independently of specific purposes and contexts (e.g., Johns, 2008; Hyland, 2003; Miller, 2011). These researchers found that teachers who draw on this decontextualized text model are often unable to explain or instruct in an explicit way how texts are effectively shaped to meet writers’ goals in specific contexts. Pei-Ying’s case provides an additional example of this finding. While she reiterated her emphasis on teaching text organization in both her journal entry and interview, she did not seem to have explicit ways of guiding students to connecting and organizing ideas into coherent texts for specific purposes and contexts.

Pei-Ying’s teaching practices heavily shaped how she responded to student writing. Two patterns were found in her initial approach to responding to student writing. First, her feedback tended to focus on evaluating students’ syntactic knowledge. For example, in a SLLD seminar meeting in October 2012, Pei-Ying and other ELTs in the class were asked to respond to a writing sample produced by a fifth grade ESL student during a biographic writing unit. The following fieldnote excerpt recorded Pei-Ying’s reaction to this writing sample.
Dr. O’Connell told the ELTs to spend a few minutes reading through this writing sample as if it were the paper one of their students submitted for feedback. She also asked the ELTs to jot down reactions to the text as they were reading it. Later, during the whole class discussion, Dr. O’Connell invited each ELTs to share one point from their feedback notes. Pei-Ying said she noticed the student writer “has some sentence-combining knowledge.” She pointed out one example from the text (Mrs. Darcia came from the same neighborhood that her children come of the same neighborhood and she loves to help them). She commented that while the student made some “prepositional and verb tense mistakes,” she appeared to have an emergent understanding of “how to make a complex sentence by using a relative clause.” (The researcher’s fieldnote, 10/25/2012).

This fieldnote excerpt shows that, like Lin and Jiwon, Pei-Ying tended to measure students’ writing ability based on their use of certain formal features such as relative clauses or based on the syntactic complexity of their texts. This approach emphasized writing as the demonstration of syntactic knowledge.

The second pattern in Pei-Ying’s initial approach to responding to student writing is a lack of explicitness in her feedback on text organization. The data shows that she attended to the issue of text organization in her feedback, but was unable to pinpoint the exact sources of the problems. As a result, her feedback was generally too broad and vague to be useful for student revision or subsequent learning. The following fieldnote excerpt provides an example of this finding. This excerpt documented an event in which Pei-Ying called on the researcher during office hours in November 2012 for assistance in analyzing student writing for her SLLD case study project.
Pei-Ying entered my room with a folder of course handouts and a pack of data for her case study. She said she was a bit confused about what Dr. O’Connell asked them to do in analyzing a student writing sample. She showed me one writing sample provided by Dr. O’Connell from a previous class session. This writing sample was a summary of a literary text produced by a former ESL student for his first-year college writing course. I asked Pei-Ying to tell me her initial reactions to this text. She said she would give this text a good grade if the writer were her student in Taiwan. She explained that the text had very few grammatical mistakes and used a variety of vocabulary words. Compared to what her vocational high school students were able to write, this text was good enough. However, she recognized that there were definitely some issues in regard to the overall organization of the text. She made a comment in Chinese like this: “If we look at it from the aspect of text organization, I feel it is not well-organized. He was trying to write a summary, but after reading the text I still didn’t know what the plots were about. It seemed that he just used a quote and then said what he thought about the quote. And then he used another quote, and repeated the patterns. I feel the text has a problem with text organization” (如果是從organization的角度來看的話，我覺得這篇是沒什麼organization. 他這是一個summary 嘛，但是我讀了之後還是不知道他的故事情節是什麼。他就是用一個quote, 這個quote 完之後他就說他覺得應該是這樣，然後在quote，就這樣一直重複。我看完的感覺就是他的organization有問題。) (Research Fieldnotes, 11/5/2012)
Pei-Ying’s comments show that she had a basic idea about the key components of a summary of literary work, for example, central plots of a story, important quotations from the story, and a writer’s reaction to the story’s themes. However, she seemed to lack an explicit understanding of how to effectively organize pieces of information – quotations, plots, and reactions to themes – into a well-developed summary. Her frequent use of “I feel” in her comment shows her uncertainty (“I feel it is not well-organized.” “I feel he has a problem with organizing a text.”). Without explicit knowledge of how a summary is shaped to achieve its purpose, she was unable to provide precise and constructive advice on how to improve this text’s organization.

In an interview, Pei-Ying also mentioned the challenge she experienced in providing explicit feedback on student writing. She said, “I often ended up re-writing a student’s text, because I didn’t know what to say in my feedback. I just felt this text shouldn’t be written in this way. It should be written in that way. But I didn’t have the language to say what was wrong” (我常常乾脆幫學生重寫一遍, 因為不曉得要用什麼語言去講。就覺得, 這一篇好像不應該這樣寫, 而是應該那樣寫, 最後就變成老師自己寫了一篇給他看; Interview, 4/2/2013).

Approach to responding to student writing during the SFL-informed PD courses

Pei-Ying’s ability to provide more explicit and informed feedback on student writing developed over time during her participation in the SFL-informed PD courses. The data indicate that learning the concepts of genre and functional grammar fostered her understanding of how different texts are shaped in distinct ways in terms of their purposes and contexts. This understanding enabled her to articulate more precise
expectations in her response to student writing, and to provide more specific advice on how to improve the organization and language use in a student text.

The following interview excerpt provides an example of how learning the concept of genre in SLLD increased Pei-Ying’s awareness of the purpose and audience of writing.

Pei-Ying: 上了一學期的課下來，我覺得對我自己最大的影響，是我開始覺得 writing 是可以教的，可以明確的教，有系統的教。(The major influence of the course on me, I think, is that I started to see writing as something teachable. It can be taught explicitly and systematically.)

Researcher: Ok. 你是說這學期學了 genre based pedagogy 之後，你覺得 Writing 是可以教. (Ok. So you found writing is teachable after you learned genre-based pedagogy in this semester.)

Pei-Ying: 對，是可以教的。而且讓學生注意到，不同文體可以怎麼寫。但最重要的我覺得是，genre based pedagogy 很重視 purpose, 它強調寫作是一個 social activity, 而不只是老師出一個作業，然後我寫這個樣子。它很在意我們寫一篇文章的目的是什麼？audience 是誰？所以我覺得它 很, 就是我學了這個之後，可能無法避免我還是會出跟以前一樣的作業，但至少我會去思考，有沒有可能性可以讓學生... 喔比如說，之前我們學校鬧得很兇阿，就是把運動會改成半天，學生很生氣，就覺得為什麼之後還要回教室上課。所以如果我結合這個東西，讓他們寫信給學校的老師們或校長，那他們就會覺得，「哇，這個作業是有意義的！」他們會覺得寫了是為了要 communicate, 為了要表達我的想法，而且這個想法是有目的性的。(Yes, it is teachable.)
You can make students aware of how different genres are written. And the most important thing I learned is that genre based pedagogy emphasizes purpose of writing. It emphasizes that writing is a social activity rather than just an assignment to be submitted to a teacher. So when we are writing, we would think about “What are our goals?” “Who is our audience?” So I think it is very, I mean, after I learned it, I may, unavoidably, still assign the same assignments to students as I did before, but I will think about how to let students (1.0) For example, there was a policy change about the sports day in my school. It used be a whole day, but now it was only half day. Students were mad at having to go back to classes in the afternoon after they were done sport games. So if I let them write a letter to persuade the teachers and the principal for having a whole day event, they would feel, “Wow, this writing task is meaningful!” They would think they write this assignment to communicate. It is to express our opinions, and it has a purpose) (Interview, 4/2/2013)

This interview excerpt indicates that a heightened awareness of writing as a goal-oriented, social activity influenced the ways in which Pei-Ying approached writing instruction. She began to move beyond teaching disembodied sentence patterns and decontextualized paragraph organization toward supporting students in writing for certain communicative purposes. She was developing an ability to design writing tasks that connected students’ writing purpose with an appropriate genre choice (e.g., asking students to write an argument to persuade the principal to make the sports day a whole day event).
Later, as Pei-Ying learned functional grammar and began to understand how language resources are used to make meaning, she gained an ability to identify the organizational and language features that are functional for writing a specific genre. This ability to highlight genre-specific language expectations enabled her to provide more precise feedback on student writing. For example, in an interview where she reflected on her professional development experience during the IFG, Pei-Ying articulated how she would respond to one specific type of business writing her students often encountered in vocational high schools.

Pei-Ying: 這堂課不是一直要我們去想平時學生需要寫那些文體嗎？我一直在想這件事，後來我發現，應用外語的學生有兩種技藝競賽很重要，一種叫做商業簡報，一種叫做小論文寫作。我們常要幫學生準備比賽。那它既然是專業競賽，就不能講得很口語。他們不能講一些“hey,” “what’s up”這些之類的話。他在比賽的時候就必須用formal的方式。(This class kept asking us to identify the types of texts our students are required to write, right? I have been thinking about that, and I became aware that there are two kinds of texts (1.0) there are two contests that are particularly important for my students majored in Applied Foreign Language. One is the business presentation contest, and the other is the short essay composition. We have to prepare them for these competitions. Because these are professional competitions, students can’t be too colloquial. They can’t say something like “Hey,” “What’s up,” “and then, and then” during the presentation. They need to use language in more formal ways.
Researcher: 這就是我們一直在講的，purpose and audience. 因為 purpose and audience 不同，所要使用的語言就不同。像是你剛剛講到學生出去比賽要用比較 formal 的方式，所以會幫他們看講稿或是 slides 嗎？(This is what we have been talking about – purpose and audience. We use language in different ways for different purpose and audience. As you just said, students need to use language in a more formal way when they attend presentation competitions. So for those presentations, did you help them with their presentation scripts or slides?)

Pei-Ying: 對，我通常會叫他們在課堂上寫，然後我幫他們看，給他們一些意見讓他們修改。(Yes, I usually asked them to write [their scripts] in class, and then I would give them some suggestions for them to revise.)

Researcher: Ok, 所以你 //(Ok, so you //)

Pei-Ying: //(不過我覺得我之前給的建議好像比較模糊，我可能就是講說，欸這個動詞這樣用不好喔。但我現在覺得，其實那個商業簡報就是屬於 argument 嘛! 因為你要推銷產品，說服別人來買。所以我之後可能會多一點這方面的建議，比如說你要怎麼讓別人相信你？你要給 evidence 啊，或者用一些比較有說服力的字眼，比如說一些帶有評價意謂的詞。//(But I feel that the suggestions I gave in the past might be a bit vague. For example, I often said, “Look, this isn’t a good verb to use here.” But now I realize, actually a business presentation is like an argument, because you are advertising your products and convince people to buy your products. So in the future I may give
more suggestions based on this orientation. For example, how are you going to make people believe you? You must give some evidence. Or you need to use words and phrases that sounded more persuasive, like some evaluative words.)

This interview excerpt indicates that Pei-Ying became more clear about the kinds of texts her students were required to write (or present), and she began to relate students’ texts to the communicative purpose and the intended audience. In addition, she was better able to identify which language resources students could use or should avoid in producing a text for a specific purpose and audience. For example, she highlighted language students needed to avoid when producing formal, discipline-specific presentation. She also attempted to provide feedback that highlighted the language resources useful for constructing an argument (e.g., use words and phrases that present position or evaluation). While these comments were still general, they illustrated Pei-Ying’s emerging ability to provide feedback that linked forms with meanings in the context of a specific genre.

Additional evidence that Pei-Ying had learned to provide more precise and informed feedback comes from her analysis of student writing samples for her IFG final project. Pei-Ying analyzed a persuasive essay produced by “Christopher,” a fifth-grade ELL student, who attempted to respond to a writing prompt “Should students be paid if they get good grades?” (see Figure 5.X for the student text). In responding to Christopher’s text, Pei-Ying was able to identify precisely the sources of problems that made this text less effective. For example, the following comment was Pei-Ying’s response to the organizational problems in Christopher’s text. This comment differed from previous vague feedback she offered (e.g., I feel the text is not well-organized) in
that it pinpointed the language resources to be added to improve a text’s organization and made specific suggestions for revisions.

This text exhibits Christopher’s ability to give a preview of the main reasons for the thesis statement in the first paragraph. It also shows that he has a basic control of summing up/reiterating his points in the last paragraph. Generally, this text includes basic elements of an argument. However, the organization is not quite clear, because the internal cohesive links between three points are not established. Moreover, in the first paragraph, right after the thesis statement, the first reason is presented, which should be ideally moved a new paragraph. (Final Paper, IFG, May 2013)

Pei-Ying’s response to Christopher’s text also provided evidence of her ability to link form and meaning in her feedback. For instance, in explicating the issue of cohesive links, Pei-Ying commented that Christopher needed to learn to “use cohesive devices to link information logically.” These cohesive devices could be “nouns that label reasons (e.g., first reason, second reason)” or “adverbs such as next, moreover.” In addition, she noticed that Christopher overly relied on ‘because’ and ‘so’ to create causal relationship. She remarked,

Christopher needs to diversify ways of expressing cause-and-effect relationship. The ways he expressed causal relationship was just through ‘because’ and ‘so’. One drawback of this is the text sounds too colloquial…To be more accomplished, he can draw on conjunctions, such as therefore, as a result, consequently, due to, and owing to, or verbs, like lead to, result in/from, to express causative relationship. (Final Paper, IFG, May 2013)
Analysis of Pei-Ying’s written comments indicates that, like Lin and Jiwon, Pei-Ying tended to focus on word-level resources in her feedback, for example, cohesive devices, emotive lexicon, and types of grammatical participants that are realized in nominal phrases (e.g., “abstract participants” versus “personal participants”). The data shows that while she could recognize clause-level resources for condensing and organizing information, she was often unable to provide explicit feedback on these features.

For example, in her response to Christopher’s text, Pei-Ying noted an example of thematic progression, or the zig-zagging pattern. She drew a figure to illustrate this zig-zagging pattern (Figure 18), and commented that Christopher’s ability to “create a nominalized phrase, Getting paid demonstrated his potential to move toward a more experienced writer.” However, besides identification of the zig-zag pattern, no specific feedback point was articulated regarding how effectively Christopher used this feature in organizing information and what additional learning he needed.

![Figure 18: The zig-zagging pattern in Christopher’s text.](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(Would) you ever Want to get paid for good grades?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Getting paid could get you far.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Approach to responding to student writing during the practicum*

Pei-Ying conducted her teaching practicum in an elementary ESL class in the U.S. This class consisted of five fifth and sixth graders, who all had been in the U.S. for approximately one year. Pei-Ying observed this class for nearly two months before she implemented her unit of instruction on persuasive writing. In her practicum report, Pei-
Ying stated that her decision to teach persuasive writing was based on her class observations. Drawing on the concept of genre, she noticed that the students had been instructed to read and write several types of texts, including “biographic recounts,” “narratives,” and “science reports.” She thought that students would benefit from learning the genre of arguments. After consulting with the classroom ESL teacher, she decided to teach persuasive writing.

Pei-Ying was given four 60-minutes class periods to implement her unit. In her unit plan, Pei-Ying stated that her instructional goal was to develop students’ understanding of the “purpose,” “main elements,” and “target register features” of persuasive writing. She explained, in her post-instructional interview, that the “elements” of persuasive writing referred to the “genre moves” of an argument. However, she chose to use “elements” rather than “genre moves” in her instruction, because she thought the term “elements” was easier to understand by her students. She also modified the metalanguage related to the genre moves of an argument. She used a new set of terms, “one clear opinion, good reasons, conclusion,” in place of “statement of position, argument, summing up the position.”

To illustrate register features of an argument, Pei-Ying planned to teach “mental verbs such as need, want; “emotive words such as should, strongly believe”; and “connectives associated with reasoning such as because, therefore.” Pei-Ying reported that her selection of these three features was based on the nature of the final writing assignment she designed. This assignment asked students to write a persuasive letter to convince their parents to buy them something. What is notable about Pei-Ying’s instructional decision was that she tended to equate teaching of register to teaching of
lexicon. This instructional practice corresponded with her feedback practice that had shown a strong tendency to address the word-level resources of grammar (e.g., cohesive devices, lexical chains).

Due to time constraints, Pei-Ying ended up not being able to implement lessons related to register features of an argument. Rather, she focused predominantly on familiarizing students with the purpose and elements of an argument, and guiding them in constructing their final writing project. For example, to raise students’ awareness of the purpose of an argument, she created an activity that engaged students in comparing persuasive writing with other types of writing (See Figure 19 for an example). In addition, she showed students samples of visual advertisement, and discussed strategies that the advertisement producers used to convince people to buy or do something (see Figure 20 for an example).

Figure 19: The comparison activity in Pei-Ying’s unit.
Moreover, to teach the elements of an argument, Pei-Ying guided students in reading, as a whole class, a children’s story *I Wanna Iguana*. This story consists of an exchange of letters between a boy pleading to adopt a pet Iguana, and his mother, who refutes her son’s argument. Pei-Ying reported that the letters in the book “provide great examples for students to learn how to express their opinions clearly with supporting reasons” (Unit Report, April, 2014). She instructed students in deconstructing two letters from the book and identifying the main elements of an argument. She also provided two additional short model texts, and guided students in highlighting each element, or organizational stage of the texts (see Figure 21 for an example).
Finally, Pei-Ying provided students with a graphic organizer to support them in writing their persuasive letters (Figure 22). She guided students in drafting their “opinion” and “three reasons.” Students were then asked to use their graphic organizer as a resource in constructing their own persuasive letters independently in the last class meeting.
The ways Pei-Ying responded to students’ persuasive letters provided some evidence of her feedback practice during the practicum. She created a checklist to assess students’ persuasive letters and provide feedback (Figure 23). She also asked students to use the same checklist to self-assess their own texts. This feedback checklist shows that Pei-Ying focused almost exclusively on the organizational stages of a text. This is not surprising given that the primary instructional focus of her unit was on the “elements” of an argument. What is striking, however, was that Pei-Ying tended to consider only the
presence or absence of specific organizational stages that students were required to use. She did not offer any written or oral feedback that pinpointed precisely what it was that made an opinion unclear, or why a stated reason was not considered to be good enough. As a result, students were not likely to know how effectively they had constructed specific stages in their texts and what they might do to improve.

Figure 23: Pei-Ying’s Persuasive writing checklist.

It is worth noting that Pei-Ying’s response to student writing during the practicum retained many characteristics of her original method of giving feedback. She continued to give general, summative evaluation on the overall organization of a text, without providing informed advice for revision or direction for subsequent learning. In addition, she continued to assess her students’ ability to ‘follow the recipe’ in reproducing a specific format of writing. However, Pei-Ying did progress during the practicum in that she moved beyond addressing decontextualized structural units such as Introduction-
Body-Conclusion to addressing genre-specific expectations such as the organizational stages of an argument.

Reflecting on her practicum teaching and feedback practices in her post-instructional interview, Pei-Ying reported that time constraint was the biggest challenge she faced. She said she did not have time to guide students through a process of thorough text analysis.

I wasn’t patient enough to wait for them to come up with their thoughts during the discussion. I often just gave them conclusion directly in order to save time for another activity. (很多時候我都直接給他們結論，因為實在沒時間等他們討論。我有發現我不是很有有耐心，一直趕著要進行下個活動。)

Likewise, Pei-Ying also attempted to be efficient in responding to student writing. Using a feedback checklist was her strategy to give feedback quickly. Pei-Ying thought that using SFL tools to analyze samples of student writing would help her identify general weaknesses to be addressed in subsequent teaching; however, she felt reserved in using the tools the same way to analyze individual student writing and give feedback. Reflecting on her work in Taiwan, she added, “This approach is good, but high school teachers have to race against time! We really don’t have that much time to analyze every student text and give comprehensive feedback” (這個方法是很好，但是高中老師實在是分秒必爭啊！真的是沒有那個時間去分析每一篇論文，給那麼多建議。)
CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION

6.1 Developing Asian ELTs’ critical language awareness

The findings indicate that the focal ELTs entered the program with a strong formalist conception of language and defined good writing as accurate arrangements of lexical and syntactic forms following prescriptive rules. Accordingly, ELTs’ initial approaches to responding to student writing focused on correcting errors, calling for a wider vocabulary, and praising students’ use of complex sentence structures. Participation in a two-semester SFL-informed PD expanded ELTs’ conceptions of language beyond a formalist understanding. They became aware of the meaning-making function of language, and learned to recognize the influence of purpose, audience, and context in the process of making meaning. In addition, they developed an ability to draw on functional metalanguage to analyze how different language resources present ideas, construct voice, and manage the flow of information in texts. The functional language awareness and text analysis skills ELTs developed during the PD provided them with new ways of responding to student writing. They were able to move beyond offering decontextualized reactions to lexical and syntactic issues to providing feedback aimed at strengthening meaning in a text. Specifically, they were able to highlight language features that are functional for writing a specific genre; identify students’ ineffectual language choices in constructing meaning; and offer linguistically-precise guidance to help students use specific language resources more expertly to improve texts.
These findings support findings of other studies, which highlight the essential role of teacher language awareness in shaping teachers’ approaches to literacy instruction and assessment (Andrew, 2007; Bigelow & Ranney, 2010; Myhill, Jones, & Watson, 2013; Wright, 2002). As Andrew (2007) and other scholars have argued, a more critical understanding of language that looks beyond the structure of language to attend to the interrelated dynamics among form, meaning, and social context contributes significantly to L2 teachers’ ability to support students in learning to use language for meaningful communication. Therefore, how to develop L2 teachers’ critical language awareness has become an important area of inquiry. This study provides an implication for this area of inquiry, and suggests that one key aspect to develop teachers’ critical language awareness is to equip them with a functional, meaning-oriented metalanguage. This metalanguage provided the focal ELTs with what Macken-Horarik (2008) calls “a powerful navigational toolkit” for making sense of how texts make meaning in complex lexical-grammatical and discourse-semantic features, and relating the features to the purpose and context of communication (p. 46).

This study also suggests that collaborative analyses of student writing samples is a productive way to support teachers in contextualizing their understanding of functional metalanguage, thereby developing their critical language awareness and text analysis skills. The data show that the focal ELTs began to build their know-how of functional language analysis as they worked with the PD instructor and other teachers in the PD to analyze the language features of student texts. These joint analysis activities provided ELTs with opportunities to discuss the language features students were expected to use for accomplishing a specific writing task; investigate how students drew on the language
resources in their writing; and share ideas about how to further help students write in fuller and more effective ways. From a Vygotskian perspective of learning, the joint analysis activities and concomitant dialogic interaction occurring in the PD mediated the development of the focal ELTs’ functional metalanguage and text analysis ability (Johnson, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). The ELTs’ initial analysis of student writing was directed by “guided participation” in collaborative analysis activities with the course instructor and more capable peers (Rogoff, 1990, p. 4). Over time the ELTs gained greater control over functional metalanguage and were able to apply it to analyzing their own students’ writing, as evidenced in the analysis they carried out in their practicum. These findings provide a professional development model for apprenticing L2 teachers to becoming critical text analysts who are able to analyze the language features of their students’ writing and provide informed feedback for improvement.

6.2 Benefits and challenges of using SFL to enhance Asian ELTs’ professional development

SFL has been critiqued as too theoretical and technical to be accessible to classroom teachers (e.g., Bourke, 2005). The findings of this study provide evidence that counters this claim. The data suggest that the focal ELTs were capable of making sense of the major constructs of SFL in the context of a 28-week PD (e.g., the three metafunctions of language, the three contextual dimensions of texts; the relationship between form and meaning). While the depth of their understanding of SFL varied, all three focal ELTs were able to draw on some SFL concepts and tools in productive ways to analyze student writing during the PD and in their practicum. These findings also provide evidence countering the claim that teachers need extensive, advanced linguistic
trainings to be able to apply SFL text analysis to writing instruction (e.g., Ferris, 2012). Prior to participation in this study, all three ELTs had no background in linguistics, but they were nonetheless able to get started relatively quickly in using SFL metalanguage to analyze student writing and design instruction. The metalanguage the focal ELTs drew on was not extensive. It consisted of a short list of terms that helped explain key language features ELTs prioritized in their instruction and assessment (e.g., participants, processes, circumstances, cohesive devices).

These findings support Macken-Horarik’s (2008) call for a “good enough grammatics” (p. 43). She maintains that teachers need a level of SFL metalanguage that is “good for teachers to think with” but that does not require them to become theoretical linguists (p. 47). The data from this study suggest that a “good enough” grammatics is achievable in the context of a 28-week PD in that teachers were able to draw on SFL metalanguage to understand and explain how grammatical systems work in constructing meaning in texts. These findings also highlight that the difficulty of implementing SFL in L2 teacher education may not be rooted in teachers’ inability to understand the complexities of the theory, but in the fields of L2 teaching and teacher education, which have historically been shaped by a formalist perspective of language. When teachers are provided opportunities to heighten their awareness of the social and functional nature of language, they could draw on this expanded understanding to teach and respond to student writing in productive ways.

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2 The term “grammatics” is referred to as the study of grammar. Halliday proposes “the simple proportion grammatics: grammar :: linguistics: language” (Halliday, 2002, p. 386). Grammatics helps us understand and explain grammar in use. In other words, grammatics can be seen as a metalanguage for reflecting on grammar (Macken-Horarik, 2008).
However, the data did reveal some concerns the focal ELTs had toward using SFL to respond to student writing. Their concerns were primarily related to the educational systems in China, Korea, and Taiwan that reward formal accuracy and teaching efficiency. For example, while Lin, Jiwon, and Pei-Ying all asserted that giving SFL-based feedback on the content, voice, and organization of a text was helpful for students’ writing development, they could not help but correct lexical and syntactic errors, because syntax and spelling were highly valued in their local assessment systems, perhaps even more so than meaning in some cases. As a result, they often vacillated between giving form-focused, sentence-level error correction and providing meaning-focused, text-level feedback. Such vacillation also had a lot to do with the issue of time constraint. How to apportion corrective feedback and SFL-based feedback within limited teaching time became a perplexing question to Lin, Jiwon, and Pei-Ying. They all expressed that English teachers in their home countries had tight and inflexible schedules mandated by schools as well as heavy workloads related to test preparation. Therefore, they felt reluctant to carry out detailed SFL analysis of individual student writing for giving feedback. They believed it was more realistic for classroom teachers to use SFL to analyze samples of student writing to identify general writing weaknesses that could be addressed in their teaching. For providing individual student writing feedback, they preferred giving quick error correction or using simple summative assessment checklists. The problem is, however, that ELTs’ attempts to give writing feedback efficiently may not attain the ideal goal of teaching students themselves to think differently about how they are using English. Even if teachers emphasize the importance of making meaning in writing, when the integration of teaching and feedback is not fully realized, students may
still treat writing as accurate combinations of words, phrases, and sentences while overlooking ways of constructing meaning.

These findings corroborate findings from other studies that have documented how institutional forces, such as a mandated form-focused textbook and aligned assessment system, have discouraged Asian teachers from designing writing instruction and assessment based on an SFL perspective of language (e.g., Lee, 2010; Gebhard, Gunawan, & Chen, 2014). For example, Lee (2010) found that the assessment system in Hong Kong that emphasized product-oriented writing, summative scores, and unfocused error correction at the lexical and syntactic levels appeared to have constrained teachers’ abilities to implement an SFL-based approach to writing instruction that highlighted a recursive process of writing, formative assessment, and focused feedback addressing both genre- and register-specific features in student texts. In addition, Lee found that when both corrective feedback and SFL-based feedback were presented to the students, their attention was much more easily drawn to the corrective feedback and the summative scores they received. This present study raised the same issue as that in Lee’s study, that the goals of language learning and teaching are paradoxically displaced by assessment systems that reward teaching efficiency and formal accuracy.

It appears that a major hurdle to overcome is how to support Asian teachers in utilizing their SFL knowledge and text analysis skills while they negotiate institutional demands in their local teaching contexts. One of the implications of this study for future practice is to help teachers analyze their teaching context. At its broadest level, this contextual analysis should take into account the culture, history, and traditions of the educational setting as well as the prevailing views and practices regarding language
teaching and learning. A further level of contextual analysis might involve the identification of constraints posed by assessment requirements, access to instructional resources, teachers’ socialization and professional training, students’ expectations, and so on. This contextual analysis will help teachers reflect on the opportunities and challenges of implementing SFL-based writing instruction in their local teaching contexts. It also provides teachers with an avenue to identify actions they can take to address some of the challenges in ways that are practical for them as teachers and supportive of their students.

Another implication for the education of writing teachers is to help Asian teachers integrate functional grammar and formal grammar in their instructional and feedback practices. Lin, Jiwon, and Pei-Ying all mentioned the importance of such integration in their interviews. They believed EFL students must acquire knowledge of formal grammar to be able to write grammatically correct sentences in English, while at the same time they need to learn to make functional linguistic choices in constructing texts for specific purposes, audience, and contexts. However, the data indicate that they seemed unable to come up with any concrete actions that contribute to useful combination of these two aspects of grammar instruction. To help teachers design strategic instructional plans, teacher educators must first develop teachers’ understanding that functional grammar and formal grammar are rooted in two epistemologically different perspectives of language. Each perspective has its own focus of language study, illuminates specific aspects of writing, and provides distinct implications for organizing writing instruction. Such understanding is helpful to prevent teachers from falling into reductionist interpretation of the formal and functional writing pedagogies while they attempt to develop eclectic methods that represent both approaches.
Moreover, teacher educators can support Asian teachers in learning to select, prioritize, and integrate the two options of grammar instruction in their writing lessons and feedback depending on the nature of the curricular units, requirements of the writing projects, and allotted instructional time. This is certainly not an easy task and necessitates more empirical classroom research. Future research can focus on how the functional and formal perspectives of grammar can be translated into classroom practices in useful combination to help Asian EFL students develop a holistic understanding of the English language and better control over multiple aspects of writing. Future research will also be needed to explore how Asian EFL teachers draw on both functional grammar and formal grammar in their writing instruction and feedback to meet their students’ learning needs.

6.3 Asian ELTs’ uptake of SFL in responding to student writing

The data show two major issues related to the focal ELTs’ uptake of SFL in responding to student writing. First, the ELTs tended to reinscribe the concept of genre with a structural understanding. For example, they often conveyed the organizational stages of a genre as prescriptive structures imposed upon a text rather than as natural moves through which a text unfolds to accomplish its purpose. In addition, when responding to the overall organization of student texts, they focused on students’ ability to arrange paragraphs in a correct order following a prescriptive formula rather than their ability to relate a writing purpose to appropriate organizational choices. In other words, they rarely provided feedback that enabled students to reflect on why specific organizational features in their texts were ineffective for the purpose of the writing or how expert writers might organize the same kinds of texts in different ways to better achieve their communicative goals.
These findings suggest that the focal ELTs’ previous socialization as English learners and English teachers in formalism-informed language classrooms in Asia highly influenced their uptake of the concept of genre. Having learned English writing in classrooms that emphasized sentence structures, when they were introduced to SFL-based genre theory the focal ELTs’ attention was immediately drawn to how texts in different genres were structured as products. They tended to see genre stages as structural units that must be employed and arranged in a correct order, while overlooking the functional and rhetorical nature of these stages in organizing messages in texts for specific social purposes. These findings provide evidence that teacher socialization plays a significant role in their professional development (Borg, 2006; Johnson, 2009). Teacher professional development cannot be seen as a linear process in which teachers learn new concepts or strategies in a teacher training program, and then shift their beliefs and practices in regard to instruction. Rather, as Johnson (2009) argued, teacher learning is a “long-term, complex, developmental process that is the results of participation in the social practices and contexts associated with learning and teaching” (p. 10). The findings of this study support this argument, and suggest that the constellation of a teacher’s experience and socialization – as a learner at school, as a teacher candidate in a teacher preparation program, and as a teacher in an institution – shape his or her beliefs and instructional practices.

Therefore, to support Asian teachers in making sense of a Hallidayan perspective of language for writing instruction, teacher educators need to take teachers’ personal and professional histories into consideration when designing professional development activities. Teacher educators need to be aware that Asian teachers are likely to enter
professional development programs with some formalist conceptions of language that were formed through their own instructional histories as learners and teachers in Asia. To make sense of an epistemologically-different perspective of language as social practice, Asian teachers need to not only re-examine their prior assumptions about language but also reframe the ways they interpret their lived experiences associated with language learning and teaching. This process of reconstructing an understanding of language and language instruction may result in tensions and misinterpretations. Such tensions and misinterpretations require further research to explore: the extent to which Asian teachers reinscribe functional linguistics concepts with more formalist/structuralist understanding of language; the nature of teacher socialization that shapes how Asian teachers take up and implement a functional perspective of language in practice; and the ways in which teachers benefit from reflecting on and inquiring into their classroom experiences shaped by multiple perspectives of language instruction.

The second issue that is worth exploration in regard to the focal ELTs’ uptake of SFL centers on a lack of teacher feedback on the tenor of student texts. The data show that during their practicum, the focal ELTs most frequently addressed the issues related to the mode of a text, that is, the cohesion and coherence of information in a text. They also focused on the issues related to the field of a text, namely, the ideational meanings that express the content of writing. Conversely, they gave very little feedback on the tenor of a text, or the voice a writer adopts in presenting information and positioning readers. This lack of attention to voice is noteworthy, because voice contributes significantly to the effectiveness of argument writing, a specific genre that all focal ELTs focused on in their practicum teaching. To construct an effective argumentative text, students are expected to
maintain an authoritative, assertive voice. This may involve, for example, using declarative mood to present information in absolute statements; removing the author from the grammatical theme position in the clause and presenting authorial stance implicitly; and utilizing modality and other appraisal resources to convey judgment or make evaluation in more objective, less opinionated ways (Schleppegrell, 2004). The data revealed that while ELTs could identify some general tenor features of argument writing, they rarely provided informed feedback on students’ use of tenor resources in constructing the voice of their argumentative texts.

There are several possible explanations for why ELTs tended to avoid addressing the features of voice in their feedback. First, the concept of tenor may be more difficult for ELTs to grasp than mode and field. Of the three dimensions, tenor is perhaps the most reliant on having command of broad yet more subtle language resources at the lexical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels. Therefore, ELTs may need a higher level of sensitivity to the options the English system offers to be able to pinpoint the exact sources of problems in voice and provide guidance for student improvement. This may also explain why ELTs tended to focus on particular field and mode resources in their feedback, such as cohesive devices, lexical chains, and expanded noun phrases that enrich grammatical participants. These resources might be easier for ELTs to address and teach because they are more vocabulary-oriented.

The second explanation for ELTs’ lack of attention to tenor of student texts is that the focal professional development program might not sufficiently build teachers’ understanding of the strategies involved in analyzing and providing feedback for interpersonal meaning. While the PD distributed equal number of instructional sessions
on each register dimension (i.e., field, tenor, mode), ELTs might need more time and guidance to learn how language works in expressing stance, conveying judgment, and presenting evaluation in ways that are appropriate to a specific genre and writing task. If teachers were not comfortable in their understanding of tenor resources, it is not surprising that their feedback was not focused in this area, as they may have not felt prepared to provide guidance on such aspect of writing.

Third, ELTs’ previous socialization as English learners in form-focused, exam-oriented language education in Asia may also contribute to their lack of attention to voice in student writing. The data show that the writing activities ELTs had been involved as English learners in Asia were primarily concerned with developing and testing learners’ ability to produce well-formed sentences. In such writing activities, there was no real-life communicative purpose for student writers to achieve. Students wrote for practicing sentence grammar and obtaining grades. Moreover, teachers were the only audience for students’ writing, and their role was primarily to evaluate formal accuracy and correct errors. Therefore, students in Asia often equate writing for academic audience to writing error-free texts. Having been socialized into such writing practices, the focal ELTs in this study might have very little experience with analyzing the needs and interests of different audiences. This lack of experience with audience analysis may result in their lack of attention to voice, as the voice writers construct is relative to the audience they have in mind.

Establishing appropriate social relationships with audience and taking an effective authorial stance are essential to successful academic writing (Hyland, 2011). Many studies have drawn on SFL text analysis to identify important tenor resources that
construct effective authorial voice in academic writing across genres and disciplines (see, for example, Achugar & Schleppegrell, 2005 and Coffin, 2006 for a discussion of tenor features in historical discourse; O’Hallaron, Palincsar, & Schleppegrell, 2015, for a discussion of tenor features in science texts; Cheng & Schleppegrell, 2011 and Jou, 2016 for a discussion of tenor resources in social science research papers). The findings of this study suggest that Asian ELTs need additional support to develop heightened awareness of audience in English writing and a more robust understanding of the tenor of discourse. This calls for professional development work and empirical research exploring ways in which Asian teachers may learn about and practice using different kinds of voice in different English genres or discipline-specific writing tasks. Future research will also be needed to explore how attention to tenor resources enables Asian teachers to teach and assess voice in writing, and ultimately how students benefit from participation in SFL-informed practices focusing on the aspect of tenor in academic writing.
APPENDIX A

SAMPLE OF FIELDNOTES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>10/4/2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>4:00-6:30 P.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room</td>
<td>Furcolo Room 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Abstract of Events**
The events include an introduction of genre theory and a continued discussion on Bakhtin and dialogic curriculum. In the discussion of genre theory, students define the concept of genre by drawing on their reading. They then compare and contrast three logs to identify the genre and linguistic features of the genre of logs. In the discussion of Bakhtin and dialogic curriculum, students compare two teachers, Louise and Diane, who use dialogic and monologic pedagogy respectively to teach. Asian international students express both their support and hesitation of implementing a dialogic practice of teaching L2 literacy in Asia.

**Artifact collected**
- Class agenda
- Participants’ log 4
- Participants’ case study ememo 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time/Event</th>
<th>Fieldnotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:10</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:18</td>
<td>Announcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:20</td>
<td>Class discussion on the two teachers (monologic vs. dialogic)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher’s Reflective Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. O’Connell resumed the class. She gave some general feedback on students’ logs and let students ask questions regarding log writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. O’Connell announced that she wanted to continue the discussion on the two teachers, Diane and Louise, and their different approaches to teaching literacy. She explained that people have many follow-up responses to last week’s discussion on monologic and dialogic approaches to literacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dr. O’Connell started the conversation by something like “I want to come back to Louise and Diane. We think Louise is great. But when we get into secondary teaching, you may not be able to handle the curriculum this much….. Do you think Diane got some problem? What kind of professional development did Diane have that would support Diane in thinking and doing things differently? Dr. O’Connell’s response includes some key words that I would like to explore by a review of literature: *teacher professional development in teacher educational program*. How do teachers get socialized in their teacher education program?

Nadia said, “Diane teaches the way she was taught” Dr. O’Connell related Nadia’s response to a sociocultural perspective of learning. She said, “So Diane was socialized at teaching that way.” I think Nadia made a good point. When we are teaching, we all bring our own assumptions to the class, to the lesson we design, and to the ways we teach. Isn’t the purpose of teacher education to expand pre-service teachers’ theoretical and pedagogical perspectives on learning and teaching?

Dr. O’Connell then pointed out that the international students had very different reactions. She identified some of the international students’ reactions: “That’s not teaching. That’s play.” “That’s not a classroom. They are just talking.” Na, GH and Yi-Ju smiled and nodded. It is very interesting to see that Asian international students look at the way that Louise teaches as a play, not teaching. *Why do they think that the class is playing rather than learning? How do they think about dialogic approach to teaching? Which teacher do they identify with?*

Dr. O’Connell continued saying something like, “You saw the video clip where a middle school teacher is doing that kind of For potential research question: *How were those Asian international students socialized as English learners*
practice. That’s a kind of practice that may be very against the socialization you have had as English teachers, or potential English teachers…..And then you return into the context…How are you gonna make sense of that??

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diane in China, Louise in America</th>
<th>Na said, “I think Diane’s pedagogy is suited for Asian people. When we return to China, maybe we become Diane. But if we stay in America, we turn to Louise. So it depends on in the future where we are, and what we will become.”</th>
<th>I’m aware of the binary Nancy makes here. Chinese teachers use monoloigcal approach and American teachers use dialogical approach.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concerns about applying a dialogic approach to teaching English in Taiwan</td>
<td>Yun felt it is difficult for one teacher to take care of “language, literacy and education in one hour” because of a large classroom size. She adds, “it is very difficult to fulfill your beliefs in that class…. You have to choose one….Most of the teachers would choose the first one, the language. At least that’s something students can take home.”</td>
<td>Yun’s words reveal (1) her concerns about how a dialogic approach can be adopted in a classroom setting housed a large group of student; and (2) her separation of language learning, literacy learning, and learning in general. In other words, students learn language just for language. (I am not comfortable saying this for her, so I will confirm this with her.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

COURSE INSTRUCTOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Question 1: Can you tell me a little bit about your course(s)?

Probes -

a. Can you briefly describe the outline, goals, and requirements of the course(s)?

Question 2: What conceptual framework(s) inform your course design?

Probes -

a. What theoretical(s) or perspective(s) guide your course(s) in general?

b. How do those guiding theoretical(s) or perspective(s) conceptualize L2 literacy development?

C. How do those guiding theoretical(s) or perspective(s) conceptualize L2 literacy teaching (curriculum, instruction, and assessment)? In other word, what pedagogical practices of L2 literacy are emphasized in your course(s)?

Question 3: What do you want your students to take away from your course(s)?

a. What do you want them to remember in terms of the theory?

b. What applications of the theory do you hope they would implement in their L2 teaching?
APPENDIX C

FOCAL ELT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Phase One Interview

The purpose of this interview is to understand participants’ personal and professional backgrounds in regard to EFL literacy

Part I: Personal background

Main question: Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

Probing questions:
A. When were you born?
B. Where were you born?
C. What formal education did you complete in __________ (the interviewee’s home country)?
D. What language(s) do you speak?
E. What make you want to pursue a Master’s degree in TESOL in the United States?
F. Why did you choose this program?
G. How long have you been a student in the current TESOL program?

Part II: English learning experience

Main question: Can you tell me about your English learning experience?

Probing questions:
A. When did you start to learn English?
B. Where did you learn English? For how long?
C. Do you remember what your English teachers do in class?
D. Can you give me some examples of the activities you did in your English classes in __________ (the interviewee’s home country or a particular setting she has mentioned previously)?
E. Do you like this activity? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Part III: English teaching experience

Main question: Have you taught English before? If so, can you describe your English teaching experience?

Probing questions:
A. Where did you teach?
B. Who were your students?
C. How long did you teach?
D. Can you describe your classroom routine?
E. Can you describe the textbooks/curriculum used in your class?

Part IV. Professional Goal

Main questions: What are your professional goals?

Phase Two Interview

The purpose of this interview is to understand participants’ experiences in the SLLD course and their perceptions and understanding of a sociocultural orientation to language and literacy development.

Part I: Course experience

Main question: I want to understand your experience in the course. Can you reflect on what you did in the course and tell me about what you think of those experiences?

Probing questions:
A. What did you do for your final project? What do you think about this project?
B. What do you think about the readings of the course?
C. What are your main take-away from the course?
D. Did you encounter any challenge while you participated in the course?

Part II: Participants’ perceptions and understandings of a sociocultural perspective of language and literacy development

Main question: In this course, we talked about a sociocultural perspective of language and literacy development. What do you think about this perspective?

Probing questions:
A. Have you heard about this perspective before?
B. Do you think it is useful?
C. Did you encounter any difficulty in reading and trying to understand this perspective?

Phase Three Interview

The purpose of this interview is to know participants’ perceptions of SFL and an SFL approach to text analysis as well as to understand their perceived change in their conceptions of language/grammar learning and teaching.

1. What do you think about SFL?

2. You analyze _________________ for the final paper. What was your experience or feeling about using SFL tools in analyzing this text?
3. Do you think SFL text analysis useful for you as a teacher?

4. Do you think SFL text analysis challenging?

5. After taking this course, do you see any change in your ideas of L2 teaching?

6. Will you use SFL in your future teaching? If so, how? If no, why not?

Phase Four Interview

The purpose of this interview is to understand how participants design and implement their curriculum units teach English learners; how they think of the impact of their instruction on student learning; and the challenges they encounter.

Part I: Unit Planning

Main question: Can you briefly describe your unit?

Probing questions:
A. When and where did you design this unit?
B. How did you use SFL in designing this unit?

Part II: Implementation Details

Main question: Can you briefly describe what you do in this unit?

Probing questions:
A. Can you briefly describe your school, class, and students?
B. Can you describe the steps of your lessons?

Part II: Influence of instruction on student learning

Main question #1: Did you see any change in your students’ writing?

Main question #2: Do you have any information regarding how your students think about this unit?

Part III: Benefits and challenges

Main question #1: What benefits did you see from your experience of using SFL to teach English in your context?

Main question #2: Did you encounter any challenges as you were implementing your units/lessons?
APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM FOR THE PILOT STUDY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFORMED CONSENT FORM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCHER</td>
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<tr>
<td>STUDY TITLE</td>
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</table>

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY
The purpose of this study is to explore how English language teachers from Asia make sense of the theoretical assumptions and practical implications of a sociocultural perspective of language and literacy development over the course of their participation in a U.S. MATESOL teacher education program. Using ethnographic case study methods, this study attempts to provide a detailed description of teacher professional development that includes voices and experiences of English language teachers from Asian contexts.

DATA COLLECTION
With your consent, I would like to collect the following types of data:
- Your statement of purpose submitted for graduate school application
- Samples of coursework submitted and posted online
- Researcher’s fieldnotes taken from weekly seminar meetings
- Transcripts from formal and informal interviews
- Audio recordings of seminar discussions

TIME COMMITMENT
The majority of your participation will occur during the sessions of the course EDUC 684 in a semester between September 2012 and December 2012. However, I would also like to conduct follow-up interviews and field observations in your other courses as you progress through your program.

USE OF RESULT
The result of this study is for part of doctoral programs and may be used in presentations and publications.

PRIVACY
Every effort will be made to protect your privacy. All data containing confidential information will be kept in possession of the researcher. Names and other identifiers will be removed from work samples. Pseudonyms will be used in place of your name and university name. In disseminating results, every effort will be made to mask positively identifying information about you and your university.
RISKS AND BENEFITS
There are no physical risks associated with this study and there are no specific benefits associated with participating in this study. The potential benefit will be that with the data collected, research can then better inform TESOL teacher education programs as to how to prepare Asian international students with theoretical and pedagogical courses that correspond to what is needed in their contexts. In addition, participants in studies like this in the past have found reflecting on their work as part of ethnographic practice to be beneficial.

YOUR RIGHT
You have the right to not participate. Your participation is voluntary. You will not be treated differently should you decide not to participate. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

QUESTIONS
Should you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study, you may contact I-An Chen at ichen@educ.umass.edu, (732)-649-9919. If you would like to discuss your rights as a research subject, or wish to speak with someone not directly involved in the project you may contact Human Research Protection Office at humansubjects@ora.umass.edu, (413)545-3428.

SUBJECT STATEMENT OF VOLUNTARY CONSENT
I have read the information in this consent form, and decided that I will participate in the study. I have had the chance to ask questions regarding the study, and have received satisfactory answers. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. There are two copies of this form. A copy of this signed Informed Consent Form has been given to me.

______________________              __________________________       ___________
Participant’s Name (Print)            Participant’s Signature              Date
APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM FOR THE DISSERTATION

CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHER PARTICIPATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Project</th>
<th>SFL, Advanced EFL Literacy, and Teacher Education</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Researcher</td>
<td>I-An Chen</td>
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DESCRIPTION OF STUDY
The purpose of this study is to explore how one TESOL teacher education program informed by Halliday’s (1994) systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and Martin’s (1992) genre-based pedagogy supports English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) teachers in developing a meaning-oriented approach to designing and implementing literacy instruction, and how this approach influences academic literacy of EFL students.

By using qualitative case study methods, the study will integrate different types of data, including semi-structured interviews, samples of teachers’ graduate coursework, observations of teachers’ classroom instruction, student test score data, and samples of student writing. The aim of the study is to shed light on the opportunities and challenges of implementing the SFL/genre-based approach in the EFL context and to provide implications on how to prepare EFL teachers to support students in developing academic literacy.

DATA COLLECTION
With your consent, I would like to collect the following types of data:
- Samples of course work submitted and posted online for your TESOL graduate courses (e.g., weekly reflection journal, midterm/final papers);
- Samples of curricular units/lesson plans that you are using with your students;
- Observational field notes of your classroom instruction;
- Audio recordings of formal and informal interviews about how you make sense of, design, implement, and reflect on an SFL/Genre-based approach to teaching EFL literacy

TIME COMMITMENT
The majority of your participation will occur during a 10-month period starting in April 2014. Observations of your classroom instruction will occur at your school within this time period. Interviews will be approximately 30–45 minutes long and will be done at a time and place of your convenience. However, I may also wish to conduct brief informal interviews over the course of the project during the school year.
USE OF RESULT
The results of this study will be used in doctoral dissertation and in academic presentations and publications.

PRIVACY
Every effort will be made to protect your privacy. All data containing confidential information will be kept in possession of the researcher. All interviews will be conducted and transcribed only by the researcher. Names and other identifiers will be removed from field notes and transcripts. Pseudonyms will be used in place of your name, university names, school names and district names. In disseminating results, every effort will be made to mask positively identifying information about you, your university, your school, and your school district.

RISKS AND BENEFITS
There are no physical risks associated with this study and there are no specific benefits associated with participating in this study. The potential benefit will be that with the data collected, research can then better inform EFL teacher education program regarding which instructional practices best support the development of advanced literacy. In addition, participants in studies like this in the past have found reflecting on their work as part of ethnographic practice to be beneficial.

YOUR RIGHTS
You have the right to not participate. Your participation is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect how you are treated or evaluated in the TESOL program. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

QUESTIONS
If you have any questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact the principle investigator, I-An Chen at ichen@educ.umass.edu, (732) 649-9919, or the faculty sponsor, Dr. Meg Gebhard at gebhard@educ.umass.edu, (413) 777-0863; If you would prefer to speak with someone not associated with this project, please contact Dr. Linda Griffin, Associate Dean, College of Education at lgriffin@educ.umass.edu, (413) 545-6985.
SUBJECT STATEMENT OF VOLUNTARY CONSENT

I have read the information in this consent form, and have decided that I will participate in the study. I have had the chance to ask questions regarding the study, and have received satisfactory answers. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. There are two copies of this form. A copy of this signed Informed Consent Form has been given to me.

Participant’s Full Name (print)

Signature Date

CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Dear Student:

I am a doctoral student at University of Massachusetts Amherst and I am asking you to participate in a project to learn more about how teachers can help students learn to read and write in English in academic ways in schools.

In this project, I would like to observe your class several times during the time period between April 2014 to July 2014, and I will collect copies of some of the writing you do in class. I will interview some students about how they are thinking about their reading and writing in English and these interviews will be audio-recorded.

Your parents or legal guardians have already given permission for you to participate in this study, but you do not have to participate if you choose. You may quit this study at any time by telling your teacher or me that you would like to stop.

Your participation in this study will not affect your grades in any way. There are no known risks involved in this study and you will receive nothing for your participation.

To protect your confidentiality, your name will not be shared with anyone. Pseudonym, or “fake names”, will be used in place of your name and school name. All interviews will be conducted and transcribed only by me. The audio recordings and writing samples I collect will be kept in a safe place so that only I will have access to them.

If you have any question about this study, please call or email me (I-An Chen at ichen@educ.umass.edu, (732) 649-9919). If you would like to speak with somebody not directly involved in the project, you may contact Human Research Protection Office at humansubjects@ora.umass.edu, or (413) 545-3428.
Sincerely,
I-An Chen

Agreement
I have read the information in this consent form, and it was explained to me in a language I use and understand. I have decided to participate in the study. I have had the chance to ask questions regarding the study, and have received satisfactory answers. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time. There are two copies of this form. A copy of this signed Informed Consent Form has been given to me.

Student’s Full Name (please print)

Student’s Signature……………Date

CONSENT FORM FOR PARENT PARTICIPATION

STUDY TITLE SFL, Advanced EFL Literacy, and Teacher Education

RESEARCHER I-An Chen

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT
The purpose of this project is to learn more about how teachers can use a pedagogy informed by Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics (SFL) to help students learn to read and write in English in academic ways.

Your child has been selected to participate in this project because he or she is in a class of a teacher who has received special training about using the SFL-based pedagogy to help students to learn English. The goal of this project is to collect classroom examples of this teaching approach and to understand how to make it better. This project will be conducted during the time period from April 2014 to July 2014.

As part of this project, the researcher from University of Massachusetts Amherst will collect data in the following ways:

- Observe classroom instruction and take notes on what is happening in class;
- Collect samples of student writing;
- Interview some students about how they think about their reading and writing in English in schools.
The results of this study will be used in doctoral dissertation and in academic presentations and publications.

There are no specific physical risks or discomforts associated with participation in this project and the researcher will make every effort not to disrupt the flow of everyday classroom activities. However, some students find this kind of extra attention uncomfortable. In the event that you or your child find participating in this project uncomfortable, you may decline to participate at any time.

Also, there are no specific benefits associated with participating in this project. However, some students and families find the extra attention paid to their experiences in school leads to a better understanding of their needs as learners.

In addition, there are no costs associated with participating in this project and students and their families will not receive any compensation. Students who do not participate in this project will not suffer any consequences to their daily school routines.

Information produced by this project will be confidential and private. Samples of student work and other documents will be kept in a secure space at the University of Massachusetts. Students' real names and other identifiers will be removed from their work and pseudonyms or "fake names" will be used to protect confidentiality.

You are under no obligation to participate in this project. You may withdraw your participation at any time without prejudice.

QUESTIONS

Should you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study, you may contact I-An Chen at ichen@educ.umass.edu, (732) 649-9919. If you would like to discuss your rights as a research subject, or wish to speak with somebody not directly involved in the project you may contact Human Research Protection Office at humansubjects@ora.umass.edu, or (413) 545-3428.

STATEMENT OF VOLUNTARY CONSENT

I have read the information in this consent form, and it was explained to me in a language I use and understand. I have decided to allow my child (or ward) to participate in the study. I have had the chance to ask questions regarding the study, and have received satisfactory answers. I understand that I can withdraw my child from the study at any time. There are two copies of this form. A copy of this signed Informed Consent Form has been given to me.

Student’s Full Name (print)
Parent/Guardian’s Name (print or type)

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<th>Parent/Guardian’s Signature</th>
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If required: Witness (print or type) to ☐ Discussion
☐ Signature

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BIBLIOGRAPHY


