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# The Role of Computer-mediated Communication in Non-native Speakers' Acquisition of Academic Literacy

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The Role of Computer-mediated Communication in Non-native Speakers' Acquisition of  
Academic Literacy

By

Rui Cheng

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Secondary Education  
College of Education

and

Department of World Language Education  
College of Arts and Sciences  
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Key words: discourse community, disciplinary knowledge, intertextuality, scaffolding,  
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# The Role of Computer-Mediated Communication in Non-native Speakers' Acquisition of

## Academic Literacy

Rui Cheng

### ABSTRACT

Research shows that academic literacy is discipline specific. Students have to learning the ways of communication in order to gain access to the discourse community of the selected discipline through understanding and performing required genres and learning necessary disciplinary knowledge. Scaffolding is important in the process to help students internalize the disciplinary knowledge and improve students' performance on academic papers. Computer-mediated communication (CMC) provides good chances of scaffolding and mediation especially for non-native graduate students who may have lost many opportunities of class participation due to their limited language proficiency or other cultural issues.

In this dissertation, the researcher investigated how a group of L2 students tried to acquire academic literacy in applied linguistics by completing a series of teacher preparation classes. CMC was built naturally into the classes where students kept online discussions on various components of applied linguistics and were engaged in some online peer review activity on draft papers. Data were gathered from 8 sources:

observations, questionnaire, online discussion entries, online peer feedback, students' major assignments, source materials, interviews and discourse-based interviews. The various sources of data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively using different methods and schemes to present how L2 graduate students negotiate their academic literacy in CMC environment in terms of language functions and focus; how CMC influences both the process and the product of student's academic writing; and how students perceive CMC in the academic literacy acquisition process.

Analysis of data indicated that non-native English speaking students used various language functions in their negotiation of academic literacy with their peers in the online discussion. They tended to apply a wider range of language function as they became more familiar with the discourse community. Students in this study also applied multiple intertextual techniques in the online discussion, whereas only a few were used in face-to-face class discussions. Results also indicated that computer-mediated communication facilitated students' understanding of tasks, performance of writing activities and applying citation conventions correctly. The scaffolding among students enabled them to effectively learn disciplinary knowledge and develop their academic literacy. Analysis of the students draft and final papers in the online peer review activities indicated that students incorporated peers' feedback into their revisions and benefited from such activities although they claimed high quality feedback was still not enough. Finally, although the students considered that computer-mediated communication had some drawbacks, it did facilitate their acquisition of academic literacy in the field of applied linguistics.

## CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

### Introduction and Background

Research in both first language (L1) and second or foreign language (L2) writing shows that knowledge needed in general composition may not be sufficient for both L1 and L2 students to perform academic writing tasks successfully in content courses (Spack, 1988; Braine, 1988; Johns, 1988). Moreover, in various disciplines, this knowledge is different in terms of the nature and types of writing assignments. According to Ramanathan and Kaplan (1996), “each discipline constitutes its own ‘culture’ in the sense that each has its own conventions and rules regarding what characterizes effective and appropriate writing for that discipline. Each uses and writes the English language differently, for different purposes, and about different things, in different formats” (p. 29). It is stated that ignoring disciplinary differences “may serve seriously to undermine the main learning objectives and the intrinsic requirements for effective educational programs in particular knowledge areas” (Neumann et al. 2002, p. 414).

In each academic discipline, disciplinary knowledge and academic writing serve as major media for members to develop their academic literacy to communicate with each other in the field. Writing and disciplinary knowledge thus play very important roles in acquiring academic literacy and gaining access to the discipline.

Graduate students, as novices of a discourse community which is formed by a group of people with common interests, beliefs and values, do not belong to their selected discourse community naturally. In order for students to become members of a disciplinary discourse community, they have to develop specialized literacy appropriate for the particular discourse community to communicate with others and understand and learn disciplinary knowledge specific to the discipline (Berkentotter, Huckin & Ackerman, 1991). Disciplinary knowledge is both stable and dynamic (Ramanathan and Kaplan, 1996). Socially situated disciplinary knowledge is internalized by the novices through contextual activities. The goal of instruction is to provide scaffolding for the learner to effectively progress in their process of development of academic literacy. In this sense, the construct of scaffolding of sociocultural theory fits well and will be used to explain the process of academic literacy acquisition among students. Students acquire academic literacy and its related discourse community and disciplinary knowledge through interaction with teachers, peers, and their social-cultural context. During this process, students internalize the academic literacy they acquired and transfer it into their own academic writing products. Mediators such as language and technology serve as very important tools to help students acquire their academic literacy. The notion of scaffolding is a crucial component to help novices develop academic literacy and learn disciplinary knowledge of a particular discourse community. In this process, both students' individual composing processes and their interaction with their teachers, peers and social and cultural contexts to organize their writing play important roles. Academic



writing is actually a sociocognitive and sociocultural activity as represented in a confluence of individual activity and social activity. This study will investigate the non-native speakers' (NNS) acquisition of academic literacy in the discipline of applied linguistics, with a focus on academic writing, from the perspective of academic literacy and sociocultural theory.

It is widely acknowledged that academic writing is a complex activity. Academic writing in a second language poses additional challenges for the writer because of their limited language, discursive and sociocultural knowledge. NNSs are found to be marginalized in academic discourse at Anglophone institutions of higher learning (Belcher & Braine, 1995). Part of the difficulty students writing in a second language face is that genre conventions are socially embedded in a culture different from one's own. Second language writers themselves sometimes feel excluded from the "culture of power" (Belcher & Braine, 1995). These are obstacles for them to encounter academic discourse and effectively produce required genres and gain access to discourse communities. While some efforts have been made in the last two decades to investigate NNSs' writing tasks, contexts, strategies and processes in various disciplines (mainly engineering and business), findings are mixed and often inconclusive, leaving many open questions. Additional issues have been introduced by the increased use of new technology, which needed to be included and considered in the whole picture.

With the development of technology, classroom learning now extends outside the classrooms and many activities can be conducted electronically through electronic

mail, electronic discussion boards and online chats. These are typical forms of computer-mediated communication (CMC) widely applied in many sectors of education nowadays. Much research regarding CMC (especially synchronous CMC) and L2 learning shows that through networked computers, students participate more and more equally (Beauvois, 1992; Chun, 1994; Kelm, 1992; Kern, 1995; Sullivan & Pratt, 1996; Warschauer, 1996), produce more language with better quantity and quality (Chun, 1994; Kelm, 1992; Kern, 1995; Sullivan & Pratt, 1996; Warschauer, 1996), experience a less stressful environment for L2 practice (Chun, 1998), have more time to develop and refine comments (Chun, 1994), collaborate more with other students (Chun, 1994), have enhanced motivation for language practice and take the time and effort to express themselves in the target language rather than take the easy way out by using their native language (Chun, 1994). However, most of these studies are comparisons of face-to-face and computer-mediated communication.

CMC is used widely in many courses across disciplines. Yet limited research addresses the issues of application of CMC in helping the students acquire academic literacy and gain access to their disciplinary discourse communities via their performance in academic writing tasks. A dearth of existing research either focuses on the superficial aspects of academic writing or on distance learning courses without considering the impact of CMC. Research into the role of CMC in assisting students to develop academic literacy and disciplinary knowledge would be beneficial to educators in all fields.

## Statement of the Problem

The examination of the current literature in disciplinary writing provides insight into several major issues faced by researchers. The first challenge is that much existing research has focused on features of professional writing. Published articles from various journals are the focus of investigation (e.g. Swales, 1990). There is little information about how students, especially NNS students, develop their academic literacy and gain access to the discourse community. Second, the previous studies mainly focus on disciplines such as sciences, engineering and business (e.g. Braine, 1995; Zhu, 2004) because they are considered to be the majors to attract the largest number of foreign students. Applied linguistics, as a discipline devoted to training teachers of TESL/TEFL, receives little attention. Third, many studies conducted focus on the nature and types of writing tasks both L1 and L2 students have to perform. Few studies focus on how students develop their academic literacy and gain access to the particular discourse community in performing their writing tasks. And fourth, there exists a lack of literature on the role that CMC can play in assisting students to perform academic writing. All of these issues need to be addressed by educational researchers.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how NNS students acquire academic literacy in applied linguistics and the possible role that CMC plays in this process. The process that students employ to develop their academic literacy is the process that they use to learn the ways of communication in the particular discipline, that is,

applied linguistics. NNS students' acquisition of academic literacy is examined with the focus on the performance on their academic writing tasks. CMC has the potential to reduce the challenges of academic writing by providing increased interaction and participation, more chances of scaffolding and increased opportunities for group work and collaboration. It is important that studies are conducted to examine how CMC, which is made available through a course management tool called "Blackboard", can be used to supplement and/or improve existing educational strategies in disciplinary classes of applied linguistics. This research can serve as a starting point for more research that focuses on more in-depth studies on how to use CMC to facilitate both native and non-native speakers' disciplinary writing.

#### Research Questions

This study will use a case study design with combination of data collection strategies such as observations, questionnaire, interviews and written assignments collections to extend theory and research by investigating the role of computer-mediated communication (CMC) in the development of non-native English speakers' writing in the discipline. The general goal will be addressed through a focus on the following questions:

- 1) How do NNSs use CMC to negotiate academic literacy with peers?
  - What language functions do NNSs use when they are engaged in online discussions?
  - What do NNSs focus on in online literate activities?
- 2) How does CMC influence NNSs' production of academic papers in their

disciplinary course?

- How does CMC influence NNSs' completion of their assignments?

- How does CMC influence the final written products?

- 3) How do NNSs perceive the role of CMC in their acquisition of academic literacy?

### Significance of the Study

The significance of the current study is salient in both theoretical and practical terms. At a theoretical level, this study may contribute to the growing body of literature on disciplinary writing by providing much needed information on the nature of academic writing of L2 students in a computer-mediated environment. The study will also provide information on the characteristics of a popular yet little researched discipline: applied linguistics. Since the study will apply a case study design, the diversity and complexity of academic literacy development on non-native L2 students of applied linguistics as represented mainly in academic writing in CMC environments will be fully explored.

On a practical level, the findings of this study will help faculty members of applied linguistics and other disciplines make informed decisions about how to effectively acculturate L2 students into the discourse community of their choice with the help of computer technology.

### Definitions of Terms

To provide a basis for discussion, the following definitions will be used in this study:

**Academic Literacy** indicates a fluency in the particular ways of thinking, doing, being, reading and writing which are peculiar to academic contexts. In order to acquire academic literacy, it is important to learn the ways of communication in the particular discipline (Berkenkotter, Huckin & Ackerman, 1991). Academic writing serves as the investigation point in this study to examine NNS students' acquisition of academic literacy. Academic writing is regarded as the equivalent term as writing in the disciplines or disciplinary writing in this study.

**Computer Mediated Communication (CMC)** is defined by Webopedia as “human communication via computers and includes many different forms of synchronous, asynchronous or real-time interaction that humans have with each other using computers as tools to exchange text, images, audio and video.” (Webopedia.com, 2004, CMC ¶ 1). CMC includes e-mail, instant messaging, bulletin boards, and videoconferencing, etc. This study will mainly involve the use of discussion boards.

**Disciplines** are recognized subject areas or fields of study within which courses and research are structured. Among various disciplines, applied linguistics is the focus of the study.

**Discourse Community** denotes groups of people with certain things in common: a public goal; a body of specialized knowledge; a specialized lexicon (vocabulary); and a set of beliefs about how knowledge is generated (what issues are important; what kinds of evidence are acceptable, how to apply knowledge) (Swales, 1990). Members in a discourse community also share an understanding of how to

communicate with each other and with the larger community. The main mode of communication is through written language. To become a member of a discourse community, one must master its theoretical concepts, as well as its language and conventions. This usually means accepting its beliefs and values as well. In this study, discourse community of applied linguistics will be explored.

**Focus of Attention** is focus of consciousness when students are engaged in online discussions. It is the intertextual technique students applied when they are negotiating with peers. Six aspects of focus were identified based on the result of pilot study: direct quotation, indirect quotation, mentioning of names or documents, commenting and evaluating, applying terminology, interest, learning tools and referring to personal experience.

**Intertextuality** is the relation each text has to the texts seen or heard before. The relation can be both explicit and implicit. In this study, how the texts in academic writing assignments draw on other texts will be explored.

**L1** is an abbreviation of first or native language. In this study, the L1 of primary participants are various.

**L2** is an abbreviation of second or foreign language. Although second (learning a target language in the target country) and foreign (learning a target language outside the target country) language learning refers to different things, no distinction is made between them in this study.

**Language Functions** are linguistics choices that reflect the social purposes for which language is used (Halliday, 1973). Nine categories of language functions in

online discussion were developed in this study as the result of pilot study: referring to personal experience, showing doubts, supporting and confirming, introducing internet resources, introducing journal resources, introducing ways to find resources, using terminologies, mentioning the big names, and raising questions.

### Conclusion

This chapter provides a brief overview of disciplinary writing. It points out some of the challenges and the gaps in the research. It presents a general explanation of this study directing the reader to focus on the importance of the disciplinary writing which will be acquired by students through scaffolding and mediation of language and technology. This chapter also suggests that the combination of computer-mediated and regular face-to-face communication may be effective in the teaching and learning of academic writing.

### Organization of the Study

The remaining chapters of this proposal cover relevant literature and research methodology utilized in this study. Chapter two reviews literature pertaining to academic literacy, discourse community, disciplinary writing studies, and computer-mediated communication (CMC) used in both L1 and L2 learning and writing, outlining the theoretical background that will be used as the basis for the study. Chapter three contains a detailed description of the methods of research used in the study. This includes why case study methodology is selected, how data will be collected, as well as an overview of the intended data analysis. Chapter four presents a detailed analysis of the collected data and answers all the research questions. Chapter



five is the summary of the whole study, where the discussions, recommendations and implications are presented.

## CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW

### Chapter Overview

In this chapter, related literature will be reviewed to clarify theoretical framework of explanation, research findings, and gaps that need attention. The researcher will start off reviewing the literature on academic literacy and its relationship with closely connected concepts of discourse community. This overview of different models, views and approaches toward academic literacy proposes scaffolding, mediation and theory of academic literacy as the basis of theoretical framework. Since Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is an inseparable part of the study, the literature on CMC and second language learning and writing will be reviewed in the next section of this chapter. Finally, focus will be concentrated on the concrete studies in various lines of research in writing in the disciplines. Studies on L1 and L2 computer-mediated disciplinary writing provides special insight on the efforts of combing academic writing and technology. The research findings are reported and gaps are exposed.

### Academic Literacy

#### The Nature of Academic Literacy

Academic literacy is the development of students' reading, writing and critical thinking in academic environment. Although these three components can never be

treated in isolation, academic writing is the focus of this study because students' academic success is typically determined by their ability to produce written texts that conform to the pedagogical genres of their department which are influenced by both institution and conventions of the particular discourse community that students want to join.

Graduate students who want to join an academic discipline need specialized academic literacy that “consists of the ability to use discipline-specific rhetorical and linguistic conventions to serve their purpose as writers” (Berkenkotter, Huckin & Ackerman, 1991, p, 191). Graduate students are initiated in their process of academic literacy acquisition through their own reading and writing, through instructions on research methodology on the particular discipline, and through constant interaction with faculty and peers in the same discipline. During this process, graduate students gradually know the values and beliefs of the discipline and learn the ways of communication in the field. The process to acquire academic literacy is actually the process for students to learn the ways of communication in a particular discipline (Berkenkotter, et al., 1991)

This learning process cannot take place in vacuum. Academic literacy approach to students writing rejects the autonomous view of literacy as a value-free process. Instead, it is acquired in social context of discourse community.

#### Academic Literacy and Discourse Communities

Academic disciplines have been characterized as discourse communities. A discourse community is a group of people who share some specific interest and a set

of social conventions that is directed toward some purpose (Swales, 1990). Discourse communities are not only confined in the academic contexts; instead, there are professional communities, social, political and recreational communities as well (Johns, 1997). With the development of technology, there are now online communities with members who never physically met each other, but stay in contact on a regular basis. Swales (1990) lists six categories for defining a discourse community:

- A broadly agreed set of common public goals
- Mechanisms of intercommunication among its members
- Provision of information and feedback
- Genres creating discursal expectations
- Some shared specific lexis
- A threshold level of expert and novice members

Members in a discourse community may have nothing in common except their shared interests (Swales, 1990) and certain psychological predispositions that attract them (Bizzell, 1992). Individuals can join a discourse community for various reasons. One can even be a member of a variety of communities simultaneously and one's involvement with communities can change over time as their interests or circumstances change. That is to say, they can change from being active to inactive members and vice versa. Unlike some communities related to individual's daily life, academic communities are selected and voluntary (Johns, 1997). Academic literacy is acquired by students in academic discourse communities. Students entering academic disciplines have to learn the ways of communication and disciplinary knowledge that

are commonly employed by members of the disciplinary discourse community if they want to acquire membership in a discourse community. Without this knowledge, students are still outsiders of the community's discourse. Yet acquisition of the conventions of the discourse communities is not enough for both novices and experts to maintain their membership. They must also learn what Bazerman (1994) called *conversations of the discipline* which refers to "issues and problems that are currently under discussion within the community" (Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995. p. 118). The acquisition of both conventions and conversation of academic literacy is normally done by some form of formal or informal apprenticeship through involvement with experienced practicing scholars.

Swales' criteria allow individuals to conceptualize disciplinary discourse communities as being "relatively systematic, albeit generally implicit, rules regarding membership, goals, participation, and patterns of communication" (Ramanathan & Kaplan, 2000. p. 176). Applied linguistics (in the United States) has common goals and participatory mechanisms, its own discursal expectations, specialized terminology and both experts and novices to maintain its existence. Applied linguistics is driven by attempts to solve problems in real-world settings. Applied linguistics is both stable and dynamic. Stable texts emerge from communities with common goals and become media to address their problems and reach their goals. For example, one goal of applied linguistic community in English speaking countries, particularly in the United States, is to train competent teacher of TESOL. This need is addressed throughout the curriculum of graduate students in applied linguistics by

asking them to perform certain genres specific to this discipline. Having student-teachers design ESOL curriculum or asking them to write a research proposal to address some problem related to their teaching and learning are instances of such practices that need some stabilized text forms. Members of a discourse community of applied linguistics use specific lexis to facilitate communication among members. Members share their notions through all kinds of social practices, inside or outside of the classroom. The name TESOL is itself an acronym which is commonly used among members and means a range of things to them, but it may mean very little to outsiders. Members participate in the activities of the discourse community of applied linguistics based on the information provided. They would use one or more genres and would get feedback about whether their actions of participation are successful. In the field of applied linguistics, particular textual forms to disseminate information among its members are used. For example, there are special textual forms when calling for proposals for a conference with detailed description of topics, formats, due dates, etc. After reading this information carefully, members use one or more genres (paper, posters, etc.) to communicate with their community. They would receive feedback some time later about whether or not their communication is successful. Experts in the discourse community of applied linguistics help maintain its stability and, through their publications and research, reach and influence the members of the community with their expertise. For example, Swales is the expert in the field of genre studies. Many novices with the same interest read his publications and follow his directions in research. Experts also control conference paper presentations and

publications because they take the role of reviewers and serve on the editorial boards. Applied linguistics has its own professional forums such as the TESOL (Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages) association, ACTFL (American Council of Teaching Foreign Languages) conference, and journals such as TESOL Quarterly, Applied Linguistics, Foreign Language Annals, Modern Language Journal. The genres characterizing applied linguistics include journal articles, book reviews, conference papers, monographs, textbooks and so on. From the above description, it is safe to say that applied linguistics can be defined as a discourse community.

Although Swales' view of discourse communities has been very insightful and influential, it has also been controversial on a number of points. One of these concerns the extent to which membership of a discourse community involves assimilating its world view. While Swales maintains that it is possible to participate in a discourse without necessarily subscribing to its world view, Bizzell (1992) argues that the discourse communities maintain not only conventions regulating social interactions, but also canonical knowledge regulating world views. According to Bizzell (1992), in the discourse community, members' world views are affected by their membership on a daily basis although the members may not be aware of that, which is unavoidable when participating in a discourse community. He further maintains that gaining access to a discourse community entails the process that outsiders, through assimilating the world views of the communities, begin to share the same world view with insiders and then become insiders. On the other hand, besides maintaining the view that participation does not necessarily entail assimilation, Swales also, to some extent,

encourages instrumental purposes of entering a discourse community, so that outsiders can gain the advantage of it without sharing the world view with insiders. Their debate raises important questions about the process of joining a discourse community. “Overall, the extent to which discourse is constitutive of world view would seem to be a matter of investigation rather than assumption” (Swales, 1990, p. 31).

Another criticism about Swales’ view of discourse communities is that he seems to ignore the fact discourse communities are not as stable as they appear. Prior (1998), drawing on Bazerman (1988), argued that discourse communities are not as homogeneous and closed as implied by Swales, but on the other hand, are dynamic, situated, open and subject to change.

Responding to such views, Swales has now modified his approach to discourse communities, recognizing “the purposes, goals, or public outcomes [of genres] are more evasive, multiple, layered, and complex than originally envisage” (Askehave & Swales 2001, p. 197). Yet he still maintains the structural properties are very important components of the genres of discourse communities and part of academic literacy.

To summarize, academic literacy is acquired by students in particular discourse communities which are both stable and dynamic. Novices acquire academic literacy through disciplinary knowledge widely recognized in the field to communicate with their peers and fulfill the change from novices to experts. At the same time, both novices and experts have to follow the conversations of the current



trend and make changes according to changing sociocultural needs. Acquisition of academic literacy needs not only the understanding of discourse communities, but also disciplinary knowledge popular in that discourse community in order to effectively communicate with other members. Discussion of genres will be covered in the following section.

#### Academic Literacy, Genre and Disciplinary Knowledge

Genre, academic literacy and discourse communities cannot be separated. Genres is seen as constitutive of discourse communities, deriving from the discourse expectations created by typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations (Miller, 1984). Genre is the media for academic literacy by which scholars communicate with their peers. It is closely related with the discipline's methodology and conforms to discipline's norms, values, and ideology (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995). So if one wants to succeed in acquiring one's academic literacy in the discipline, it is necessary for him/her to understand the disciplinary knowledge of communication.

Disciplinary knowledge is both social and communicative. Swales privileges communicative purposes by suggesting that it "shapes the genre and provide it with an internal structure" (Askehave & Swales, 2001). Communicative purpose and structural properties are the two major components envisaged by Swales (1991). He maintains that through recurrent use and typification, conventionalized forms of writing become media for a community of people with shared interest to disseminate knowledge and information. The characteristics of Swales' view is stabilizing disciplinary knowledge which are also reflected in his six categories of discourse

communities covered above. The problem of this view mentioned by some researchers (e.g. Horowitz 1989; Hyland 1990; Kusel 1992; Henry & Roseberry 1997; Dudley-Evans 2002) is sometimes disciplinary genres with less clearly defined internal structure are difficult for the analyst from the outset, and what is worse is that student essays in particular prove to be somewhat intractable. This is often the case of students' academic writing assignments which are less clearly defined pedagogical genres.

Swales' view on genre and disciplinary knowledge represents one tradition of genre theory which called ESP genre analyses (Hyon, 1996). ESP approach focuses on rhetorical moves of the texts and structure of research articles (e.g. Swales, 1990). Certain features of research articles such as hedging, modality and reporting verbs are sometimes the focus of investigation (e.g. Hyland, 2000). Another tradition of genre theory, labeled "new rhetoric studies" (Hyon, 1996) represented by scholars such as Bazerman, Berkenkotter and Huckin, and Prior, places a greater emphasis on social purposes and social action, using ethnographic rather than linguistic methods (e.g. Bazerman 1988; Freedman & Medway 1994; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Prior, 1998).

According to Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995), Genres are inherently "dynamic rhetorical forms that are developed from actors' responses to recurrent situations and that serve to stabilize experience and give it coherence and meaning" (p. 4). The recurrent situations do not resemble each other exactly each time, and changes may occur according to the user's sociocognitive needs. "Genres, therefore, are always

sites of contention between stability and change” (p. 6). According to Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995), disciplinary knowledge is a form of situated cognition embedded in disciplinary activities which develop as the novices go through lengthy processes of apprenticeship and enculturation and it is transmitted as novices become socialized in their disciplinary communities rather than explicitly taught. Berkenkotter, Huckin and Ackerman contend that disciplinary knowledge develops out of what Vygotsky (1962) called scaffolding and mediation which “provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers, and the activities, identities, artifacts, and communities of knowledge and practice. A person’s intentions to learn are engaged and the meaning of learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in sociocultural practice. This social process includes, indeed it subsumes, the learning of knowledgeable skills” (p. 29). Graduate students learn as much through a variety of peripheral participation acts, for example, working with peers in a research team, submitting proposal for conference presentation or publication, or even just going to a conference, as they do in their graduate studies. This does not deny the usefulness of formal training, which is actually very important. Advocates of ESP genre theory believe formal teaching of genre knowledge in order for novices to acquire required academic literacy, whereas supporters of New Rhetoric studies back the scaffolding and mediation which is often takes place outside of the classroom. These two preferences should actually complement each other instead of mutual exclusion. In order to be accepted into a discourse community to learn its academic literacy and perform its genres successfully, most of novices have to be enrolled in

certain program courses to receive formal teaching from experienced faculty members and at the same time, absorb required genre and literacy knowledge from social activities both inside and outside the classroom. That is to say, disciplinary knowledge that is essential for development and acquisition of academic literacy can be acquired from the combination of formal training, scaffolding and mediation by language.

Disciplinary knowledge is continuously evolving and changing to meet not only the needs of discourse communities and their members, but also the needs of changing technologies such as the emergence of computer-mediated communication (CMC), changing ideology and world views of discourse communities and individual's intention for textual experimentation (especially, experts). Well-established scholars in certain disciplines have greater freedom to break traditional genre conventions and sometimes, through this creative efforts, "existing social expectations and practices get challenged, questioned, and in some case, eventually recast" (Ramanathan & Kaplan, 2000, p, 183). Novices in the discourse community are at a greater risk if they try to break conventions established in the field. The consequences may be that they are marginalized in the discipline.

No matter what perspectives are adopted, the importance of disciplinary knowledge in helping students to understand and master academic discourse has been widely acknowledged. According to the real situation, different disciplinary knowledge or the combination of them may be most effective in helping students develop their academic literacy in their chosen disciplinary discourse community.

## Acquisition of Academic Literacy

Different theoretical orientation toward discourse community and disciplinary knowledge affect the views of teaching and learning academic literacy. Two different yet closely related models of academic literacy acquisition are introduced below.

### Apprenticeship Model

ESP approach to academic literacy tends to focus on forms, emphasizes the communicative purpose of academic writing (Hyon, 1996) and support explicit teaching. The advocates of explicit teaching approach maintain that this act of academic discursal consciousness-raising would promote a sense of shared awareness of the rules of academic games and the strategies that successful player use (Swales, 1990, 1993). Although students can not get all the insider perspectives and knowledge from explicit teaching, they can develop from what they get from teaching a sense about how pedagogical genres in their disciplinary function to convey intended meanings and therefore start to see how their own words can function. The explicit presentation of rules of academic discourse can also make the learning of the rules easier, thus promoting more and more critical participation and may in turn reveal social contexts to students (Swales, 1990).

The development of students' academic literacy is often portrayed as a type of apprenticeship. The apprenticeship is developed out of the notion of scaffolding from Vygotsky (1978) where students and the teacher interact in the context of shared experience and students gradually take the responsibility of individual work. With the

help from the teacher, students can finally develop the ability to perform the tasks by their own. The advocates of ESP approach to academic literacy usually apply one model of apprenticeship: cognitive apprenticeship with three continuous stages: modeling, in which model of typical writing of the discipline will be presented to the students who will examine its genre; joint construction, in which the teacher and students will cooperate to build a new text in the same genre; and independent construction stage where students make use of their internalized disciplinary knowledge to create new texts on their own (Martin, 1999). Nonetheless, this approach of academic literacy teaching was criticized for its static view of discourse communities and genres by scholars from new rhetoric studies.

#### Enculturation Model

New rhetorical approach to academic literacy also uses the term apprenticeship, but in different sense as in the ESP approach. Advocates of this approach view apprenticeship as a process of enculturation in which the novices in a discourse community are gradually inducted into this community through participating in its discursive practice (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Prior, 1998). They tend to be skeptical of explicit teaching and maintain that genres and academic literacy are acquired through participation of activities such as collaboration with experienced faculty in the discourse communities rather than direct teaching (Bizzell, 1992; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Prior, 1998). Assimilation to the target discourse community is the goal of enculturation model in which students develop their personal consciousness in the academic discipline through participation of various

academic activities. The result of such participation will enable students move from novices to experts, that is, they can not only master the genre conventions of the specific discourse community, but share its goals, belief, value and ideology, that is, take a new identity as a member of disciplinary discourse community. Novices are not merely learning the linguistic forms to perform genres, but rather developing internally persuasive voice to move from knowledge-tellers to knowledge-transformers (Bartholomae, 1985, Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995). As Herrington (1985) pointed out in his study, mere display of familiar knowledge in their academic writing assignments is not sufficient for students show their commitment to the discourse community. It is their persuasive reports indicate students' enculturation to the discipline.

Many advocates of New Rhetoric approach to academic literacy regard apprenticeship also as scaffolding with the language as mediators. Novices sustain mutual relationship, share ways of engaging in doing things together, share discourse reflecting a certain perspective on the world through use of specific tools to become experts (Wenger, 1998). Students develop their particular academic literacy not from explicit teaching, but from participation in the sociocultural practices. In this process, those who are more experienced (e.g. the instructor, more advanced peers) provide the scaffolding for novices in their internalization of these sociocultural practices.

Two models of academic literacy approach: the ESP apprenticeship model, the new rhetoric studies' enculturation model address different aspects of discourse communities and disciplinary knowledge. Since discourse communities and genres

are both stable and dynamic, the linguistic and social accounts of academic literacy should not exclude each other, but instead, complement each other.

### Scaffolding, Mediation, and Acquisition of Academic Literacy

Evolved from the work of the Russian psychologist and semiotician Lev Vygotsky, sociocultural theory operates on the assumption that cognitive development is socially situated and that learning is a process of internalization of social and cultural values and patterns in a given society. This does not mean that development process is a simple repetition of social and cultural experience. Rather, socially-based learning is dynamic. Vygotsky's emphasis on social, cultural and contextual influence on cognitive development makes him distinguished from other major figures.

Vygotsky (1962, 1978) has argued that a child's development can not be understood by studying the individual. One must also examine the external, social, and historical world in which the individual's life develops. That is to say the locus of learning is not exclusively within the individual's mind but, rather, is a product of social interaction with other individuals. Vygotsky distinguished between natural or lower mental functions, such as memory, attention, and the higher, or cultural functions, such as logical memory, voluntary attention, conceptual thought, planning, and problem solving. Vygotsky explained that higher mental functions appear as a result of transformations of the lower functions (Vygotsky, 1978). The progression from natural to higher psychological functions during cognitive development is the result of a dynamic interaction between three different human development areas: phylogenesis (physical), ontogenesis (individual), and sociohistorical (social)



development. It is the interaction between the individual and the social and historical environment that causes ontogenetic development or the transformation of natural functions into higher function. In order for such transformation to occur, the individuals must make use of psychological tools, such as language. These psychological tools function as mediators, or instruments that stand between the individual and the goal toward which the individual's action is directed. The introduction of new cultural tools transforms the mediation process, rather than simply facilitating forms of action that would otherwise occur (Wertsch, del Rio, & Alvarez, 1995). Wertsch (1991) suggests that mediational means be viewed in terms of items that make up a tool kit, rather than being viewed as a single, undifferentiated whole. Academic literacy and disciplinary knowledge are parts of the conceptual tool kit of professional academic writer, linked to their knowledge of how to use the other tools of their collections to successfully perform required writing assignments.

In fact, academic writing, as one of the higher psychological functions, is developed by the scaffolding among teachers, peers and group members with language as one of the most important mediators. As the students grow academically, they use their innate biological propensity to detect conventions from the social environment and to internalize them. Language is one of the tools that play a primary role in structuring students' cognition about disciplinary knowledge and conventions that are socially based and contextually situated. Students are not isolated during this whole process. Instead, the transformation cannot be done without help from and cooperation with teachers, peers and social environment.

With scaffolding between members of a discourse community, cultural tools and practices and academic knowledge are transmitted from external social and cultural activities to internal psychological knowledge. Students can gradually solve problem under the guidance or in collaboration with others (Vygotsky, 1978). In the setting of acquisition of academic literacy, students, with certain concepts and procedures already internalized from their previous experience (e.g. general writing knowledge), acquire the disciplinary writing knowledge with the help of dynamic support from teachers and capable peers.

To summarize, the most salient feature of Vygotsky's theory is that learning has a social origin. However, for actual learning to occur, scaffolding has to be provided as well as the existence of necessary mediators. Disciplinary development and learning occur as the result of an interaction among members of a discourse to realize knowledge transformation. Such a transformation is only possible through mediation with symbolic tools such as language and writing. The goal of instruction is to provide scaffolding for the learners to effectively progress to reach their fullest development. Disciplinary knowledge that students have to understand and apply in their own writing is socially situated. Students learn disciplinary knowledge through interaction with teachers, peers, and their social-cultural context. During this process, students internalize the disciplinary knowledge they acquired and transfer it into their own writing products. Mediators such as language and technology serve as very important tools to help students to reach their goals. The notion of scaffolding is a crucial component of the apprenticeship model to help novices develop academic

literacy and learn disciplinary knowledge of a particular discourse community.

To date, theory of academic literacy has been applied in second language writing with contexts, purposes and writing practices as focus of investigation. Yet it was seldom combined with sociocultural theory with focus on scaffolding and mediators. Therefore, the theory of academic literacy will combine with constructs of scaffolding and mediation to serve as the theoretical framework to explain the process of NNS students' acquisition of academic literacy through investigation of their academic writing assignments.

#### End of Section Summary

Academic literacy is actually the ways of communication between members in the same discourse community. The medium of academic literacy is academic writing which reflects the disciplinary knowledge required in the discourse community to address issues in the field. The process to acquire academic literacy is the process for students to perform required tasks and gain access to and become members of the particular discourse community. Different models of academic literacy acquisition reflect different theoretical orientation and different approaches in teaching and learning of academic literacy. This study will investigate how NNS students enrolled in MA program of applied linguistics acquire their required academic literacy of this discourse community. The constructs of scaffolding and mediation of sociocultural theory are closely related to the concept of academic literacy, therefore will be used side by side with theory of academic literacy to form the theoretical framework in this

study to explain the research finding on students' acquisition of academic literacy, which may bring fresh insight in this research area.

### Computer-Mediated Communication and Second Language Learning CMC and L2 Learning

Computer-mediated communication includes both synchronous and asynchronous communications. Synchronous communication refers to real-time interaction between people over a computer network. Online chat is a typical synchronous communication. The interaction between participants is simultaneous. This is contrasted against asynchronous communication where there is some delay between the time when messages are sent and received. Email, listserv and discussion boards are the most common examples of asynchronous communication. Both synchronous and asynchronous communications are gaining popularity in the field of education. Blackboard, being used in this study, offers both synchronous and asynchronous opportunities for students to communicate with each other.

A considerable amount of research has been conducted on CMC with different interests in second language acquisition. The findings are mostly promising with many researchers stating that CMC provides increased and more equal opportunities for students' participation (Sullivan & Pratt, 1996; Kelm, 1992) because students interacting in CMC are less apprehensive of making mistakes and are less constrained by oral rules such as turn-taking. Teachers seem less authoritative and students' (even shy, less motivated and typically marginalized) anxieties in communication in L2 are reduced (Chun, 1994; Kern, 1995). Learners also take more active roles in developing

their discourse skills, interactive competence than is typically found in regular classroom discussions (Chun, 1994). Besides increased participation, students in CMC environment also produce more texts than in typical classroom with the same amount of time. The quality of the texts is higher as represented by more sophisticated ideas and longer and more complex sentences (Chun, 1994; Kern, 1995; Kelm, 1992; Warschauer, 1996). Other benefits of CMC include that students have more time to develop and refine their comments. There is also encouragement of a collaborative spirit among students and enhanced motivation for language practice. Since there is no time pressure, they might take the time and effort to express themselves in target language rather than take the easy way out by using their native language (Chun, 1994).

The research on CMC does not show that CMC has no limitations. Disadvantages of using synchronous CMC include slow speed as compared with speaking, loss of coherence in discussion of a topic, loss of teacher control, too direct or confrontational a style, lack of nonverbal communication and the necessity of learning a new set of turn-taking skills (Salaberry, 1997). Formal accuracy, stylistic improvement, global coherence, consensus, and reinforcement of canonical discourse conventions are goals not well served by synchronous CMC (Kern, 1995). Weisband (1992) also found that it was more difficult to achieve consensus in online discussion than in face-to-face interaction, that is to say, electronic discussion reduces conformity and convergence (Sproull & Kiesler, 1991). Another aspect of CMC that could hinder cooperative learning is the prevalence of hostile language known as

“flaming”, which apparently occurs due to the same features that encourage free expression, and which can have negative effects on classroom interaction (Sproull & Kiesler, 1991).

Due to the limitation of synchronous CMC, asynchronous CMC will be applied in this study. Asynchronous CMC allows students to take their time to develop more accurate and coherent interaction with peers or the teacher. Asynchronous CMC will be combined with face-to-face interaction, with strengths of one domain helping the other.

#### CMC and L2 Writing

Although many researchers on CMC are mainly concerned with students’ oral ability, the development in students’ writing in L2 is one inseparable part since the medium of CMC is mainly written. Students achieve higher written proficiency through practices in computer-based writing. Warschauer (1997) pointed out that this kind of text-based medium enables students to focus on linguistic structures that written communication provided. Kern (1995) also reported an overall higher level of sophistication of students’ written language in terms of the range of morphosyntactic features and the variety of functions expressed in French. Chun (1994) found that CMC fostered discursal moves such as topic initiation and expansion, which is very important for academic writing of research papers. Chun (1994) also found that students generated increasingly more complex sentences during their interaction and showed a significant improvement in the depth and strength of argument following online collaborative discussion. She noted that the types of sentences students used

required not only comprehension of the preceding discourse but also coherent thoughts and use of cohesive linguistic references and expression.

One limitation on the methodologies for many CMC studies is that it compares computer-mediated classrooms and normal classrooms which was pointed out by Chapelle (2001) as being unlikely to shed light on the problem or solution. Chapelle (2001) further pointed out comparisons of CMC versus classroom learning outcomes create an irony in which the most precise and sophisticated modern tool (CMC) is investigated through the most crude and outdated educational research methods (gross comparison).

In asynchronous communication, St. John and Cash (1995) used linguistic analysis and learner reports to describe the process of an adult learner who dramatically improved his German via email exchanges with a native speaker. The learner systematically studied the new vocabulary and grammatical structures in his incoming emails and used this information to improve his future letters, with striking results by the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> month. This exchange provides an excellent example of a student learning through interaction with a more capable peer (Vygotsky, 1978).

Above cited researchers and studies focus on general writing skills of L2 learners. Since it is commonly believed that general writing and academic writing are different, the application of CMC in acquisition of academic literacy as reflected in academic writing context will shed some light on the relationship between CMC and L2 students' writing in the disciplines. But unfortunately, this medium has been barely explored in relation to writing in the disciplines although disciplinary professors have

been receptive to the use of CMC to provide more opportunities for students' communication. The few study (Lea, 2001) on asynchronous CMC and students' academic writing assignments shows that students make use of online collaborative learning context, reflect their own learning, draw upon their peers in the construction of their own disciplinary knowledge, and thus benefit their own academic writing.

End of Section Summary

The research on CMC and L2 learning provides many promising results, especially on the heavily researched synchronous CMC and L2 learning. Yet the limitations brought by synchronous CMC are not beneficial for students to perform writing tasks which regard coherence and discourse as goals. Instead, asynchronous CMC such as email application seems to serve the writing better. CMC has been seldom applied in the study of academic writing. It is this study's task to investigate the influence of asynchronous CMC on students' acquisition of academic literacy.

### Studies on Writing in the Disciplines

#### Studies on Face-to-face L1 and L2 Disciplinary Writing

The following section will discuss the main results and methodological choices of research on disciplinary writing in both L1 and L2 contexts.

#### Discourse Communities and Disciplinary Writing

Research in both L1 and L2 disciplinary writing has focused on different aspects. One line of research has examined how novice scholars are inducted into their disciplinary discourse communities through various forms of apprenticeship or enculturation (Belcher, 1994; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Casanave, 1995; Dudley-



Evans, 1991; Swales, 1990). This line of research is based on the widely accepted notion that discourse communities are important in shaping generic competence of young scholars (Bartholomae, 1985; Bizzell, 1982a, 1982b; Dias, 1994). Since its introduction and almost immediate acceptance in the early 1980s, the notion of discourse communities has played a major role in the theory and research of academic writing (e.g., Berkenkotter, Huckin & Ackerman, 1988, 1991; Faigley, 1985; Herrington, 1985; Walvoord & McCarthy, 1990). Much of the empirical case studies of academic literacy development based on the notion of discourse community have been concerned with native speakers, (e.g. Bazerman, 1988; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Berkenlotter, Huckin, & Ackerman, 1991; Chiseri-Strater, 1991; Faigley & Hansen, 1985; Geisler, 1994; Herrington, 1985, 1988; McCarthy, 1987; Myers, 1990; Nelson, 1990; Rymer 1988; Swales, 1990; Walvoord & MclCarthy, 1990), although some researchers are notable for their focus on nonnative speakers (e.g. Belcher, 1989; Belcher & Braine, 1995; Braine, 1989; Carson & Kuehn, 1992; Casanave, 1990, 1995; Currie, 1993; Horowitz, 1986; Howe, 1990; Johns, 1991, 1992; Leki, 1995; Leki & Carson, 1994; Prior, 1991; Santos, 1988; Swales, 1990).

Berkenlotter, Huckin, and Ackerman have published two reports (1988, 1991) of their ethnographic case study of a student's (Ackerman alias "Nate") socialization into the graduate rhetoric program at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU). Nate was an undergraduate and then a graduate student in a curriculum and instruction program. Before entering the Ph.D. program in CMU, he has been teaching writing to students in another university. Nate was a good writer yet the characteristics of his writing was

colorful words and metaphoric constructions. In both studies, data collected include Nate's written self reports, weekly taped interviews, copies of paper Nate wrote, and the participant observer's field notes. Both reports present a number of interesting findings. In their study of a doctoral student's writing development and his acquisition of discipline-specific textual conventions, Berkenkotter, et al. demonstrated how these conventions were linked to the learning of the research methodology employed by the disciplinary community. To achieve success in his writing, Nate gradually abandoned the informal style he brought with him when he entered the program in favor of the more formal register that was required by the disciplinary community. Access to and acceptance by the disciplinary community are thus dependent upon the learning of the beliefs, values, and conventions that characterize that community. Berkenkotter et al. developed four assumptions that inform the discussion of their findings:

1. Members of a research community share "a model of knowing" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 20). This model of knowing is embedded in the research methodology that incoming students in graduate programs learn and is encoded in the language that community members use.
2. A research community extends beyond a student's graduate school to include researchers at other institutions. The vanguard of these researchers constitutes an "invisible college" (Crane, 1972, p.34-40, 49-56), wherein they share their work with one another through publications in professional journals and through papers delivered at professional meetings.

3. Papers and publications are among a research community's communicative forums; significant issues are raised, defined, and debated within these forums in this sense, to publish and to be cited is to enter the community's discourse.
4. Graduate students are initiated into the research community through the reading and writing they do, through instruction in research methodology, and through interaction with faculty and with their peers. A major part to this initiation process is learning how to use appropriate written linguistic conventions for communicating through disciplinary forums. (Berkenkotter, Huckin, and Ackerman, 1991, p. 193)

These assumptions are vivid top-down portray from the larger community to individual graduate students. As to the individual graduate students, they should work from step 4 and gradually reach step 1 through papers and publications and extending their academic activities beyond their graduate school. Yet there are also some criticisms about Berkenkotter, Huckin and Ackerman's studies. Schilb (1988) mentioned that it is very hard to regard Ackerman/Nate as a basic writer. The fact that Ackerman would co-author these papers and his personal background in writing strongly showed that he is not lack of literacy before he entered CMU. It may not be appropriate to portraying Nate as about to enter an academic field (Prior, 1991). It is more convincing if the subjects of the study are true novices in the academic community. In this dissertation, NNS MA students will be subjects of investigation on

how they acquire the academic literacy needed in performing writing tasks in the discourse community of applied linguistics.

Prior (1998), based on ethnographic case studies, has emphasized the “mediated” (p.22) nature of academic writing. Prior (1998) discusses three different modes of participation: passing, which involves meeting institutional requirement; procedural display, where both teacher and students cooperate to “do a lesson”; and deep participation, which involves rich access and engagement in practices. Analysis of two NNS MA students’ work suggests that their modes of participation are totally different, although they both finished their theses. On the one hand, Mai exhibited a limited participation with only passing and procedural display. She is isolated in the community outside of the classroom. In contrast, Teresa illustrates a richer mode of participation with indications of deeper participation. Teresa was more involved with local and broader disciplinary activities. For Prior, “Teresa’s world seemed richly populated with helpful others” (Prior, 1998, p. 133).

This strand of research concerns how novice writers are inducted into disciplinary communities. But almost all studies focus on the investigation of final texts from students to examine whether students have acquired the required genre knowledge. The researcher regards the importance of the process of academic literacy development and academic writing through apprenticeship and enculturation. Investigation on students’ process to perform their disciplinary written assignments will provide more insight on how novices are inducted into their discourse community.

What is also missing from this strand of research is the detailed discussion on the role of intertextuality, that is, the relation each text has to the prior, contemporary and potential future texts (Bazerman & Prior, 2004) in helping students become members of their discourse community. No academic writing product can appear in isolation. Every piece of written text is based on some other texts or utterances the author has heard, read or experienced. Intertextuality is considered by the researcher as important in the investigation of acquisition of academic literacy because it will provide insight on how students proceed from reading the writing assignment guidelines to accomplishing the assignments. The study of intertextuality between final written products to students' discussions, CMC peer feedback will provide very important information of the process of academic literacy acquisition.

#### Tasks and Disciplinary Writing

Another line of research examines types and nature of tasks students are expected to perform in university classrooms (e.g. Braine, 1989, 1995; Bridgeman & Carlson, 1984; Canseco & Byrd, 1989; Carson, 2001; Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Eblen, 1983; Hale et al., 1996; Horowitz, 1986; Johns, 1981; Kroll, 1979; Ostler, 1980; West & Byrd, 1982; Zhu, 2004).

Initial research into academic writing covers many disciplines in a single study and questionnaires with pre-determined categories are the most frequently used instrument for data collection (Behrens, 1978; Bridgeman & Carlson, 1984; Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Eblen, 1983; Johns, 1981; Kroll, 1979; Ostler, 1980; West & Byrd, 1982). Kroll (1979) applied a questionnaire to investigate the writing tasks of 20

American and 35 international students enrolled in freshman English classes at a large university. 54% of international students identified lab reports as the most frequently assigned writing tasks, while 33% identified reports integrating mathematical and statistical data to be most frequent. Ostler (1980) used a questionnaire on 133 (both undergraduate and graduate) students enrolled in the American Language Institute at the same university. Lab reports, research proposals and research papers were ranked highly as writing tasks among students from “hard” sciences and engineering which made up 44% of the student sample. Eblen (1983) investigated 266 faculty members from five different academic areas by using a questionnaire. In one of the academic areas, natural sciences, lab reports were again mostly required of students (57%), followed by documented papers (27.7%) and analytical reports (18%). Bridgeman and Carlson (1984) surveyed faculty members in 190 academic departments at 34 universities in the United States and Canada. The purposes of their questionnaire investigation was to find out the writing tasks and skills required of foreign students at their beginning stage of undergraduate or graduate studies. In addition to undergraduate English departments, six graduate departments were surveyed: electrical engineering, civil engineering, computer science, chemistry, psychology, and master of business administration programs. Although results indicated that considerable variability existed across fields in terms of both writing tasks required and assessment methods preferred, lab reports again along with brief article summaries stood out as the common writing tasks in engineering and science.

Although these types of studies provide useful information on writing tasks in disciplines, great cautions should be taken to interpret the results due to the methodology used (Zhu, 2004). Research (Braine, 1989, 1995; Horowitz, 1986; Zhu, 2004) shows that few survey designers (with the exception of Bridgeman and Carlson) used pretest strategies during the formulation of the questionnaire to eliminate the areas of ambiguity and assure the accuracy and reliability of the self-designed questionnaire. The result of this is often that the data collected did not serve its intended purposes, that is, to answer the research questions. This was admitted by some of the researchers. Behrens (1978) admitted that his “survey might be a more accurate measure of what people think ... than what they actually do” (p. 60); Pre-conceived classifications of writing assignments were incorporated into the survey by the researchers, and survey respondents, faculty or students, were asked to use the particular terminology used in the survey instrument (Horowitz, 1986), which was criticized by Horowitz as illogical. Instead, the “logically prior endeavor” is to analyze writing tasks before classifying them because there is no agreement on the classification scheme for academic tasks (Braine, 1995); Furthermore, Confusions of terminology can result from the use of a questionnaire in which designers may use multiple terms to identify essentially similar or the same genre. Questionnaire designers and respondents may also have different interpretations of the same term. For example, lab reports may mean a real experimental report to faculty or students from the “hard” sciences, while it means a research proposal to people from “soft” sciences.

Based on his criticism of survey methodology, Horowitz (1986) examined 54 writing assignments from one graduate and 28 undergraduate courses taught in 17 departments at Western Illinois University. Instead of setting predetermined categories, Horowitz used the inductive approach in which seven categories of writing tasks expected of students were identified after careful analysis of the writing assignments collected from students. They are: summary of/reaction to a reading; annotated bibliography; report on a specified participatory experience; connection of theory and data; case study; synthesis of multiple sources; and research project. Horowitz tried to avoid terms that may evoke different scenarios in varying contexts by explicitly explaining activities required and framework of performance in each category (Braine, 1995). Horowitz's study reflected the change of methodologies in the research on writing tasks for the purpose of better understanding genres students are expected to perform in different discourse communities. These new methodologies are characterized by the use of collections of assignments, interviews and inductive approaches (Zhu, 2004). The methodology change also reflected that the aim of writing tasks analysis has changed from matching tasks with predetermined categories to "identifying, describing, and contextualizing" the genre (Zhu, 2004).

Although Horowitz's study provided reliable classification based on careful analysis of writing assignments, his samples of assignments were collected from 17 different departments as diverse as marketing and biology (Braine, 1995). A shift of focus has taken place in recent years in which research has focused on single discipline. According to Braine (1995), "this shift in focus is based on the assumption



that separate disciplines are singular discourse communities with their own writing conventions” (p. 114). Braine adopted the inductive approach applied by Horowitz by collecting 80 assignments from 17 courses in 12 academic departments. All these 12 departments belong to the natural sciences and engineering and the researcher believed these two disciplines share sufficient characteristics to be considered a single discourse community. Braine identified five genres: summary/reaction, experimental report (lab), experimental report (design), case study, and research paper. Each genre was provided with extended definitions based on their traditional meanings. In this way, the creation of other taxonomies could be avoided (Braine, 1995). Since almost 75% of the sample consisted of two forms of experimental reports, six experimental reports were analyzed in order to determine the underlying writing skills. The analysis of sections of report (abstract, introduction, theory, apparatus & procedure, results and conclusions) showed that the most frequently used writing skills are paraphrase and summary.

Based on the findings in his study, Braine (1995) suggested that the formation of classes according to the students’ academic disciplines is justifiable and necessary. Although English teachers are not familiar with experimental reports genres, they can possibly discuss the “structure and function of each section of experimental reports” with students and teach students paraphrase and summary, two dominant skills required in the writing in such genres. At the end of his study, Braine pointed out that business majors need to be explored for its nature of business writing tasks because business majors also attract high percentage of foreign students.

Some efforts were made to study the type and nature of writing tasks in business majors. Among them, Zhu (2004) collected and analyzed 95 handouts and syllabi on writing assignments, 12 student writing samples, 6 of which with instructor's feedback, handbooks or portions of the required textbooks, records of discussion with 4 business professors and 6 transcripts of interviews with business faculty members from 6 departments of the business schools of a large research university. Using the inductive and iterative approach, she identified 9 genres including types of assignments common across academic disciplines: article/book report/critique, the reflection/reaction paper, the library research paper, and research proposal/paper, and genres specific to business disciplines: case analysis, business report, business proposal, design project and business letter and memo. Descriptions of the different types of writing assignments were provided. Case analysis was the most frequently required assignments. Based on the analysis of four business genres: case analysis, business report, business proposal, and design project, Zhu identified the characteristics of business genres: problem-solving and decision-making orientation, socializing students into the real world, emphasis on persuasion and ability to manage different data and tools. Skills required for business major students to succeed in their writing assignments encompass cognitive skills, rhetorical skills, and many others such as appropriate application of English and business terminologies, clear presentation of information and teamwork skills which may or may not be required in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) writing assignments. It is important for EAP courses to help students develop problem-solving skills,

awareness of audiences and their needs and teamwork skills.

To conclude, this line of research on type and nature of writing tasks required in academic disciplines show that students are expected to perform different genres in different disciplines. The focus of writing tasks is somewhat different across disciplines and writing classes differ considerably from other academic courses in the emphasis placed on various aspects of writing (Leki and Carson, 1997). But to date, the vast majority of research in this line focuses on the natural sciences, engineering and business majors because they are considered to attract most of the foreign student population. Little research has ever been done in the field of applied linguistics which is starting to attract more foreign students as a consequence of TESOL is rising in population worldwide.

Another issues reflected in this line of research is that the purpose of most research focuses on merely identifying tasks rather than exploring how students develop and acquire their academic literacy in this discipline through performance of writing tasks. Identifying the tasks can serve as the beginning of investigation and further examination of learning academic literacy to perform the tasks may provide valuable information on how students develop their academic literacy. This examination also reflects the shift of focus from emphasis on cognition to emphasis on the social construction of meaning which also conforms to the theoretical orientation adopted by the researcher of the study. Not much research so far has addressed this issue. Flower (1987; Flower, et al., 1990) explored the act of interpretation of an assignment by L1 student writers and found that students use

different plans and subsequently different strategies when they are engaged in writing activities. A study on the process and result that L2 students complete their academic writing tasks in a more complicated social and cultural context will contribute to the literature on academic literacy.

### Context and Disciplinary Writing

Research on writing in academic contexts has also examined the contexts of writing. This line of research is intertwined with other research on writing tasks and discourse communities because contexts are permeated with the whole writing process in the discipline. Many studies documented the difficulties students have when they learn to think and write in different disciplinary contexts (e.g. Berkenkotter, Huckin, & Ackerman, 1988; Casanave, 1992; Faigley & Hansen, 1985). Even within the same discipline, different contexts require different textual formats and ways of thinking. Herrington (1985) conducted a study in two chemical engineering classes: lab and design classes. Through interviews (both open-ended and discourse-based), survey and class observation, Herrington found that the two chemical courses represented different communities in which different issues are addressed and different lines of reasoning are used. Writers assume different roles, writing for different purposes and audience. Herrington's finding suggests that writers try to write texts that fit the discipline's preferred forms and ways of thinking, which may be in conflict with individuals' personal knowledge and interest. At this time, they have to be repressed (Casanave, 1995).

Casanave (1995) challenged the global context of discourse community in its inadequacy for understanding writers in specific settings. Instead, she proposes that context at the local, personal and interactive levels is more meaningful. Casanave (1995) conducted an 18-month ethnographic study on a group of first-year doctoral students in sociology program of a large private university. The key players in this study include both native speakers and non-native speakers. The result of this ethnographic study shows that students construct their contexts mostly from sources that are directly related to their daily life. The students interact with the professors, teaching assistants and other students, with the system of training and with the writing tasks in multiple and diverse ways. Students construct their context of writing and ways of thinking in the process of these local, historical and interactive interactions. Therefore it is a more meaningful approach in understanding students' development of disciplinary writing than taking discourse community metaphor as a whole.

As the development of technology, computer-mediated communication (CMC) now is widely used in many disciplinary classes. Some classes are offered totally online, and some would make use of CMC as an extension of classroom instruction. The inclusion of technology extends the limited classroom time and provides extra opportunities for both students and professors for interaction and scaffolding. But at the same time, it makes the local context more complex. It is not clear how technology will influence students' completion of their academic writing and how students perceive the incorporation of CMC in the local context. These are the questions which will be answered in this study and the answering of them will

contribute to the existing literature by addressing the popular issues of the effect of CMC in academic literacy.

### NNS Students and Disciplinary Writing

A relatively new line of research is the discipline-based experience of NNS students. NNNS students are at a disadvantage in their disciplinary writing. A number of case studies have examined their experiences (e.g. Belcher, 1994; Casanave, 1992; Connor & Kramer, 1995; Schneider & Fujishima, 1995; Shaw, 1991). In their study, Connor and Kramer (1995) found that two of the ESL students lacked the strategies of a successful report writer throughout the task representation. Language proficiency may have affected the ESL students' performance. Professional training and background was found to affect both ESL and American student's task representation. The authors recommended longer texts for reading with increased opportunities for critical thinking and creative problem solving. Schneider & Fujishima (1995) portrayed an ESL graduate student who failed in both his language learning and academic courses. The possible reason for this failure is that this student focuses only on his subject courses without any interaction with both university community and larger disciplinary discourse community. This problem is also found by Prior (1998) in Teresa, a Chinese graduate student who regards meeting course requirements as the only goal. Casanave (1995) and Prior (1998) looked at both disciplinary communities themselves and students' interactions with their communities. One of the salient findings from these research indicate that NNS students have difficulties in mastering "invisible discourse" conventions, which are hiding under the surface of the discourse

and even not so easy for native speaking students to acquire immediately, but necessary for students to understand and produce it.

Many NNS students are also faced with the dilemma to choose whether to stick to their native culture and shut out from the western academy or to become a member of the academy with either psychological or social sacrifices (Canagarajah, 1993). Many NNS students from collectivist countries take a reproductive approach to learning and seldom adopt a critical stance toward subject knowledge, which is considered by western academics as lacking of rigor in scholarship (Ballard & Clanchy, 1991; Richards & Skelton, 1991; Rouzer, 1993). NNS students' lack of challenge to academic authority, to some extent, is due to their fear of failure in the academic life. Proper guidance to demystify labyrinth of western academic discourse is needed to help NNS students gain membership to specific discourse communities, but the form of such guidance is not agreed (Spack, 1988b).

Many NNS students are also at disadvantage in terms of language proficiency. Using the non-native language to participate in the disciplinary activities through academic writing is understandably harder than using their L1. Also because of lack of native like oral language proficiency and different cultural values, many NNS students are usually very quiet in the classroom and avoid opportunities to work with their native peers collaboratively. Thus, NNS students may miss a lot of chances of legitimate peripheral participation which is stated before as being very beneficial for both L1 and L2 students to acquire academic literacy and gain membership of their discourse communities.

To facilitate NNS students' entry into their discourse communities and involve them more actively in both explicit teaching and legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practices, computer-mediated communication will be integrated with classroom instruction in this study to investigate how the application of CMC will influence the process for NNS students to acquire their required academic literacy.

End of Section Summary

L1 and L2 disciplinary writing studies that focus on tasks, discourse communities, contexts have shed some light on nature of academic literacy, genres and discourse communities. Different genres are required in different disciplines. Each discipline represents singular discourse community with its own conventions, values and beliefs. Novices are inducted into their disciplinary discourse communities through various forms of apprenticeship or enculturation. Understanding the tasks of written communication and conforming to a discipline's norms, values, and ideology are essential for the individual's academic success. Students' performance of particular writing assignments in their discourse communities is realized in their socialization with teachers, peers and training as disciplinary writers. Both L1 and L2 learners have difficulty in acquiring academic literacy and gaining access to the particular discourses communities, while L2 learners are more at a disadvantage in term of their lack of native language proficiency and unfamiliarity with "invisible discourse".

Although studies on both L1 and L2 disciplinary writing are very insightful, there are some issues that have not been addressed. More subjects from various



discourse communities need to be studied to provide as complete a picture of academic writing as possible. How students, especially L2 students, acquire required academic literacy of the discipline through the process of task completion needs to be explored. Furthermore, how L2 students perform academic writing assignments in CMC environment and their perception toward CMC influence warrants investigation and explanation.

#### Studies on Computer-Mediated Disciplinary Writing

Research on disciplinary writing in computer-mediated communication is still in the incipient stage. Warschauer (1999) reported several cases of students writing activities among 15 graduate students from various countries. The students were enrolled in Writing for Foreign Graduate Students course for the purpose of being integrated into their academic life in their disciplines. Computer-mediated communication was integrated in the class in various forms: emails, synchronous chat, discussion board, listserv and home pages. Students were required to write academic papers in their own disciplines. Warschauer stated that the use of computer as medium corresponds to a tutor-tutee model of apprenticeship model of learning between teacher and student, a collaborative model of apprenticeship learning between students, and a peripheral participation model of apprenticeship as well.

The cases of Miyako and Zhong are examples of tutor-tutee model. Miyako, a quiet first year M.A. student in class, learned much about the academic writing process in the United States through constantly sending emails to the instructor and peers to raise her questions, doubts and concerns about academic life in the US. The

inclusion of CMC medium was considered especially beneficial for students like Miyako who are regarded as “peripheral members of organizations” because they were mostly “shut out” in traditional classrooms. The case of Zhong is different from that of Miyako in the sense that Zhong had already established his status in his disciplinary discourse community in China by numerous publications. This tutor-tutee model facilitated by the CMC benefited Zhong in the sense that through his individualized contact with the teacher via electronic communication bearing his real-world questions in mind, he protected his own academic rights, and at the same time, maintained a positive relationship with his distant colleagues.

Not only did CMC provide more opportunities for teacher-student interaction, it also enhanced collaborative learning among students. A comparison of samples of face-to-face discussion and online synchronous discussion indicated that teacher’s role in online discussion was decentralized. Instead, students centered discussion became the norm. Face-to-face discussion generally followed the IRF (initiating, responding, and following) pattern in which the teacher took the major role by initiating the questions and following up on students’ responses. Students were mostly passively responding. But in the sample of online synchronous discussion on plagiarism, a topic closely related with academic writing, the instructor’s message just appeared once. The whole discussion was dominated by students. The result of such discussion was very promising with one student stating that “the single greatest benefit he got from the class was a better understanding of the differences between American and Indonesian approaches to plagiarism”.

Students' entries into their discourse communities were facilitated through various activities of peripheral participation such as talking to the professor and fellow graduate students and reading journal articles as well. CMC could serve as a great medium for peripheral participation. In Warschauer's (1999) report, students were asked to create their own home page and join at least one academic listserv in their disciplines. One student, Atsuko, a graduate student in English as a Second Language program from Japan, bravely sent a message to an academic listserv in Japan made up of English language teacher nationwide. Atsuko did receive some helpful responses to her questions. Although Atsuko unexpectedly received one rude message criticizing her English, the step she has taken facilitated by computer technology would benefit her academic life in the long run.

In another study, Lea (2001) reported the role of computer conferencing in the development of students' disciplinary knowledge. Taking an "ethnographic style" of data collection, Lea collected online discussion entries, copies of marked assignments with tutor comments and feedback, and email responses to tutor's semi-structured questions from seven participants globally located in different countries. Lea also conducted telephone interviews with all of them. The focus of his analysis was whether the texts of the computer conferences were reflected in the texts of students' written assignments. The results of data analysis showed that asynchronous computer conferencing provided not only chances of collaborative learning among students, but also opportunities for learners to reflect on their own and peers' academic arguments which served as their rhetorical resources that students can refer back any time they

wanted. Students drew upon their peers' writing in the construction of their own disciplinary knowledge in which texts from computer conferencing were reflected in students' writing assignments. Like Warschauer (1999), Lea emphasized that the application of computer-mediated communication changed peers' role from being passive to assuming authoritative status in the class. To conclude, the information expressed from these studies is that using computer-mediated communication would facilitate the process of students' disciplinary knowledge development.

#### End of Section Summary

Although studies on computer-mediated disciplinary writing are limited in numbers, the results of such studies are mainly positive. The use of CMC in various forms such as emails, discussion boards, chat and computer conferencing raises students' awareness of and facilitates their development in disciplinary knowledge reflected in their academic writings. The interaction between teacher and student extends outside of the regular classroom and students learn some academic and genre conventions from the instructor through electronic media. Students take more active roles in the construction of their social and academic knowledge in the less scary CMC environment, providing scaffolding for each other. The opportunities for students' learning are also broadened to include all kind of peripheral participation with the help of computer technology. Peripheral participation is regarded the best way to assist students to integrate into academic life of their disciplines.

Studies in computer-mediated disciplinary writing, however, seem to be limited in certain ways. First, some studies focus on very basic and superficial aspects

of academic discourse such as how to use library, take notes effectively, and organize research papers. These are the important information to know but may not be vital for students to gain access to particular discourse communities. Researchers sometimes also ignore the fact that different genre types may be required by different disciplines. Studies focusing on single disciplines and exploring the tasks, strategies, contexts, learning process and their interrelationships in both regular classroom and computer-mediated environment are much needed to understand the role of computer-mediated communication in helping students, especially L2 students in gaining their entry and maintaining their status in particular disciplines. Second, in some studies which do focus on single disciplines and analyze students' written assignments (e.g. Lea, 2001), genres particular in the disciplinary discourse communities are not defined. The result of this is that although study shows that technology enables reflexivity in students learning which is reflected in students' own written arguments, it is not clear whether these writing assignments conform to the genre conventions of particular disciplines. Third, some studies (e.g. Lea, 2001) were conducted in a total distant learning environment without considering the limitations of using CMC. A study combining both face-to-face and CMC is much needed to provide a possibly successful model in teaching and learning disciplinary writing.

#### End of Chapter Summary

The acquisition of academic literacy by applying particular disciplinary knowledge is supported by both theory of academic literacy and constructs of scaffolding and mediation of sociocultural theory. Students' development of academic

literacy is socially situated and that learning is a process of internalization of social and cultural values and patterns in a given society. Students engaged in disciplinary writing tasks have to understand and apply socially situated disciplinary knowledge and finally internalize this knowledge through contextual activities. The internalization of disciplinary knowledge enables students to reach their goals of development and gain entry to their discourse communities. In terms of disciplinary writing, it is a joint effort of students' individual composing processes and their interaction with their teachers, peers and social and cultural contexts to organize their writing. Writing in the disciplines may be more challenging to L2 learners whose insufficient language proficiency and possibly different understanding of discourse communities may prevent them from acquiring required academic literacy and gaining access to discourse communities.

Computer-mediated communication, claimed by many researchers, provides students with a less scary environment in which students can control their learning process at their own pace and have their voices easily heard. CMC also extends students interaction with teachers, peers and expands the possibility of all kinds of social activities. However, research on computer-mediated disciplinary writing is scarce and focuses more on superficial aspects of discourse community.

Also, few studies have examined computer-mediated disciplinary writing in applied linguistics. Applied linguistics, as a discourse community, has its special knowledge and skills, socio-cultural contexts that non-native speakers have to be aware of and understand. A study that provides textual and interactional data about

how non-native speakers of English try to acquire academic literacy and gain access to the discourse of applied linguistics in the computer-mediated environment will definitely contribute to the growing body of literature on academic literacy, discourse communities and academic writing. This is the purpose of this study.

## Chapter III Method

This section described the participants and settings, the design of the study, the data collection procedures and the methods of data analysis.

### Participants and Settings

The primary participants of this study were the non-native speakers (NNSs) of English who were enrolled in one of the graduate courses in an MA program of applied linguistics of a large, urban public university in the southeastern United States. The summer class met twice a week for three and a half hours for six weeks, while the three fall courses met once a week for 3 hours during a 16 week period. The remaining one offered in the fall was mainly conducted online with a few face-to-face meetings. Although there were some individual differences among NNS students in terms of their age, gender, countries of origin, length of stay in the US, ESL proficiency, L1 and L2 writing expertise, attitude toward writing, and stages in their academic studies, they were, at the time, members of the same domain-specific academic program with academic literacy playing an important role.

The selected classes were four core courses and one internship class offered by the master's program of Applied Linguistics in the Department of World Language Education. The purpose of the program was to train teachers in the field of teaching English as a second or foreign language (TESL/TEFL). Students were required not



only to have an understanding of linguistic principles, but also embody their understanding in their academic writing by applying those principles. The students in the program took nine core courses: Applied Linguistics, Introduction to Graduate Study, Grammatical Structure of English, Second Language Acquisition, Contrastive Analysis, Methods of TESL, ESOL Curriculum & Instruction, Language Testing, and Cross-Cultural Issues in ESL. All the courses were designed to help MA students develop their academic literacy in applied linguistics, and students were mostly graded on their performances on writing assignments. The writing assignments that students were required to perform reflect the needs and social practices of the local discourse community of applied linguistics in this university. Each of these courses addressed one aspect of the discourse community of applied linguistics. For example, the Introduction to Graduate Study was designed to familiarize students with major approaches of linguistic and applied linguistic research; the Curriculum & Instruction course focused on helping students develop their ability to create effective ESOL curriculum. Although some lessons were basic and others were more advanced, students in the MA program were regarded as novices in the discourse community of applied linguistics. The majority of students enrolled in this MA program of applied linguistics were American students, but there were students from all over the world as part of the student population. Currently they had students from some Asian countries such as Korea and Japan and Latin American countries such as Columbia and Brazil.

The basic requirements for the selected course were that the course involved significant online discussions via the use of Blackboard and some writing assignments.

The course also included some NNS students who were the primary participants in the study and whose work was followed more intensively. Five classes satisfied the basic requirements and were selected as data collection sites. These five classes were: the ESOL Curriculum and Instruction offered in the summer of 2005 and the Methods of teaching ESOL, Applied Linguistics, Language Testing and Internship class offered in the fall semester of 2005.

The ESOL Curriculum and Instruction (ECI) (see course syllabus on appendix 1) was designed to enhance and improve students' knowledge of the basic principles of curriculum design. Due to the time limitation of 6 weeks, students in this class conducted needs analysis in the real world in groups and finished the authentic ESL curriculum in the form of take-home exam as individual project. Students performed these activities through understanding needs analysis, determining instructional goals and objectives, analyzing and developing syllabi, developing lesson plans, and evaluating textbook materials. All these procedures were reflected in students' written products of an ESL curriculum.

The Methods of Teaching a Second Language (MTSL) class (see course syllabus on appendix 2) was designed for graduate students to have a foundation in the theory and practice in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). Not only did students understand major characteristics of different methods to teach a second language through reading and class instructions, but also they observed, taught and reflected on real ESL classes in the English Language Institute (ELI), conducted peer teaching sessions in the class and developed their statements of teaching philosophy.

Applied linguistics (see course syllabus at appendix 3) class offered opportunities for first year students not only to be acquainted with linguistic knowledge (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, discourse and pragmatics), but also to understand how language was organized, used and changed over time and how language was acquired by both L1 and L2 learners. Students in this class were required to understand basic terms and concepts, analyze and describe language phenomena and integrate their understanding into their written projects on one of the selected topics.

Language testing (see course syllabus at appendix 4) class was designed to help students understand the basic concepts, principles, purposes of language testing with a focus on the ESL context. Students were expected to learn methods, tools and processes to construct language testing to appropriate audience and evaluate the validity and reliability of tests effectively. Students in this class were required to design a language test for a chosen audience in an ESL context, administer the test, and write a report on the reflection on the whole process from writing the test to the modification of the test based on test results.

Internship I was one of a series of two classes designed for students to get some field experience before they entered the job market. During the first internship, each student was paired with an experience ESL teacher from ELI, observing the classes and helping the instructor plan the class. During their second internship, they taught real ESL students in ELI for one semester. All the students in the current study were at the first internship stage at the time of investigation. Besides working with an

ESL instructor, another major component for them as course requirement was to develop and/or modify their teaching philosophy. This was an ongoing process. Students initiated their teaching philosophy at the beginning of the semester (they can also use the one they constructed during the methods class) and modified it through the semester based on peers' or the teacher's comments and their own reflections. The final version of the teaching philosophy was due by the end of the semester.

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) as realized via the use of Blackboard was a component of all these courses and tightly built into the pedagogy. Every class taught in this university was provided with a Blackboard shell but it was up to the instructors whether to use it. All kinds of Blackboard workshops and personal trainings were available all over the campus, so Blackboard was more and more popular campus-wide. Many courses in the MA program of applied linguistics incorporated Blackboard into their curriculum and the most frequently used function of Blackboard was discussion boards. The use of Blackboard from the students' perspective was straight forward. In the case where the students enrolled in one of these classes were not familiar with how to use the Blackboard, trainings were provided by the instructor during one of the first class meetings. The information of whether students had a good mastery of Blackboard was obtained from the questionnaire containing questions about Blackboard using experience.

In each class, CMC was intensively used as a completion of limited class time and an opportunity for extended interaction. CMC was mainly used on discussion questions and online peer feedback activities. Both discussion assignments and

feedback activities were devoted to helping students have better understanding of some components of applied linguistics. The detailed use of CMC in each class was listed in the Table 1-4.

Table 1. The Schedule for CMC Application in ESOL Curriculum and Instruction

Week 1	July, 4	Holiday (No class)
	July, 6	Blackboard discussion: Assignment # 1 (Due July, 13)
Week 2	July, 11	
	July, 13	Blackboard discussion: Assignment # 2 (Due July, 20)
Week 3	July, 18	
	July, 20	Blackboard discussion: Assignment # 3 (Due July, 25)
Week 4	July, 25	
	July, 27	Blackboard discussion: Assignment # 4 (Due August, 3)
Week 5	August, 1	
	August, 3	Blackboard discussion: Assignment # 5 (Due August, 10)
Week 6	August, 8	
	August, 10	

Table 2. The Schedule for CMC Application in Language Testing

Week 1	Aug 29	
Week 2	Sep 6	
Week 3	Sep 13	Discussion via Blackboard
Week 4	Sep 20	Discussion via Blackboard
Week 5	Sep 27	
Week 6	Oct 4	Discussion via Blackboard

Week 7	Oct 11	Discussion via Blackboard
Week 8	Oct 18	Discussion via Blackboard
Week 9	Oct 25	Mid-term Exam
Week 10	Nov 1	
Week 11	Nov 8	Discussion via Blackboard
Week 12	Nov 15	Discussion via Blackboard
Week 13	Nov 22	Class on-line
Week 14	Nov 29	
Week 15	Dec 6	

Table 3. The Schedule for CMC Application in Methods of Teaching ESOL

Week 1	Sep 1	
Week 2	Sep 8	Blackboard Online Discussion Assignments
Week 3	Sep 15	
Week 4	Sep 22	
Week 5	Sep 29	
Week 6	Oct 6	
Week 7	Oct 13	
Week 8	Oct 20	
Week 9	Oct 27	
Week 10	Nov 3	
Week 11	Nov 10	
Week 12	Nov 17	
Week 13	Nov 24	
Week 14	Dec 1	

Week 15	Dec 8	Blackboard: Peer Review of Teaching Philosophy
Week 16	Dec 15	

Table 4. The Schedule for CMC Application in Applied Linguistics

Week 1	Aug 30	
Week 2	Sep 7	
Week 3	Sep 14	Blackboard discussion posting 1 (Due 10/19)
Week 4	Sep 21	Blackboard discussion posting 2 (Due 10/19)
Week 5	Sep 28	
Week 6	Oct 5	Blackboard discussion posting 3 (Due 10/19)
Week 7	Oct 12	Blackboard discussion posting 4 (Due 10/19)
Week 8	Oct 19	Mid-term Exam
Week 9	Oct 26	
Week 10	Nov 2	
Week 11	Nov 9	
Week 12	Nov 16	Blackboard discussion posting 5 (Due 12/7)
Week 13	Nov 23	
Week 14	Nov 30	
Week 15	Dec 7	
Week 16	Dec 14	Final Exam

The fifth class Internship class was conducted mainly online. So Blackboard was used more frequently and consistently than all the other classes. Students posted their questions into discussion forums to seek helps and answers. They also read each other's teaching philosophy and made comments on that.

## Design

This study applied a case study methodology. Case study research was the in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). It was an approach of “watching people in their own territory and interacting with them in their own language, on their own terms.” (Kirk & Miller cited in Gall, et al., 2003, p. 438). The case study approach was gaining popularity in both general writing research and research on writing in the disciplines in which information about writing, writers, and social and cultural contexts in specific circumstances was collected to describe, investigate and explain a phenomenon that was previously unknown. Unlike the previously widely used survey methodology, in which assignments required of students were matched with predetermined categories, case study methodology took the diversity and complexity of writing tasks and situations into consideration.

The purposes of this case study were twofold. The researcher was interested not only in understanding the complex phenomenon of academic writing activities as experienced by NNS participants enrolled in a course in the field of applied linguistics (emic perspective), but also making conceptual and theoretical sense of the case and reporting the findings so that their contribution to the literature was clear (etic perspective). Emic perspective enabled the researcher to view what participants view through observations of their behaviors in the natural context of the class as well as through interviews with them. At the same time, it was very important for the researcher to maintain her own perspective as an outsider.



One characteristic of case study was to answer “how” and “why” questions (Yin, 1994). Since this study sought to answer “how” questions about students’ acquisition of academic literacy taking place in disciplinary courses, qualitative research strategies were most appropriate for this study and used for the majority of the data collection to obtain a picture as complete as possible. Data collection modes included: (a) classroom observations of students’ behaviors and the researcher’s self-reflection journal, (b) questionnaire on background information about students, (c) online discussion entries, (d) sources of students’ academic writing, (e) students’ drafts and revisions of written assignments, (f) interviews with students and faculty, and (g) discourse-based interviews. The use of multiple sources of evidence helped to strengthen the construct validity of the research. All data were stored in a database for future review. The use of case study protocols and the creation of a study database assisted in increasing the dependability of the study. The credibility of case study findings was also enhanced through these multiple methods to collect data and through a process called triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Different sources of data and different methods were used to obtain a triangulated and contextualized perspective on student’s online discussions and writing. The overall credibility of the study was strengthened because the researcher presented a strong chain of evidence. The research was intended to provide clear and meaningful links between research questions, raw data, and findings. Some raw data served primary roles such as interviews, while others were secondary data sources such as a questionnaire. The design was particularly aimed at gathering data that had received less attention in

previous studies: significance of CMC in student learning to communicate in the field of applied linguistics, peer roles in online discourse, patterns of online interactions, and relationship between final written products and online communication.

The unit of analysis of this case study was individual NNSs (NNSs in a particular disciplinary class) who were chosen as primary participants as the result of convenience sampling. They were novices in a discourse community of applied linguistics trying to understand and learn the ways to communicate with each other, that is, they were trying to learn the specialized literacy of this academic discipline. The main medium for this communication was the academic writing. It was challenging for NNS students to communicate with other members using the language that they might still be developing. Because of this, NNS students might have lost many chances for interaction with teachers and peers and opportunities for legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991) to internalize the required academic literacy in traditional classroom communication. It was beneficial for both students and instructors to know whether the use of computer-mediated communication in the disciplinary class would provide more equal opportunities for NNS students to develop their academic literacy.

The role of the case study researcher in data collection and analysis was very complex. The researcher of this study assumed several different roles simultaneously. First of all, the researcher was a participant observer. The researcher was present at every class meeting except the exam weeks. Extensive field notes were taken on NNSs about their behaviors in the class. This role of participant observer “allows the

inquirer to see the world as her subjects see it, to live in their time frames, to capture the phenomenon in and on its own terms, and to grasp the culture in its own natural, ongoing environment” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 273). Second, the researcher served as the assistant to the instructors of the courses. The researcher worked closely with the instructors to finalize the syllabi and ensure CMC was built naturally into the pedagogy. When the semester started, the researcher met the instructors of the courses regularly before each class meeting. They discussed the content being covered in the class and the writing assignments being assigned to students. Since computer-mediated communication was used extensively in the class, the researcher helped the instructor set up various discussion forums in the Blackboard sites of the courses. There were numerous discussion forums in each class on various topics. Some special discussion forums were set up in some classes to provide certain space for students to discuss their problems and comments in the process of completing their written assignments. Some group forums devoted solely for providing feedback on peer’ drafts were also used. Third, the researcher was the primary “measuring instrument.” The researcher got involved in the phenomenon being studied. Thus, the researcher was likely to interact closely with participants, attend social events in the classrooms, and use empathy and other psychological processes to grasp the meaning of the phenomenon as it was experienced by individuals and groups in the setting.

## Data collection

Data for this study were gathered from eight main sources:

- 1) Class observations and Researcher's Reflective Journal. Extensive field notes were taken in each class. The researcher was present for most of class sessions during semesters. The only sessions from which the researcher was absent were the exam weeks. Primary participants were the major focus of observation. The instructors and other English speaking classmates' behaviors were recorded if primary participants interacted with them in any sense; for example, commenting on each other's statements, group work, etc. The researcher tried to be as unobtrusive as possible throughout the whole process so as not to distract the primary participants in their natural context, as well as not to be distracted in note taking. The purposes for field notes were to record relevant incidents observed in the behaviors of non-native speakers of English as related to the development of their academic literacy and to be referred to during member check if necessary. For example, class notes helped the researcher understand how a topic discussed in the class was followed up in online discussion.

The researcher also kept a reflective journal on a daily basis during the whole data collection process. The journal included 1) the daily schedule and logistics of the study; 2) a personal diary, and 3) a methodological log (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 327). The purpose of a reflective journal was to

help the researcher organize the data collection process, evaluate data collection progress and help reduce researcher bias.

- 2) Questionnaire. Questionnaires (see appendix 5) were distributed to all consented students in these classes during the second class meeting. Part of the first week's class time was devoted to explaining the purpose and process of the study, and distributing consent forms (see appendix 6) to participants of the study in the class. The questionnaire contained three major parts: personal information, academic writing experience, and computer experience. Personal information was to determine their national origin, native language, language study experience, etc. The purpose of the personal information part of the questionnaire was to identify important individual variables and to target the primary participants in the case study. Academic writing experience was to identify their academic background and goals, disciplinary affiliations, pre-experience in academic writing in both L1 and L2. The purpose of this part of the questionnaire was to identify the possible individual differences of participants as different cases in this study and might be traced back if different results occurred to individual participants. This information served as the baseline of the investigation. The last part of the questionnaire related to students' experience with technology which included whether they had access to the computer with internet connections, and their degrees of experience in using Blackboard to send emails, attach files, post discussions etc. Blackboard software was used intensively throughout the semester. The purpose of this

part of questionnaire was to target the problems of technology use from the very beginning of the class and provide training accordingly if necessary.

The questionnaire was piloted on an NNS (Kim) who was a current student in the MA program of applied linguistics. Kim came from South Korea and was in the middle of her study and still had 15 more credit hours before graduation. The researcher met Kim when she was enrolled in the Introduction to Graduate Studies where the researcher was observing the class. The researcher emailed Kim, explained the purpose of piloting and got consent from her. Then the researcher and Kim met in a quiet study room in the library where the questionnaire was presented to her. The purpose of this pilot was to check whether the questionnaire was easily understandable and whether it could generate data that were expected by the researcher to use in data analysis. It took Kim around fifteen minutes to finish the questionnaire. From her answers to the question items, the researcher obtained information about her personal background, academic writing experience and technology experience, topics which could serve as the basis in my data analysis. For example, the researcher was clear at the moment that Kim was still struggling in her academic writing, but she was very familiar with all the functions of Blackboard usage. At the same time, Kim did think some questions were not clear and some part of the questionnaire was not organized in a very user-friendly manner. Then we discussed the questions and confusions that she had and made necessary changes to the questionnaire. For example, I reorganized

the items in the academic writing section with the first few questions focusing on general writing experience and the rest focusing on academic writing experience. I also changed the wording of a few questions to make them more easily understandable. The pilot of the questionnaire improved the quality of the questionnaire and was beneficial in the real data collection process.

- 3) Online Discussion Entries. Since CMC as delivered by Blackboard communication was widely used in this class, participants' online activities were observed and recorded as well. In order to do so, the researcher was added in the Blackboard sites of the courses and given instructor status that allowed the researcher to have access to all functions of Blackboard. Among these functions, discussion boards were used extensively during the whole semester as a supplement to class discussion (due to the limited class discussion time) and as a medium for students to accomplish their online discussion assignments. Since there were different online discussion assignments in each class, the number of discussion forums in each class differed. The online discussion assignments took 10% of the class grades in some classes and did not take class grades in others.

Students were required to participate not only actively in class discussions but also in online forums. Students were encouraged to post their entries, read other students' postings and comment on and respond to their peers' entries. Discussion rubrics were created by the instructors and the researcher for some classes and presented to students during first class meeting as their guidelines

for online discussions. Since the purposes for these courses were to acculturate the novices in the field of applied linguistics to acquire academic literacy and learn ways of communication in acquiring basic knowledge of applied linguistics, developing effective ESOL curricula, language test and statement of teaching philosophy, applying various ESOL methods in different situations, all the online discussion assignments were related to components of these topics. All these online discussion assignments helped students produce their written projects. Students were also encouraged to talk and write professionally using the terms specific to the field. The online discussions provided chances for NNSs to have their voices heard since they might have limited participation during class discussions due to their language deficiencies or cultural issues.

All the online discussion entries related to the primary participants were saved for data analysis. These entries could be the participants expressing their own opinions or responding to or critiquing peers' opinions. The discussion entries from secondary participants (the instructor or native peers) were also collected if they were "conversations" between secondary participants and the primary participants. The purpose of collecting online discussion entries was to identify the patterns of language functions and the students' focus of attention when they tried to acquire academic literacy in the computer environment to explore the process of collaboration between NNS and NS, between NNS and the instructor, or even between NNS and NNS.



4) Students' written assignments. Students' major assignments were collected and analyzed for evidence of how they learned the ways of communication in these particular classes and what role CMC played in the process. The major assignment in ESOL Curriculum and Instruction was a curriculum project with several subcomponents: needs analysis paper, objectives and syllabus for the project, lesson plans for the project, and textbook evaluation. The reason that students were required to write a needs analysis paper instead of conducting a real needs analysis was due to the fact that it was a 6-week summer semester. General information of major assignments was provided in the course syllabi and briefly explained to students during the first class meeting. Detailed guidelines were provided as the courses proceeded. Students were encouraged to start working on their written assignments as early as possible. In some classes, such as ESOL Curriculum and Instruction, from the very beginning of the semester, a discussion forum devoted solely to assignments was set up in the Blackboard site of the course along with other discussion forums mentioned previously. Students were encouraged to post their questions, confusions, and/or share their attainments in their efforts to accomplish their written assignments. They were also encouraged to answer other people's questions and comments on their advice posted by other members of the class. This activity continued until the end of the semester when all the assignments were submitted. At the same time, the instructors encouraged students to incorporate what they had discussed in the forums into their written

assignments. The written assignments of NNS students were examined in terms of its intertextuality with discussions as well as whether they met the instructors' expectations.

- 5) Sources from which students write. Students developed the academic literacy specific to applied linguistics not only based on information presented by the instructor but also on other important ways that they could get help to learn the ways of communication in the discipline. Among them were textbooks, other books, journal articles, websites, and comments on writing. All these sources were very important evidence to trace the footsteps of students in developing their academic writing. The researcher negotiated with the primary participants to obtain copies of their source articles, portions of the books and URLs of websites that were important sources for them in the process of accomplishing their written assignments. The ways that students used source materials were explored.

The second type of sources that the researcher collected were class handouts which included everything the instructor distributed to the students either in the class or via Blackboard: syllabus, assignments guidelines, class activity sheets, etc. These handouts were designed based on the instructor's understanding of and experience with the discourse community to facilitate the students' enculturation process. The purpose of collecting class handouts was to 1) understand the instructor's expectations and 2) examine students' understanding and performance of such expectations.

6) Comments. Comments provided by peers on drafts of papers as long as drafts and revisions were collected as one of the data sources. Peer feedback activity was conducted in Methods of Teaching ESOL class in the middle of the semester when students finished their initial drafts of statement of teaching philosophy. Once students finished their individual work, they were grouped with other two peers in the class. Group discussion forums were set up in the Blackboard site of the class with the access from group members, the instructor and the researcher. The group discussion forums had private discussion boards and send-email functions. The students were asked to post or attach their drafts in the group discussion boards, read the peer's drafts in the same group and provide feedback. The feedback was also posted in the group discussion boards. The students were encouraged to continue discussions on feedback provided by the peers. Comments from the instructor on drafts were also collected if there were any. Then students were asked to revise their drafts based on the comments given by peers and/or the instructor. The final versions of the statement of teaching philosophy paper were posted by students to the discussion board a week after the drafts were due. The purposes of collecting drafts, comments and the final versions of paper were 1) to investigate the influence of CMC as realized in a feedback activity, 2) to compare drafts with final written products to see whether participants incorporate peers' or instructor's comments into their revisions, 3) to investigate the roles of the instructor and peers in helping students develop

their academic literacy to write in the discipline, 4) to identify students' perception toward peer roles, and 5) to investigate whether primary participants could understand the instructor and peers' intentions properly.

- 7) Interviews. Interviews served as a major source of data for this study. All of the primary participants were interviewed. Before the real interview sessions, the researcher discussed with the interviewees the purpose of the interviews and made it clear that their views and thoughts were very important, so they were asked not to be selective in their explanations. Interviews were scheduled in the latter half of the semesters. Interviews were conducted solely in English because primary participants came from different countries and the only language in common between them and the researcher might be English. The interviews gave the researcher the chance to collect detailed information in the participants' own terms and have one-to-one interaction with them. The interview (see appendix 7) questions used in this study were created by the researcher of this study. All the interview items were presented to experts in the field of applied linguistics and academic writing. They all approved the interview questions with suggestions of minor changes. Revisions were made based on their advice. The interviews will be primarily semi-structured. Although 7 open-ended questions served as the guiding questions, the researcher followed the flow of the interviews based on the interviewees' answers. The researcher was the interviewer for all primary participants. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and the format was informal, that is,

the interviewees decided on the time and location of the interviews, and the one hour interview sometimes was divided and taken by primary participants in different time slots. All face-to-face interviews were audio taped for accuracy purposes in data analysis. All interviews were scheduled and conducted as planned. No one was interviewed through MSN or other messengers. Therefore, there was not need for the researcher to schedule a time with the participant to meet online. Participants of this study were asked to discuss their feelings and understandings of writing assignments, their perceptions of the use of CMC, roles of the teacher, peers, and disciplinary texts, their own goals and approaches in their discussions and writings, their reasons to take those approaches, their problems or questions they had with the use of CMC, and their perceptions of how they acquired academic literacy via technology.

The teachers for most of the courses were interviewed as well. The teachers were asked about the goals of the discussions and writing assignments, how s/he consciously communicated with students online about discussions and writing assignments, and his/her general perceptions of students' development of academic literacy in applied linguistics. These interviews (see appendix 8) were conducted face-to-face and tape recorded.

Throughout the interview sessions, cautions were taken that the interviewer did not intervene or manipulate this reporting process in any way. The main role of the interviewer was eliciting information from participants.

The interview questions were also piloted on Kim. The purpose of this pilot was to examine whether interview questions could generate the data needed in the data analysis process. The pilot of interview questions took place right after the pilot of the questionnaire with Kim in the study room of the library. The interview session was taped recorded. Since the researcher had already revised the interview questions based on the advice of the expert in the field before the pilot study, the questions were all easily understood by Kim and she provided either long or short answers to each guiding question immediately. Sometimes the answer to the guiding questions would take Kim to discuss some other issues in the process of learning academic literacy which were not clearly stated as guiding questions; the researcher followed the flow of the conversation without interrupting her. For example, when she started to talk about the role of CMC in the academic writing process, she added some discussions about her attitude toward critiquing published articles. She stated that "...critiquing published article is very challenging for me. Since it is already published, it should be perfect...". Although this speech was not directly related to the question, it was beneficial to the study because it provided an opportunity for the researcher to know more about the cultural background and previous experience of the participants which could explain certain behaviors in their academic writing performance. The audio-taped interview session was transcribed and the researcher obtained the data she wanted from interview: her academic writing process, citing behaviors and

habits, perceptions toward teacher and peers, perception of involving CMC as a part of curriculum. The pilot of the interview questions showed that the researcher could get the data she wanted and the interview questions were appropriate to be used in the real data collection process.

- 8) Discourse-based interviews. Finally, the researcher interviewed the primary participants about a sample of discussion entries and written assignments, selected for their relevance to research questions emerging from initial analysis of the written texts. The interviews followed a modified version of the discourse-based interview procedure (Odell, Goswami, & Herrington, 1983), focusing on selected discussion entries, peer or instructor responses as well as the student's texts (Prior, 1991) to explore their approaches of communication in acquiring the academic literacy in this particular class. The purpose of this discourse-based interview was to tap the tacit knowledge writers employed in producing their texts. Different parts of the participants' texts were discussed and questions were raised on issues such as content, organization, rationale, and perceptions, and interpretations of feedback from the professors and help from peers. Face-to-face interview formats were used.

The researcher conducted similar text-based interviews with the instructors as well. The researcher again followed the procedure outline by Odell, Goswami, and Herrington (1983). The interviews focused on selected instructor responses as well as the student's texts. These interviews were also conducted face-to-face.

Although data were collected from multiple sources, they were weighted differently in answering research questions. The research questions were answered mainly by data from students CMC online discussion entries, CMC online peer review feedback, students writing assignments and interview data. Other data types: observation and reflective journal, questionnaire, sources from which students referred, etc. were considered as secondary data. Their main purpose was to serve as supplemental device to help answer research questions of the study.

### Instrumentation

Instrumentations used in this study were two coding schemes. The coding scheme for language functions was developed by the researcher from the results of the pilot study. Ideas of language functions in the peer feedback studies were borrowed because although peer feedback studies were generally conducted in either first or second language composition classes rather than in the context of academic writing in the content area classes, they shared the common nature that L2 students developed their writing ability with the help from the “dialogue” with of their peers. The coding scheme for focus of attention was developed on the basis of intertextual techniques proposed by Bazerman (2004). He listed 6 categories of techniques of intertextual representation which was adopted by the researcher as the starting point of data coding. The usefulness and effectiveness of these coding schemes were tested in the pilot study.

The pilot study was conducted using the course “Introduction to Graduate Studies”. The Introduction to Graduate Studies course was designed to introduce



graduate students to the fields of applied linguistics and research in applied linguistics. The objective of this course was to help students develop an understanding of the field, an understanding of approaches and techniques of empirical research and the ability to critically evaluate research. To achieve these objectives, students had to finish the following written assignments: annotated bibliography, research critique and research proposal.

Thirteen students were enrolled in this course in fall, 2004. Among them, 3 were NNSs of English and therefore the primary subjects in the pilot study. As mentioned previously, students in this class had to finish three major written assignments: annotated bibliography, research critique and research proposal. The class met once a week for three hours. CMC was applied in the course. Students and the instructor spent the first half of the class in a computer lab twice during the semester discussing the research proposal topics they were going to investigate through the discussion board of the Blackboard site. The instructor encouraged students to carry on their discussion after the class due to the limited class time. Most students followed up their discussions. Five different online discussion forums were set up by the instructor of the course for students to discuss their assignments and other interested topics. They were: research topic, revised research topic, annotated bibliography, quantitative, qualitative and descriptive research, and research proposal. Students were also divided into four groups and discussed within the group a research presentation in the lab via Blackboard group discussion board. Although CMC was a part of the course, it was not required or planned into the curriculum. So it was not

used very intensively and consistently by the students. The researcher chose two heavily used forums - research topic and revised research topic - to test the coding schemes for intertextuality representation and techniques in the forms of language functions and focus of attention when students were engaged in academic literacy activities.

The non-native speakers' online activities were mainly observed and explored. A chunk of discussion involving NNS students were randomly chosen and coded by the researcher for the categories of language functions used in the negotiation with peers. The selected discussion entries were segmented into "idea units" which were the segments of texts that expressed the complete meaning. One idea unit could be either larger or smaller than one sentence. In the discussion, one student said: "think this is a very interesting topic. From the experiences that I have had with non-native speakers, they all say that the TV played an enormous role in helping their acquisition of English". This discussion entry was segmented into two idea units: "think this is a very interesting topic" and "From the experiences that I have had with non-native speakers, they all say that the TV played an enormous role in helping their acquisition of English". In this way, the chunk of discussion was segmented into 36 idea units. A peer was invited to segment the selected discussions into idea units after the researcher explained the concept. A high interrater reliability was reached (95%). One of the few disagreement occurred when segmenting the above mentioned sentence. Initially the peer regarded it contained three idea units, that is, "from the experiences that I have had with non-native speakers" was considered as a single idea unit. The

researcher and the coder gathered together and finally they reached the consensus that this preposition phrase does not express complete meaning.

The researcher then read through the selected discussions many times. Categories of language functions started emerging from the reading. The categories were labeled and idea units were constantly compared with each other and fit into different categories. The Results of this analysis indicated that students used 1) showing disagreement (3), 2) supporting and confirming (7), 3) questioning (1), 4) advising (2), 5) reacting (2), 6) eliciting (2), 7) critiquing (1), and 8) explaining (18) in their negotiation of academic literacy with peers (see appendix 9 for examples of each category). A another chunk of discussion entries involving NNSs as active participants was also analyzed independently using constant comparative method (described in detail below). This chunk of discussion entries served the same purpose as the previous one given that they were all devoted to the discussion of their research proposal topics. The similar discussion entries were chosen for the purpose of intrarater reliability. The same procedures were repeated in which idea units were segmented, categories were developed. Similar categories were identified, showing a high level of intrarater reliability. The same second rater was also invited to segment discussion entries into idea units and code idea units into language function categories. The interrater reliability was over 90% in each measure. The researcher and the coder had some mismatch in coding idea units into “advising” and “eliciting”. The disagreement was resolved after they gave clear working definition on each language function where they defined “advising” as giving suggestions for change” whereas

“eliciting” as interested to see more information while not containing negative opinions toward the existing information”. The coding scheme of language functions was regarded reliable based on the measures of inter and intra rater reliabilities. However, the language functions were grounded in the questions of discussion which might be different in accomplishing different disciplinary writing assignments. Therefore, emergent categories were notified in the real data analysis if there were any.

The same initial chunk of discussion from the research topic discussion forum involving some NNSs was also coded by the researcher to evaluate the categories of intertextual techniques used in their negotiation with peers. The researcher coded the idea units against the categories presented by Bazerman (2004). Whenever the researcher could not match the idea units with one of the existing categories, a new label was given to the category and added into the existing categories. The emerging categories were constantly compared with existing ones for similarities and differences. The same peer was invited again to code idea units into intertextual categories independently. The interrater reliability had reached 87%. Once the disagreement occurred, the discussion between the researcher and the coder took place until the consensus was achieved. During the coding process, both the researcher and the second coder founded that the category item “Using language and forms that seem to echo certain ways of communicating, discussions among other people, types of documents” was not applicable in the study. Instead, many students mentioned about their personal experience in their discussions which was very valuable. However, this category was not in existence in Bazerman’s techniques of

intertextual representation. After careful consideration, discussion with the second rater and faculty advisors, one category labeled “stating personal experience” was added in the coding scheme and the category “Using language and forms that seem to echo certain ways of communicating, discussions among other people, types of documents” was removed from the coding scheme. Also due to the fact that some single idea unit could be labeled as several different focus of attention, the total number of idea units representing all the categories were more than 36. The results of the coding were represented in the following table (Table 5).

Table 5. Frequency of Idea Units In Terms of Focus of Attention

Coding Categories	Number of Idea Units
Direct quotation	5
Indirect quotation	15
Mentioning of a person, document, or statements	13
Comment or evaluation on a statement, test, or otherwise invoked voice	10
Using recognizable phrasing, terminology associated with specific people or groups of people or particular documents	9
Stating personal experience	27

#### Data analysis

The various sources of data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively using different methods and schemes to arrive at a rich, contextualized description of the development of academic literacy.

## Quantitative analysis

The procedures for the quantitative analysis of the different types of data were provided below (Figure 1).

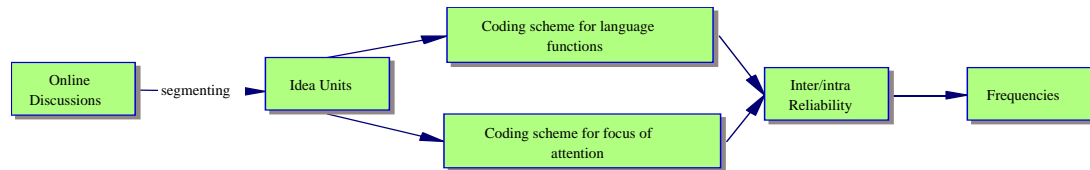


Figure 1. Procedures for Analysis of Language Functions and Focus of Attention

### Language Functions

Data on language functions were used to answer research question 1a: What language functions do NNSs use when they are engaged in online discussions?

The language functions were examined based on the coding scheme developed during the pilot study. All the online discussion entries that involve the NNS students' participation were sorted out whether or not they were their opinions or responses. These discussion entries then were segmented into "idea units". A second rater was invited to segment 10 % of the discussion entries to idea units. When disagreement regarding the limits of idea units arose, the researcher discussed with the rater until consensus was achieved. The researcher finished segmenting the remaining entries. Once the researcher finished segmenting discussion entries, each unit was examined in terms of language functions using the coding scheme developed during the pilot study. If new categories appeared in the analysis, new labels was given and added to the coding scheme after verification with the second rater. The second rater was again invited to code 10% of the data and interrater reliability was calculated.

One month after the data coding, the researcher recoded 5% of the data and compared them with the initial coding results. The purpose of this was to check the intrarater reliability reported in the study.

The answer to this research question provided a clear picture of how NNS students use language in their development of academic literacy.

### Focus of attention

Data on focus of attention were used to answer research question 1b: What do NNSs focus on in online literate activities?

Focus of attention was also analyzed quantitatively. The focus of attention was examined based on the coding scheme revised during the pilot study. The same idea units used in the language function analysis were used again in the analysis of focus of attention. Then, each unit was examined in terms of focus of attention using the coding scheme. If new categories appeared in the analysis, new labels were given and new categories were added to the coding scheme after consensus was reached between the researcher and the second rater. However, during the data analysis process, no new categories emerged. The second rater was again invited to code 10% of the data and interrater reliability was calculated (85%). The researcher also recoded 5% of raw data a month after the first coding to ensure the intrarater reliability of the coding (97%).

The answer to this research question indicated where NNS students paid most attention in their negotiation of academic literacy.

## Qualitative analysis

Although quantification of qualitative data was justified by Miles and Huberman (1994), the majority of data analysis to answer research questions in this study was qualitative. All types of data were used in the qualitative part of data analysis. These data were combined in different ways to identify the process of academic writing in a CMC environment and students' perceptions toward CMC. The final written products were explored as well.

### Constant Comparative Method

One of the major methods that was used in the qualitative analysis is the constant comparative method. Constant comparative method was first proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) but with the purpose of “prediction and explanation” instead of naturalistic inquiry, and in the sense of “deriving theory” instead of processing data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 339). Because of its inductive, generative and constructive nature, constant comparative method was later widely used in all kinds of qualitative studies for decades. The purpose for choosing this method of analysis also conformed to the theoretical framework of the study because as Goetz and LeCompte (1981) stated:

This strategy combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all social incidents observed. As social phenomena are recorded and classified, they also are compared across categories. Thus, the discovery of relationships, that is, hypothesis generation, begins with the analysis of initial observations, undergoes continuous refinement throughout the data



collection and analysis process, and continuously feeds back into the process of category coding. As events are constantly compared with previous events, new typological dimensions, as well as relationship, may be discovered. (p. 58)

Constant comparative method took into consideration both the inductive nature of the study and social and cultural nature of academic writing in the discourse community of applied linguistics.

In accordance with the constant comparative method, the researcher first transcribed the audio tapes of interviews. The transcripts were read carefully several times along with the discussion entries by NNSs. After the reading, the researcher was familiar with the content of the transcripts and themes emerged as well. Labels were given to different categories of themes. The researcher constantly compared each incident in the whole process with other incidents in the same interview as well as incidents in other interviews with different participants. The categories were continuously revised based on constant comparison if necessary.

In order to ensure the quality of the analysis and minimize researcher bias, debriefing sessions were conducted with the experienced members in the field and member checks were conducted constantly with major participants. Both formal and informal member checking were used by the researchers. By informal member checking, the researcher intended to check her understanding and interpretation of NNSs behaviors observed in the classroom and online discussions casually. This informal member check could be conducted in conversation in the hallway during the break. Formal member checking was conducted after all the data were collected and

analyzed to test the authenticity of data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions. The purpose of member checking in this study was to provide opportunities for the researcher to assess participants' intentionality, as well as give a chance to participants to correct errors in the interpretation, confirm data points, or elicit more relevant information missed in the previous data analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checks were conducted individually. An experienced peer with substantive knowledge of the inquiry and methodological familiarity was invited to conduct peer debriefing sessions with the researcher in which "the inquirer's biases were probed, meanings explored, the basis for interpretations clarified" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308). The debriefer was a person who was serious about this role and played "devil's advocate" if necessary. Debriefing activities took place several times during the data collection and analysis process. The format of debriefing was either formal or informal. For example, the researcher and debriefer conducted the debriefing sessions in a quiet environment with paper and pencil in hand and also during a lunch break where important issues were written down as well for later reference. Both member check and peer debriefing served to establish credibility of the study.

### Textual Analysis

Another important method that was applied in this study to answer parts of research questions was textual analysis. Textual analysis was one approach of rhetoric analysis. Traditionally, the characteristics of textual analysis were the text over context in the analysis (Bazerman and Prior, 2004). The application of textual analysis

on the written papers in this selected course in applied linguistics did not prioritize text over context. Instead, the analysis of text led to the discussion of social and cultural contexts of writing activities.

There were different forms of textual analysis. Some researchers focused on the application of different terminologies in their analysis (Bazerman & Prior, 2004), others focused on the text moves in their analysis (e.g. Swales, 1990). But as mentioned by Bazerman and Prior (2004), there was no one correct way to conduct textual analysis; “there is no simple recipe for it”. The best approach for textual analysis was situated in the real needs of the study to answer research questions.

The textual analysis that was applied in this study was closely related to the nature of the academic writing assignments that students were required to perform. First of all, the researcher examined students’ written assignments to determine what strategies students applied in their writing process based on what they have revealed in the interviews, what were their difficulties, and whether there was relationship between students’ online discussion and their written assignments, etc. The purpose of online discussions was to help students better understand each component of applied linguistics and facilitate their performance of their various assignments. Secondly, Textual analysis also determined whether students followed the instructor’s guidelines. Some guidelines were delivered to students face-to-face and some via CMC. Discussion of guidelines between students and the instructor mostly took place in online forum because of the limited class time. The third method of textual analysis was the textual comparison between students’ drafts and final versions of their

finished academic papers. The researcher examined whether these revisions were generated from CMC feedback provided by peers. Students revisions were compared with the comments provided by peers in the computer-mediated peer response setting and sources of changes were detected whether they were from the peer comments or other sources. Discourse-based interviews with both the instructor and primary participants explored the reasons of revisions.

The procedures for the qualitative analysis of the different types of data were provided below.

The analysis of completion of academic written tasks responded to Research Questions 2a: How does CMC influence NNSs' completion of writing tasks? The analysis was realized in the following steps (Figure 2).

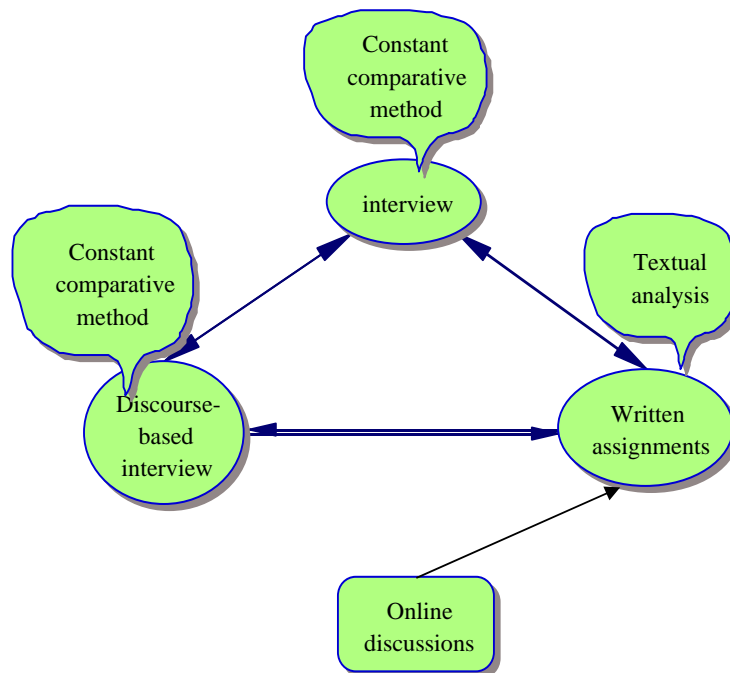


Figure 2. Procedures for Analysis of Process of Task Completion

1. The transcripts from the interview questions on NNSs' process to accomplish their written assignments in CMC environment and the how CMC helped them in any way in this process were analyzed using constant comparative methods. Patterns of interpretation of tasks, steps toward completion, sources of support, strategies applied, individual behaviors, and roles of CMC were identified and categorized.

2. Students' final written assignments were studied closely focusing on several important points: 1) how students' interpretation of the tasks was reflected in the written paper; 2) how students' steps of completion were indicated in the written paper; and 3) how written assignments could be traced back to the online discussion entries and source materials that students cited. The analysis in this step triangulated with the analysis in the step 1 and expanded it by involving the real analysis of the product other than interview statements from the participants. In this step, the focus of analysis was to investigate how intertextuality was established by participants with the help of online discussions, and how students' internalized academic literacy needed in the production of written papers.

3. Discourse-based interview transcripts on the questions about student's process of academic writing tasks, evidence of the CMC discussion usage were examined as well to further triangulate the data obtained from other sources. Constant comparative method was applied again to derive the themes that emerge during their text-based explanation on their process to complete the tasks and the roles of CMC during this process. The analysis of the discourse-based interviews served very

important roles in this sense that students were interviewed with their written products in front of them and it was assumed easier for them to recall why they did what they had done and what were the reasons behind. Besides strengthening the power of the study by triangulation, the analysis of discourse-based interview also focused on the intertextuality between Blackboard discussions and their academic writing assignments and internalization of academic literacy.

4. Finally the relationship between online discussion and the written assignments was discussed based on the evidence revealed from interviews, written assignments and discourse-based interviews. Format of intertextuality and how it helped student build their academic papers in various genres were explored.

Thick descriptions were provided to strengthen the credibility of the study. Member checks and peer debriefing sessions were conducted constantly during the whole process of data collection and data analysis.

The analysis of disciplinary writing products responded to Research Questions 2b: How does CMC influence NNSs' final written products?

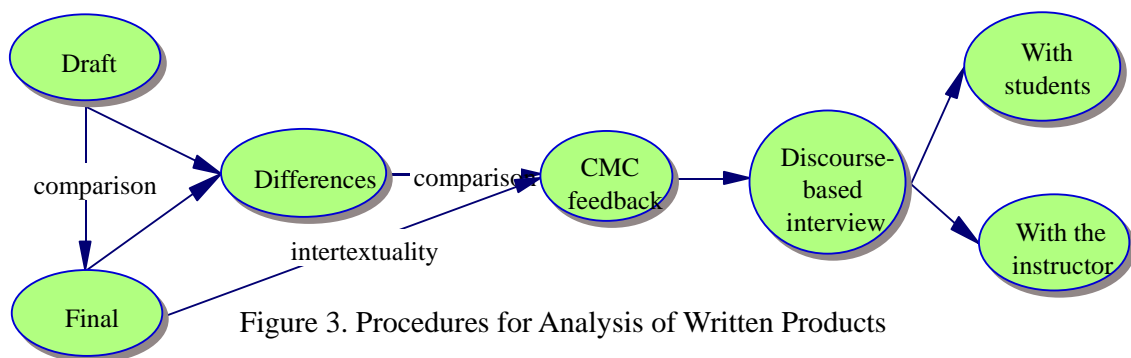


Figure 3. Procedures for Analysis of Written Products

Both textual analysis and constant comparative methods were used to answer this research question. The detailed steps were described below (figure 3):

1. NNS students' written drafts and final papers from the activities of computer-mediated peer review were collected. Each NNS student's draft and final paper were put side by side and compared sentence by sentence. Every instance of a difference between the two versions was marked. Each change was coded according to the types of changes such as addition, deletion, polishing and reshuffling (Gosden, 1995). The difference then was compared with the CMC feedback from peers. Revisions students mad were compared with CMC feedback provided by the peer and how students incorporated CMC peer feedback in their revisions was explored and described.

2. Transcripts from discourse-based interviews with primary participants were then analyzed with the purpose to find out the rationale behind the revisions students made in the papers. The reasons why students incorporated CMC feedback from peers, why they did not incorporate peers' feedback and why they made some other revision on their own were described and deeper reasons were explored.

3. Transcripts from discourse-based interview with the teacher were used in this part of data analysis too. The questions focused on the instructor's expectations, whether he/she thought peer feedback activities were beneficial and whether he/she thought incorporating peer feedback helped students produce a better paper.

The analysis of perceptions was used to respond to Research Question 3: How do NNSs perceive the role of CMC in academic writing in their disciplinary courses (figure 4)?

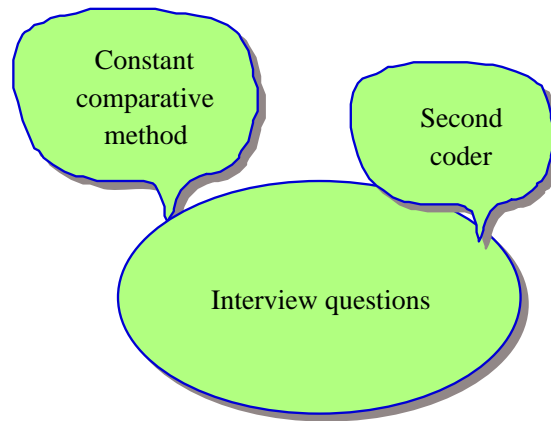


Figure 4. Procedures for Analysis of Perceptions

The transcripts from semi-structured audio-taped interviews questions on NNS students' perceptions on the purpose and role of computer-mediated communication were examined to identify primary participants' perceptions on the use and effectiveness of CMC in their disciplinary writing tasks. The researcher read through the transcripts several times, and applied constant comparative method to generate themes from the transcription. To achieve the maximum trustworthiness in the interpretation of NNS students' perceptions toward incorporating CMC into their disciplinary course, the researcher invited the second rater to code one interview transcript and label emerging themes independently. The researcher and the rater then gathered to compare the themes they had developed in their individual work and discussed the part of disagreement until the consensus was achieved. The researcher coded the rest of interview transcripts based on the themes.

In order to give the reader of a clear picture of the focus the study, the following table summarized the research questions, data collection and data analysis (Table 6).



Table 6. The Table for Research Questions, Data Collection and Data Analysis

Questions	Data	Analysis
<p>How do NNSs use CMC to negotiate academic literacy with peers?</p> <p>-What language functions do NNSs use when they are engaged in online discussions?</p> <p>-What do NNSs focus on in online literate activities?</p>	<p>Class Observation and Researchers' Reflective Journal</p> <p>Online Discussion Entries</p> <p>Interviews</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Segmenting online discussion into idea units</li> <li>• Coding idea units based on the coding schemed developed in pilot study</li> <li>• Qualitative analysis</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Segmenting online discussion into idea units</li> <li>• Coding idea units based on the coding schemed revised in pilot study</li> <li>• Qualitative analysis</li> </ul>
<p>How does CMC influence NNSs' production of academic papers in their disciplinary course?</p> <p>- How does CMC influence NNSs' process of completion of their assignments?</p> <p>- How does CMC influence the final written products?</p>	<p>Task Completion:</p> <p>Class Observation</p> <p>Online Discussion Entries</p> <p>Written Assignments Sources</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Discourse-based Interviews</p> <p>Products:</p> <p>Class Observation</p> <p>Online Discussion Entries</p> <p>Written Assignments Sources</p> <p>Comments Interviews</p> <p>Discourse-based Interviews</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Studying the transcripts from interviews</li> <li>• Examining students papers</li> <li>• Echoing students' interviews and their academic papers with discourse-based interviews</li> <li>• Detecting the intertextuality between online discussions and students assignments.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparing students' drafts and final papers for the differences</li> <li>• Coding the types and sources of changes</li> <li>• Comparing revisions with peer comments</li> <li>• Study the discourse-based interviews to analyze the rationale behind revisions</li> <li>• Study the discourse-based interviews with teachers to check improvements by revisions.</li> </ul>
<p>How do NNSs perceive the role of CMC in their development of academic writing skills to help them acquire academic literacy?</p>	<p>Class Observation</p> <p>Online Discussion Entries</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Discourse-based Interviews</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Studying audio-taped interviews on students' perceptions on CMC</li> <li>• Identifying the themes of their perceptions</li> <li>• Explaining the perceptions</li> </ul>

## Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness of qualitative case study had important status as validity and reliability in a quantitative experimental study. Yet trustworthiness in the naturalistic case study was evaluated using the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). An overview of establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research was presented in Table 7. The trustworthiness was explained in terms of the four techniques.

Table 7. Summary of Techniques for Establishing Trustworthiness

<i>Criterion Area</i>	<i>Technique</i>
Credibility	(1) activities in the field that increase the probability of high credibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) prolonged engagement</li> <li>(b) persistent observation</li> <li>(c) triangulation (sources, methods, and investigators)</li> </ul> (2) peer debriefing (3) negative case analysis (4) referential adequacy (5) member checks (in process and terminal)
Transferability	(6) thick description
Dependability	(7a) the dependability audit, including the audit trail
Confirmability	(7b) the confirmability audit, including the audit trail
All of the above	(8) the reflexive journal

Note. Adapted from Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 328

## Credibility

According to Table 1, five major techniques ensured the credibility of the study, that is, the convincingness of the study. Prolonged engagement and persistent observation were realized by the fact that the researcher was with the class for the whole semester to observe students. Students were also persistently engaged in online discussions on the various topics and written assignments. Eight data sources, classroom observation and researcher's reflective journal, questionnaires, online discussions, written assignments, sources materials, comments, interviews, and discourse-based interviews were employed in this analysis, allowing for triangulation of data sources. Although data collection and analysis were mainly qualitative, a small portion of quantitative data was collected to realize the triangulation of methods. Another researcher was invited as the second rater who helped code certain amount of data to triangulate the study in terms of the investigators and participate in the peer debriefing process. It was obvious that no negative cases appeared in the data analysis process, therefore, no actions needed to be taken. In order to assure referential adequacy, audio recording was captured during interviews to ensure the authenticity of the data used in data analysis. The interviews also provided opportunities for member checks.

## Transferability

Unlike external validity of quantitative investigation, the establishment of transferability in qualitative investigation was impossible in the strictest sense (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Yet the thick description of the data and methodologies

enabled the interested readers to reach a conclusion about whether it was possible for them to transfer the study to their specific contexts. Thick description was realized in this study by detailed information about the specifics of the investigation including the description of disciplinary writing activities, information gathered via the background questionnaire, the interviews, and application of CMC which provided the insight into the social and cultural characteristics of the disciplinary writing. The thick description allowed other researchers to judge whether the findings from this study could be transferred to their particular contexts.

#### Dependability

Dependability in qualitative studies was similar to reliability in quantitative studies. Auditing was regarded as a useful technique in which auditors examined the process and product of the research to determine whether they “fall within acceptable professional, legal and ethical limits” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 318), that is, to attest dependability. In this study, the researcher’s dissertation advisors and some selected Ph. D. student peers served the role of auditor and helped the researcher to examine the process and product of the study to ensure dependability.

#### Confirmability

Confirmability was also related with the quantitative term reliability. The major technique to establish confirmability in qualitative study was the confirmability audit in which the findings, interpretations and recommendations were supported by the data and internally coherent between each other. Again, advisors and peers helped the researcher in this process.

One last but still very important technique to establish all four above mentioned components of trustworthiness was keeping reflective journal of “self” and “method” on a daily basis, which helped to reduce researcher bias. The researcher of the study kept reflective journals to better interpret the study.

#### End of Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview and rationale for the selection of case study methodology that this study utilized to examine the internalization process of NNSs in the field of applied linguistics to the genre conventions required in the classes of the discipline. The research questions this study sought to answer had been addressed and mechanisms for analyzing the data collected had been presented. A variety of data collection procedures were discussed to allow triangulation of data.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

Participants' profiles were created to better describe and interpret the results. In this chapter, the participants' profiles were presented first. The results pertaining to each research question were then followed.

The data to create the profiles were obtained from the background questionnaires which were collected at the beginning of each course.

#### The Profiles of the Participants

Thirteen non-native speaking students were identified from all five classes that data were collected from: ESOL Curriculum and Instruction, Applied Linguistics, Language Testing in ESOL, Methods of Teaching ESOL, and Internship I. However, one student did not return the consent form which eliminated him automatically from the study, one student was in the United States since the age of five whose native languages were both English and Spanish and one student did not participate in the interviews. The remaining ten students were the participants of this case study.

The participants' profiles illustrated the diversity of their backgrounds, experience of academic literacy and views toward it. As table 87 shows, of the 10 students, 2 were on the range from 20 to 25 years of age, 2 were on the range from 26 to 30, 4 were on the range from 31 to 35, one was from 36 to 40 and one was over 40

years old. Participants were from different countries, mainly Asian countries and Latin American countries. Two participants were from Korea, one from Japan, one from China, one from Thailand, two from Brazil, one from Columbia, one from Puerto Rico and one from Germany. All participants came to the United States after puberty. Eight out of 10 students were female participants and the other two were male students, which showed the general gender ratio in the program. One student was seeking a PH. D in the Computer Science and took Applied Linguistics class as one of her cognates. One student was in her first semester of a Ph. D program in Second Language Acquisition and Instructional Technology (SLAIT) and took the Applied Linguistics class as one of the prerequisites before she could take other doctoral level classes. Two of them were taking the same course as non-degree seeking students with one expressing her intension to officially join the program later. Among the 6 students officially enrolled in the program of Applied Linguistics, 4 were in their first semesters, and 2 were toward the end of their studies.

Students diverged in terms of both the years of English study and the years of stay in the United States. The years of English study ranged from 4 to 25 years. Some students stayed in the US for 20 years, while some others just came 2 or 3 week ago at the time of investigation. 9 out of 10 students had the access to the computer with the Internet either at home or offices. One student only had the access in the library on campus. The section below was the detailed description of each participant. Nicknames were taken to replace their real name to protect their privacy.

Table 8. The Profiles of the Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Semesters at the program	Native Language	Years of English study	Years in the US	Access to the computer
Lee	Female	26-30	3	Korean	10	2	Yes
Blanca	Female	31-35	3	Spanish	15	15	Yes
Anita	Female	31-35	2	Portuguese	7	5	Yes
Pinky	Female	20-25	1	German	7	9 m	Yes
Lily	Female	31-35	1	Portuguese	7	12	Yes
Erica	Female	36-40	1	Spanish	4	8	Yes
Zhang	Female	20-25	1	Chinese	13	2 w	Yes
Solada	Female	>40	1	Thai	25	20	Yes
Park	Male	26-30	1	Korean	15	3 w	Yes
Aki	Male	31-35	1	Japanese	10	2 m	No

Lee. She was a female student from Korea and in her late twenties. Lee completed her bachelor's degree in Korea in English literature and studied for 2 semesters in the English Language Institute (ELI) before she joined the master's program. Lee was in 3 of the 5 classes that served as my data collection sites. They were ESOL Curriculum and Instruction, Language Testing in ESOL and Internship I. ESOL Curriculum and Instruction was offered in the summer 2005 and the other two were offered in the following fall semester. Lee had ten years' experience of English study, and most of them happened in Korea. Although she studied English language in the ELI for 2 semesters, she regarded that she was constantly engaged in the English language study during her 2 years stay in the United States. In her previous



degree study and in her native language, she most frequently wrote essays and practiced free writing. She thought different skills were needed for general composition and academic writing. To her, in order to perform the academic writing in the US academic institutions, a student needed to be familiar with some conventions such as APA or MLA format to perform the academic writing tasks successfully. In her word, in order to write academic paper, students needed to have special knowledge of the criteria. In her current program, she most frequently performed academic writing. She thought the academic writing was difficult because her unfamiliarity with the format and the nature of this type of writing was already a challenge for her as a foreigner. So far, she had some experience in certain types of academic writing such as research proposal, research critique, annotated bibliography, and lesson plans. Among them, she thought research proposal was the most difficult type of writing because it required her to come up with hypotheses, forced her to find the research articles that she might refer to in her writing and to plan the whole procedures carefully. She also thought enough academic writing preparation might be helpful for students like her. Lee had her own laptop at home. In terms of her computer skills, Lee indicated that she was at the intermediate level of using Blackboard, sending emails, attaching files, searching the Internet, using discussion boards, using chat, and using working processing software. In this case study, Lee was one of my major subjects and her work was closely followed for 2 semesters.

Blanca. Blanca was a female degree seeking student in her early thirties. She came from Puerto Rico 15 years ago. Like Lee, Blanca was in the three of five classes

of my investigation: ESOL Curriculum and Instruction, Language Testing in ESOL, and Internship I. My data collection from her took 2 continuous semesters from all three classes. Before she came to the United States, she had no experience of learning English. She started learning English both in school and in life since she came to the US 15 years ago. She had the television production background. Therefore, she most frequently performed script writing and news writing. She seldom did any type of writing in her native language: Spanish. In her opinion, there were not too many differences between general composition and academic writing because they both required the writer to have a clear understanding of the grammatical rules of the language. Academic writing seemed more formal to her than the general composition, yet the same rules applied to both. In her current master's program, the types of writing she did most often were research papers, lesson plans, literature reviews and so on. She considered academic writing difficult but stated that the reason to say so was because she really did not like writing. Sometimes she found academic writing arrogant. She did it only because she had to do it to get her degree. She had some experience so far on research papers, annotated bibliographies, and lesson plans which were the required course assignments for different classes. Among them, she found research papers were the most difficult type of writing because she had no patience to do the research. She stated that she liked doing not researching. Blanca admitted that more patience would be helpful for her to succeed in the academic writing. Blanca had an easy access to computers with Internet. She had rated herself as very experienced in using Blackboard, sending emails, attaching files, searching

the Internet and using word processing software. She regarded herself intermediate in using the chat and novice in using the discussion boards. In this case study, Blanca was also a major subject whose work was followed by me intensively.

Anita. She was a female Ph.D. student in her early to mid thirties in the program of computer science and engineering. At the time of the research, she had been in her doctoral program for 2 years. Besides that, she had a bachelor's and a master's degree in computer science outside the United States. Since she was a native of Brazil, Portuguese was her native language. She also mastered English and Spanish. She had 7 years of English study experience and she had been in the United States for 5 years. Applied linguistics was a brand new field for her. The reason for her to take the graduate level classes at the masters' program of applied linguistics was that she needed several cognates to complete her degree and her advisor suggested these classes to her. Anita would only do free writing such as letters, e-mails in her native language and she had extensive experience of writing research papers in her previous degrees. In her mind, the difference between general composition and academic writing was that they required different format and language. In her current program, she would most frequently write essays and research papers. Academic writing tasks were difficult for her because she thought it needed to be more formal than the colloquial language. Research papers, master's thesis, and lesson plans were the academic writing tasks she had performed and research papers stood out at the most difficult type among them. Yet she believed that more writing practice and reading published papers would be helpful in her academic writing. As a computer major, it

was not surprising that she was very experienced in using Blackboard, chat, word processor, sending emails, attaching files and searching the Internet. However, she rated herself as intermediate in using discussion boards. In this case study, she enrolled in the applied linguistics class.

Pinky. She was a young female student in her early twenties. It was her first semester in the master's program of applied linguistics and her goal was to get the degree and teach English as a foreign language in Germany. Besides her native language of German, she could also speak English and French and had some knowledge in Latin. Her English study lasted for 7 years while she was in school systems in Germany. She had been in the United States for 9 months at the time of investigation. Pinky had a bachelor's degree in Physical Education & German in Germany with the purpose of being an elementary school teacher. She did some research papers in German to complete her degree. Right now, the only circumstance that she would use German was to write letters and e-mails. In her opinion, general composition and academic writing required the same skills for some degree programs, but there were many differences in others. As for the current program that she was in, she had no idea of what kind of writing she was supposed to perform yet since she was totally new in this program. She thought academic writing was a learning process, something that needed to be learned to perform. To her, it also depended on personal preferences, that is, whether people liked to write. Although she did not know what kind of writing she was going to perform in her current program, she already had experience in performing research papers, book reviews, lesson plans and

“Diplomarbeit”. What made academic writing difficult for her were not the particular types of writing. It was any type of long papers that scared her because she had to organize ideas very well and write a big amount. She also believed in practice making a success and would like to have more experienced people to review her academic writing to help her improve. Pinky also had a convenient access to computers with high speed Internet. She rated herself very experienced in using Blackboard, sending emails, attaching files, searching the Internet and chat. Her level of using word processor was rated was intermediate. However, she admitted that she had no experience with using discussion boards at all. In this case study, data collection from Pinky took place in two classes she enrolled in the same semester: Applied Linguistics and Methods of Teaching ESOL. Pinky was also one of the major subject in this case study.

Lily. She was female student in her early thirties. The semester of the study was her first official semester in the master’s program of applied linguistics. Before she was officially accepted, she took one class in the program as non-degree seeking student. Portuguese was her native language and she also had the ability in speaking English and Italian. She learned English both in Brazil and the United State. The total length was about 7 years. She came to the United States 12 years ago. Lily had a master’s degree in library and information science and worked as a librarian in one college. In her native language of Portuguese, she had the experience of writing essays and research papers for academic purposes, but right now she only used Portuguese to write letters to family members. She believed that general composition

and academic writing required the same skills. What she did most often in the current program was research papers which to her were difficult because she felt uncomfortable and insecure with academic writing and she also made lots of errors in grammar. She did a lot of annotated bibliography. She still thought research papers were the most difficult type of writing. She thought she needed tutors to perform the academic writing tasks successfully. She had easy access to computers with Internet both at home and work. She rated herself very experienced with sending emails, attaching files, searching the Internet and using word processing software and intermediate in using the chat. However, she considered herself as a novice in using the Blackboard and discussion boards. In this case study, data collection from her took place in applied linguistics class.

Erika. She was a non-degree seeking female student in her late thirties. She intended to join the program in the semester after. Erica came from Colombia, got married to an American citizen and soon became a stay-home mom for two boys for almost eight years since her arrival. Her four years of English study took place at the Pedagogical and Technological University of Colombia. She spoke both her native language: Spanish and English at home. She obtained her bachelor's degree in English in Colombia and worked for several years as an English language teacher. In her previous degree in Colombia, she did both research papers and all types of free writing in Spanish. Right now, she most often used Spanish to reply emails from her family and friends back in Colombia. She maintained that general composition and academic writing required different skills in that academic writing needed to be

planned and it required certain rules for the writers to follow. She was a beginner in the field and she mentioned that she had already been asked to write a reflexive paper. To her, academic writing was difficult because she had to write carefully and apply certain norms. She did book reviews and essays before for the academic purposes, and essays were not easy for her. She had the experience of taking English I at this University several years ago, and she was required to write seven different types of essays. What she thought might help her succeed in academic writing was to read some useful books on how to write academic papers and practice academic writing as often as possible. She had easy access to the computer with Internet connections at home, yet she was not confident with her computer skills. She only rated herself as very experienced in sending emails. She could intermediately use word processor. However, she regarded herself as a novice in attaching files and searching the Internet and admitted that she had no experience with Blackboard, using discussion boards and chat. In this case study, she was one of the subjects enrolled in the applied linguistics class.

Zhang. Zhang was a very smart girl in her early twenties. She was first year doctoral student in the program of Second Language Acquisition and Instructional Technology. The fall semester was her first semester in the Ph.D. program. Some students accepted in that program had to take some master level classes before they took classes at a higher level when they either did not have a master's degree at hand or obtained their master's degrees in a foreign country. Zhang was one of the students to be required to take several extra master level classes because her master's degree

was from China. Besides her native language of Chinese, she also spoke English and had some knowledge in Japanese and German. All her 13 years of English study happened at schools in China at different levels. At the time of the study, she was only in the United States for 2 weeks. Zhang had a master's degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language in one of the top universities in China. Therefore, she had done a lot of research papers and term papers already. In her native language of Chinese, the only type of writing she would do now was free writing. She did not think that general composition and academic writing required the same skills because to her academic writing required some common practice while general writing did not. In the current program, she supposed that she would do a lot of research papers. She did not think that writing an academic paper was too difficult as long as she had something to report. She was most experienced with research proposals and book reviews. Comparing to other types of academic writing, she still felt that research proposal was most difficult because it required the writers' own innovative ideas. What she thought might be helpful to be successful in performing the academic writing were knowing more, practicing to write more academic papers and reading more in the field. She had an easy access to computers with Internet connections at home and on campus. She rated herself as intermediate level in sending emails, attaching files, searching the Internet, using chat and using word processing software, whereas she regarded herself as a novice in using the Blackboard and online discussion boards since this is her first semester at this university. In this case study, she was one of the subjects enrolled in the applied linguistics class.



Solada. Solada was the oldest subject in this study. She was in her forties and took the class as a non-degree seeking student. She had not decided whether to join the program, yet she had planned to take more classes in the semester after. Solada had a staff position at the university and did not plan to change her career to teaching. The reasons for her to take the classes were mainly the interests. Solada was originally from Thailand. Therefore her native language was Thai. She spoke 80% of English and 20% of Thai with her family. She had English study experience for 25 years both in Thailand and in the United States and she stayed in the United States for 20 years. Solada had two bachelor's degrees in political science and international studies respectively. She was required to do the research papers in her degree studies. She would only do the free writing now in her native language of Thai. Her understanding of good writing was closely related with grammar which was reflected in her opinion that general composition and academic writing required the same skills because both types of writing required the knowledge of grammar usage. In the current program, she assumed that she would do a lot of academic writing which was difficult for her. Up to now, she had the experience of doing proposals, book reviews and lesson plans and research proposal was rated by her as the most difficult type of academic writing. To her it was important to find a right topic which she was interested to conduct a research and put it into writing. Solada had an easy access to computers with Internet at work, school and home. She was very experienced with sending emails, attaching files, searching the Internet and using word processing software. Her level of using Blackboard and discussion boards were intermediate, and

she was a novice in using the chat. In this case study, Solada took the applied linguistics class and data collection from her took place in that class.

Park. He was a young male student in his late twenties. Park was formally accepted by the program and started his first semester in this fall. At the time of the investigation, he had only been in the United States for 3 weeks. Park was from Korea. Besides Korean, he could communicate efficiently in English and he had learned some Chinese and Japanese in Korea. Park's English study lasted for 15 years in the middle school, high school and university in Korea. Surprisingly, Park was the only student in the subjects who had a bachelor's degree in linguistics, which he thought might made things a little easier for him because he had some experience in the concepts and topics already. However, in his previous degree in Korea, he only did essays and free writing. Free writing was also the only type of writing that he used now in his native language of Korean. Although he was not quite sure, he thought there were some differences in terms of skills required by general composition and academic writing. He also guessed that he would be required to perform research and academic writing in the current master's program. He also assumed that academic writing was difficult and his reason for mentioning that was academic writing looked very formal to him. To date, he did not have any experience of performing any type of academic writing; however, he assumed that practice and review might be two most important factors for him to succeed in the future writing tasks. Park had a computer with Internet at home. He was most confident with his ability of searching the Internet. He considered himself as intermediate in sending emails, attaching files, using

discussion boards, using chat and word processor. Since he was a new comer, he did not know what Blackboard was. In this case study, Park was in the two of the classes that served as my data collection site: Applied Linguistics and Methods of Teaching ESOL. He was also one of the major subjects.

Aki. He was a male student in his early thirties from Japan. This fall semester was also his first semester in the master's program of Applied Linguistics. Besides Japanese, he was fluent in English and had some knowledge in Spanish and Italian. His English study took place in England, Thailand and Japan, which altogether lasted for 10 years. When we first met in the class, he was only in the United States for 2 months. Aki has a previous degree in American and Spanish with a focus on American studies. He did a lot of essays in that degree study. The only circumstance that he would use his native language of Japanese in writing format was free writing. He did not quite know whether general composition and academic writing required the same set of skills. And he assumed that in the new program, he would still do a lot of essays. Although he did not have experience of performing the academic writing himself, he assumed it would be difficult because he needed to read many difficult books before he wrote anything. He did have some experience of writing lesson plans which was closely related with the fact that he was working as a Japanese language teaching assistant in the world language education department to teach Japanese to undergraduate American students in this fall semester. He also thought reading a lot and writing a lot might definitely be helpful for him if he was asked to perform any type of academic writing tasks. Aki was the only person among these 10 subjects who

did not have an easy access to a computer. The only place he had to choose was the library on campus, which made things a little harder because he could not be on campus all the time and the library had fixed operating hours. Like Park, he had no idea what the Blackboard was. He also had no experience with discussion boards. He rated himself as a novice in sending emails, attaching files, searching the Internet, using the chat and word processor. Data was him was collected from the Applied Linguistics class.

### Summary of the Profiles of the Participants

The profiles of 10 participants clearly indicated that all of them had very diverse demographic and cultural background, experience and attitude toward academic writing and technology competence. First of all, they came from 8 different countries and their ages ranged from early twenties to forties. They all had different previous experience in academic settings. All of them had bachelor's degrees and some of them had master's degree or were working toward their doctoral degrees. All of them had many years of English study experience. Many of the participants in the case study were novices in the discipline of applied linguistics and had no or limited understanding and experience with the writing requirements and conventions in this field. Some of them related academic writing merely with the grammar usage. Others thought academic writing might apply certain rules and norms in the disciplines, but could not explicitly state them. Research proposals and papers were regarded by most of the participants as the most difficult type of academic writing although some of them had not had any experience in it yet. As true beginners, most of them already

knew that reading literature and practicing more types of academic writing might be helpful for them to get access to the discipline. Participants were also diverse in their computer competence. Some of them were capable of using all kinds of technologies that were listed and used to accomplish their course requirements; whereas some others were at the other extreme. They even did not know how to use Blackboard and discussion boards, the two most frequently used devices for students to perform the online portion of the courses. Luckily, the use of the technologies needed for each course was not very hard to master. During the first few sessions of the class, the instructors of some of the courses provided the detailed instruction on how to use them by illustration on laptop and projector in the classroom. All of the participants then had no problems in using computer technologies to perform their online course requirements.

Among these ten participants, four of them: Lee, Blanca, Park and Pinky were selected as the main focus of investigation due to the following reasons: Lee and Blanca were the only two continuing students among all the subjects. They were enrolled in 3 of the classes across two semesters. It's valuable for the researcher to explore the CMC influence on their academic literacy development on the continuing students, therefore, they were targeted as major participants. All the other eight participants were in the first semester in the MA program of Applied Linguistics. The major participants: Park and Pinky were identified due to the fact that they were both registered in two of the five courses of the investigation and their participation in CMC activities was regarded as high comparing to other students in the same classes.

The sections below are organized to answer the research questions of the study in a rich and meaningful way. The questions to be answered were (a) the language functions students used in their online communication, (b) the focus of attention when they were engaged in online communication, (c) their completion of academic writing tasks, (d) their products of academic writing tasks, and (e) their perceptions on the use of computers to acquire the academic literacy.

#### Profiles of the Professors

Although non-native speaking MA students were the focus of the study, some of the professors were interviewed to help the researcher get a better understanding of what students were expected to do and whether their performance, mainly in their writing, met professors' expectations. The professors involved in the study were described below.

In this MA program, two associate professors, one assistant professor and one visiting professor formed the teaching group. Sometimes, faculty from other department such as English Language Institute (ELI) would teach some of the courses. The two associate professors taught many of the core courses and occasionally some electives. The assistant professor and the visiting professor newly joined the program and each taught two classes for the semester of investigation. The classes that the researcher observed on regular basis were: ESOL Curriculum and Instruction taken in the first year of the MA program, taught by instructor A; Applied Linguistics, taken at the first semester, taught by visiting professor B; Methods of Teaching ESOL, taken also at the first semester, taught by professor C; Language Testing, taken toward the

end of the program, taught by professor D; and Internship I, taken at the semester before graduation, taught by professor E, the director of ELI. Professors C and D were the associate professors and had a lot of experience of teaching TESOL students. Visiting professor B, a Ph. D. candidate and had many years of teaching experience, was appointed as the visiting professor. The instructor A was also a Ph. D. candidate with tremendous teaching experience both in and outside the United States. His class was offered in the summer of 2005 and all the other in the fall of 2005.

The professors I interviewed included instructor A, visiting professor B and professor C. Below is the brief introduction of each and description of teaching styles. Professor D was not interviewed in order to avoid bias because professor D also served as one of the researcher's co-major professors in the dissertation study. The reason that professor E was not interviewed because he left the university immediately after the semester was over.

Professor C. She was a very experienced, energetic and hard-working professor who tenured several years ago. She arranged the seats in a circle for each class meeting and seldom lectured. Students never felt boring in her class because they were engaged in all types of hands-on, group and pair activities involving a lot of movements. As to the Methods class she was teaching, students were supposed to observe ESOL classes, teach one session of ESOL class, teach one mini-lesson on certain topics to classmates and receive feedback, write written reports on each activities and engage in online peer review activities on the statement of teaching philosophy. Professor C provided numerous handouts for each class and detailed

comments on the margin and back of each written assignment. Professor C herself was very active in the field with numerous publications and conference presentations.

Visiting professor B. She was a Ph. D. candidate working on her dissertation. She had many years of teaching experience at various levels in different locations and in different languages. Visiting professor B was appointed as the visiting professor and taught two sections of Applied Linguistics class for undergraduate and graduate groups. The class that the researcher observed and collected data from was the graduate level class. Professor B made herself available to students as much as possible and tried to involve students in both class and online discussions. A lot of group activities and peer presentations were conducted in the class. Professor B was also academically active. Besides diligently working on her dissertation, she also had some publications and conference presentations.

Instructor A. He was also a Ph. D. candidate working on his dissertation. Like professor B, instructor A had many years of teaching experience of English in several countries. The instructor A's preference of a mix of lecture and activities were clearly shown in the class he was teaching – ESOL Curriculum and Instruction. Besides the knowledge from the textbook, he was eager to let students have real world experience, that is, applying what they had learned in the real setting. This mission enabled him to make the decision that the final and the most important project of the class was to create a curriculum for an existing organization – Florida Center for Survivors of Torture. He concerned students' satisfaction a lot and changed the syllabus a few times during the short semester to meet the needs of most students.



To summarize, all the professors involved in the study were experienced teachers and enthusiastic researchers in the field of TESOL. They had distinct style of teaching, yet shared a lot of common practices. They all loved the teaching and their students. They had specific expectations from the students and would provide support to help students meet the expectations whenever necessary.

### Negotiation of Academic Literacy through CMC

Question 1. How do NNSs use computer-mediated communication (CMC) to negotiate academic literacy with peers? This question was examined through the language functions and the focus of attention of the participants' online postings which included both online discussions and online peer feedback. The data to answer this question were obtained from three sources: (a) the observation conducted both in class and in the online environment, (b) the participants' online entries posted under the discussion boards of Blackboard course management tool for each class, and (c) the participants' responses to the semi-structured interview questions on what they used the language to do and how they negotiated with peers and teachers when they were engaged in computer-mediated activities.

Data indicated that the primary language functions that participants used were 1) showing disagreement, 2) supporting and confirming, 3) questioning, 4) advising, 5) reacting, 6) eliciting, 7) critiquing and 8) explaining. These language functions were combined in different ways, depending on the topics and purposes of the online activities. Some students were constantly applying the same language functions throughout the semester, while others were using more combinations of language

functions within or across semester(s). Results also showed that the participants focused on: 1) direct quotation, 2) indirect quotation, 3) mentioning of a person, document, or statements, 4) comment or evaluation on a statement, test, or otherwise invoked voice, 5) using recognizable phrasing, terminology associated with specific people or groups of people or particular documents, and 6) stating personal experience.

The following was a description of (a) the language functions used by the participants and (b) the focus of attention of their online communication in the written format.

#### Language Functions

Information on the language functions used by the participants broadened our understanding on how they developed their academic literacy in the content area classes. Working definitions were provided for each language function category for the purpose of clarity and ease of data analysis. The definition of each language function was described below:

Showing disagreement: expressing different opinions without critiquing.

Supporting and confirming: showing agreement to the postings.

Questioning: challenging without critiquing

Advising: giving suggestions to improve.

Reacting: responding to the comments without showing emotional preference.

Eliciting: asking to provide more information.

Critiquing: showing disagreement by providing critiques.

Explaining: providing explanation.

The data on language functions were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Quantitative Analysis.

Some of the participants were registered only in one of the classes of investigation; others were in two to three courses. The number of online communication activities and students' extent of participation varied in each class.

Table 9 below detailed the number of online involvement by each participant in each class.

Table 9. Number of Online Participation by the Participants by Class

Participants	ESOL Curriculum & Instruction	Applied Linguistics	Language Testing	Methods of ESOL	Internship I	Total
Lee	3	n/a	3	n/a	5	11
Blanca	5	n/a	10	n/a	2	17
Anita	n/a	12	n/a	n/a	n/a	12
Pinky	n/a	8	n/a	7	n/a	15
Lily	n/a	5	n/a	n/a	n/a	5
Erika	n/a	9	n/a	n/a	n/a	9
Zhang	n/a	9	n/a	n/a	n/a	9
Solada	n/a	6	n/a	n/a	n/a	6
Park	n/a	7	n/a	5	n/a	12
Aki	n/a	8	n/a	n/a	n/a	8
Total	8	64	13	12	7	104

A total of 1759 idea units resulted from the segmentation of the participants' online communication five classes. Table 10 presented the number of idea units produced by the participants for each class.

Table 10. Number of Idea Units by Class

Participants	ESOL Curriculum & Instruction	Applied Linguistics	Language Testing	Methods of ESOL	Internship I	Total
Lee	56	n/a	37	n/a	91	184
Blanca	95	n/a	149	n/a	36	280
Anita	n/a	129	n/a	n/a	n/a	129
Pinky	n/a	140	n/a	116	n/a	256
Lily	n/a	109	n/a	n/a	n/a	109
Erika	n/a	113	n/a	n/a	n/a	113
Zhang	n/a	157	n/a	n/a	n/a	157
Solada	n/a	104	n/a	n/a	n/a	104
Park	n/a	175	n/a	84	n/a	259
Aki	n/a	168	n/a	n/a	n/a	168
Total	151	1095	186	200	127	1759

Each idea unit was examined in terms of language functions. Table 11 presented the types and frequencies of occurrence of language functions in the online entries produced by participants for all the classes.

Table 11. Type and Frequency of Language Functions in Online Entries

Types of Language Functions	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentage
Showing Disagreement	87	4.90%
Supporting and Confirming	257	14.61%
Questioning	138	7.80%
Advising	151	8.58%
Reacting	228	12.91%
Eliciting	45	2.56%
Critiquing	60	3.36%
Explaining	799	45.37%
Total	1759	100%

As shown in Table 11, the most frequent type of language function in the online communication provided by the non-native English speaking students in this program was explaining (45.37%). They made use of this language function to state

their views of points without being judgmental no matter they were assuming reader or writer roles. Other language functions that occurred in the students' online communication were supporting and confirming (14.61%), reacting (12.91%), advising (8.58%), questioning (7.8%), showing disagreement (4.9%), critiquing (3.36%) and eliciting (2.56%). Table 12 presented examples of each language function from the participants' online discussions.

Table 12. Examples of Language Functions

Language Function	Examples
Showing Disagreement	I believe, however, that teachers often seem to play as "teachers" itself, not as one member of learners.
Supporting and Confirming	I like your introduction.
Questioning	The only thing I was wondering is how the teacher could manage it that students are online at the same time so that a conversation takes place?
Advising	Maybe divide your SOTP more clearly in paragraphs.
Reacting	Hi, guys, I was reading your comments and started thinking about the translation of acronyms.
Eliciting	Give examples how you would do that in class.
Critiquing	Your SOTP is too general.
Explaining	And teachers should know that this kind of attitude never means teachers' authority itself over students.

#### Qualitative Analysis

The reasons behind which different language functions were applied were explored. The analysis of the transcripts of interviews with non-native participants of the study revealed that the main reason that explaining function was used most extensively was that students regarded their main roles as presenting information or explicating their stand points in their understanding of disciplinary knowledge and written tasks. What was stated by Pinky reflected this position.

I just want my teacher and my classmates know what I know and what I think. I don't know whether other people have the same thinking. I

just present my understanding of the topic. I think it is a good way to share ideas with others. In a lot of times, we have different understanding, not totally different, most of time. When they have some doubts on my understanding, if I think they are right, I will do something different. But if I think I am right or I think they may misunderstand me, I usually will try to make myself clear.

The percentage of using the explaining function was much higher than all other language functions in the coding scheme.

The next group of language functions, which was used much fewer than the explaining function, but higher than others in the coding scheme consisted of supporting and confirming and reacting. It was obtained from the analysis of interview transcripts that some non-native students were more likely to give positive comments when they assumed the reader role and they would respond to others' comments neutrally when they assumed the writer role. Pinky said:

After I posted my discussion, I will usually read others. I was always impressed with others' views and new perspective. I will reply to some of the authors if I strongly agree what they have said. But to tell the truth, sometimes, even if I am not that impressed with the posting, I will put down something like you have such a great idea, etc. especially to the classmates that I know well.

Lily said:

When other students gave me some feedback, I will really appreciate that because they spent time to read my posts, think about it and give me some feedback. So I will generally respond to their feedback. Even if they were criticizing me, I won't sow any negative feelings to them. I thought it is important to be respectful to others' opinions.

The usages of all the other language functions: advising, questioning, showing disagreement, critiquing and eliciting were all under 10 percent. The analysis of interview transcripts indicated that non-native English speaking students in the current study were reluctant to assume the role of being experts to challenge others or "tell

them what to do” (Aki), especially at the beginning stage. Most of them thought that they would easily accept or consider those functions applied to their writing without feeling offended. However, they did not think they were in the position to provide constructive feedback or critique others as stated by Solada when she was posting and responding to group members at the time she was preparing for her project for applied linguistics class.

I don't always like to see good comments because I know I still need to improve. So I like to see some students give me some advice on how to improve my ideas of papers, etc. Even if they did not agree what I have said or gave me some negative comments on my ideas, I won't be mad if it is not personal. Sure, I never see any negative personal comments. Actually, I like those comments a lot because that made me think what I can do better, whether their suggestions was good enough....No, I did not openly challenge people or give them some advice for changes. I don't think I am knowledgeable enough to do it now. I am afraid my advice is not well taken or they will fight back with me if I showed my disagreement.

Another noticeable feature of students' use of language functions was the changes of the range they applied in the online discussion activities. Lee and Park's discussion entries were taken as examples for closer analysis. Lee was in three of the five classes of investigation. When she was enrolled in the ESOL Curriculum and Instruction class in the summer, her online participation was very limited. She contributed 3 discussion entries with the total idea units of 56. Among these 56 idea units, she only used two language functions: supporting and confirming (21) and explaining (35). However, when I studied her discussion entries for the Language Testing class and especially those for Internship I, there were some changes in terms of the range of language functions used. Although her participation was still limited

with 3 and 5 entries respectively, the number of language function categories was much higher. In the internship I class, among 91 idea units of her posting, she used all eight categories of language functions although the percentage of supporting and confirming and explaining were still higher than others. Below is the comparison of her language function usage in two discussion entries at different stages of her study.

Above of all, everybody has a good point. Agreed with xx and xx, since our ultimate goal is to create a useful curriculum for the organization, we should make sure what they want whether (like xx's saying) they need a model curriculum for funding or they need a tutor-based curriculum which has been used without an organized way. I also agree that after the decision is made by the organization about the aim of creating curriculum, general information should be gathered from resource groups such as former/current tutors and administrators. As xx said, it is the better way to gather information by these instruments like interviews or meetings. (Excerpt from ESOL Curriculum & Instruction)

About your philosophy, I agree with your overall thoughts. When I read to the second paragraph, I was a little afraid that your image of a teacher could be too friendly to lead students with professionalism. However, in reading the last paragraph, I was satisfied because you skillfully balanced the roles of teachers and learners in your writing. Especially I like your expression of 'you are the teacher first, and then their friend'. I think that such recognition can be very influencing for teachers to continue to endeavor as a 'teacher'. And teachers should know that this kind of attitude never means teachers' authority itself over students. I think your writing would be much better with some specific teaching strategies like the methods of understanding learners' background or with examples about learner-centered lesson outline that can make learners active. (Excerpt from Internship I)

It could be detected, in the first excerpt, Lee overwhelmingly adopted "supporting and confirming" language functions. Everything she mentioned in that paragraph was her agreement and restatement of what others have already expressed. However, some changes could be seen in the second excerpt. Although she still used



“supporting and confirming” language function, it was confined to a much lesser extent. In this paragraph, she expressed her concerns, explained her view points, and provided advice for revision.

During the discourse-based interview, she disclosed with me that although she did not know she applied more language functions to communicate in online communication, she did feel she had more to say in the forums in the fall classes.

You know I am not very active in the discussion board. I don't know what to say. I guess you can see it because I did not put too much in it. If it is not graded, I participated very little. If it is graded, I just do what the teacher requires. But I did feel that I want to discuss on the Statement of Philosophy (Internship I class) because I wanted to read others to see what helpful information I can get from them. Also I want others to read mine to give me some suggestions to improve the quality. Comparing to other classes, I went to the discussion board pretty often in this class. I will read other people's advice on my paper to see whether I can include that in it. I will also read other people's papers and sometimes give my suggestions or ask some questions. ... I am not very comfortable doing this. I am trying...”

It seemed from Lee's description that students were more engaged in online communication when they thought that was helpful for them to perform academic papers. And only if they were more engaged, they tended to use more categories of language functions to negotiate academic literacy with their peers in their online discussion and peer review activities.

Park was a first year MA student and registered in two of the classes of investigation. Although the data from him was only spanning one semester, the trend for changes was still obvious. Like Lee, he applied fewer language functions at the beginning of the semester, while significant change could be observed in the latter half of the semester. Park was enrolled in Applied Linguistics and Methods of

Teaching ESOL classes and both of them required extensive amount of online communication. Among 175 idea units provided by Park in the Applied Linguistics class, more than two thirds was entered after mid-term exam. Like Lee, he also applied more types of language functions in his entries during the latter half of the semester. Park did not realize such difference before the researcher mentioned it to him. However, after thinking for a short moment, he gave the possible reasons behind it:

I think it is because I am more comfortable with online forums now. You know, this is my first semester and I don't even know what discussion board is before the instructor told us we need to use it. I think at the beginning, I am scared. I don't know what to put there. I could say I am only observing others at the beginning. Gradually, I am more familiar with the format and I do think this discussion is helpful for me to understand some concepts and write my papers. I feel more comfortable and I started to freely participate in the discussion. I think my contribution to the discussion is also important because although I am from another country, I may have some new perspectives on something.

Park's experience showed that technology could be intimidating at the beginning. In order to achieve the purpose of developing academic literacy through the use of computer-mediated communication, the technology had to be easily accessible and applicable for non-native students.

When the researcher mentioned to Park that he also used more language functions in the online discussion forums that were not directly related to any writing assignments in the later half of the semester than in the former, the explanation he presented was as follows.

Yes, you are right. These discussion topics are not for the papers. But you know what, I realized I really can learn something in this. I

probably can give you an example. I remember we discussed the morphology in applied linguistics class and I posted the rule of formation of past tense in Korea. I did not expect that a few people are really interested and asked me some questions and ask me to further explain it and give some examples. I started to seriously thinking after that. I did learn a whole lot on this concept. I guess I may use more language functions as you said. You know I am the expert on Korea.

The researcher and Park successfully targeted the examples Park mentioned and it was apparent from the exchange of information that scaffolding occurred in the process using language and technology as mediators which helped the participant developed the disciplinary knowledge in the field of applied linguistics. The following example contained sample questions peers asked Park and answers he gave back to peers.

When you describe the following phenomenon, "But, in Korean, there is no such exceptions as ran, thought, broke, said etc. in which the root should undergo the change of its form." Are you saying that there is no internal change to show past tense inflection for any Korean words? I think I am inferring your statement correctly but I want to be sure. Thanks for your insight and information. (Sample peer's questions)

I think you understood me correctly. When I said 'there is no exception such as thought, ran, etc....', I meant that when Korean verbs are changing into past tense, there's no change in the root of original verb, but there would be only phonological changes depending on the sound environments.

#### Example

...

In sum, I am not very sure whether there is the same example like sank, drove, ate etc. in Korean. I would say we put *at*, *eot*, or *yeot* before *da* depending on sound environments. We can talk if you want to know more. Do you think such sound changes will be much more difficult than the formula to make past tense for L2 learners? Please share your idea with me. (SamplePark's response)

I think your analysis is so great with thoughtful insights in the overall contents. Your paper provided me with new insights for Korean and English. Thanks.

By the way, I'd like to ask for your thought about the morphology.

English -ed is very simple and easy to learn in that it is added to the end of verbs, while Korean past tense indicators extremely complicated in that they are put in the middle of the verb root. In your thought, comparing two patterns of the past tense indicating, what could be the most notable features of both past tense markers when learning both languages at the same time? This is not my case. How do you explain xx's overgeneralization? (Sample Park's response)

The analysis of language function indicated that students used multiple language functions to negotiate academic papers with peers. The development of academic literacy took place in the process of such negotiation. Students used explaining functions most frequently and other functions in various degrees. It also showed that students' ability to apply language functions developed across time. By applying various language functions in online communication, non-native students were able to scaffold among peers to develop their disciplinary knowledge which was necessary for them to learn the ways of communication in the discourse community of applied linguistics and to facilitate their understanding and performance of written assignments.

#### Focus of Attention

Information on the focus of attention by the participants explored what areas non-native English speaking students focused on in the MA program of applied linguistics when they were engaged in online communication as realized in the form of online discussions and CMC peer review activities. Due to the fact that the categories of focus of attention were not mutually exclusive, one idea unit could be coded as either one or multiple categories of focus of attention. For example, the idea unit "Graves noted one must keep in mind that the boundaries of the categories are not fixed, but

permeable” was coded both as indirect quotation because what Graves stated was paraphrased and mentioning of a person because the author Graves was mentioned.

The data on focus of attention were also analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

#### Quantitative Analysis

The same total number of 1759 idea units generated from the segmentation of the participants’ online communication for language function analysis was also used as the basis of analysis for focus of attention.

Each idea unit was examined in terms of focus of attention. Table 13 presented the types and frequencies of occurrence of focus of attention in the online communication produced by participants for all the classes.

Table 13. Type and Frequency of Focus of Attention in Online Discussions

Types of Focus of Attention	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentage
Direct Quotation	137	6.64%
Indirect Quotation	324	15.70%
Mentioning of a person, document, or statements	396	19.20%
Comment or evaluation on a statement, test, or otherwise invoked voice	401	19.44%
Using recognizable phrasing, terminology associated with specific people or groups of people or particular documents	409	19.83%
Stating personal experience	396	19.20%

As shown in Table 13, students focused on multiple areas at almost the same frequency. The percentages of mentioning of a person, document, or statements

(19.20%), comment or evaluation on a statement, test, or otherwise invoked voice (19.44%), using recognizable phrasing, terminology associated with specific people or particular documents (19.83%) and stating personal experience (19.20%) were very similar. The use of indirect quotation was somewhat less (15.70%) and the use of direct quotation was minimal (6.64%). Table 14 presented examples of each focus of attention from the participants' online communication.

Table 14. Examples of Focus of Attention

Language Function	Examples
Direct Quotation	He states that “regular tool using in hominids probably evolved before vocal language”.
Indirect Quotation	All the things mentioned by Graves, the most revealing of them was that goal should be realistic.
Mentioning of a person, document, or statements	Graves noted one must keep in mind that the boundaries of the categories are not fixed, but permeable.
Comment or evaluation on a statement, test, or otherwise invoked voice	Comparing English and Portuguese, we see that English is more condensed even when no abbreviations are used.
Using recognizable phrasing, terminology associated with specific people or groups of people or particular documents	Zero derivation onomatopoeia, clipping and blends are also used in Portuguese.
Stating personal experience	In the middle school and high school, I was very poor at science classes especially in astronomy.

#### Qualitative Analysis

The most salient feature of students' focus of attention was that non-native speaking students in this study focused differently in online environment than in traditional face-to-face classrooms. None of the courses in the study was a purely distance learning class. On the other hand, four of them were with the traditional face-to-face format where Blackboard communication was an extra component. The Internship I class was also a blended course with a few meetings in the classroom.

The researcher observed both face-to-face class meetings and students' online activities. When compared with her notes of class participation to online ones, the researcher found some obvious differences. The analysis of face-to-face class notes showed that over 90% of students class participation focused on stating personal experience, while in online communication, student were engaged in various intertextual techniques as described above. Blanca's behaviors in these two environments were studied more carefully for comparison. Compared to the other participant (Lee) who was in the same class with Blanca, Blanca was much more talkative in the class discussion. The researcher took extensive class notes on the numbers and content of her class discussion. The analysis of these class notes indicated that every time when Blanca made a comment, it was always related with her personal experience. During one class session, the discussion topic was portfolio assessment. She made a comment on it by saying her experience of doing the portfolio in her previous major in media and mass communication. She explained the procedures and her feelings about it. The discussion on this topic was extended to online discussion board because the limited class time. Blanca also made a comment but applying multiple intertextual techniques besides stating personal experience.

Although portfolio assessment sounds like an ideal tool, there are many things teachers and programs must do in order to assure reliability and validity. To assure reliability program must assure to have appropriate inter-rater reliability, in the case when the portfolio are rated by more than one teacher. Also, it is important to maintain objectivity and prevent mechanical errors. Validity could be assured by '(a) demonstrating the validity of the portfolios for the purpose of making decisions about students; (b) determining how adequately the portfolios exemplify students' work, development, and abilities; (c) identifying and controlling any potential intervening variables that

might affect students' achievements; and (d) separating out which student abilities lead to which performance characteristics in what amount' (pg.665)

In the above online discussion entry, Blanca used terminology of language testing and quoted the ways to assure validity directly from the textbook, etc. She was displaying her disciplinary knowledge rather than merely stating her personal experience. The disciplinary knowledge she learned by composing this posting would strengthen her understanding of assessment to ESOL students.

It was also true that non-native students focused on more areas in the online academic communication in later stages of their study than earlier no matter the courses were offered at different semesters or within one single semester. Below is an example of difference from a student across semesters. The researcher compared Blanca's discussion entries in ESOL Curriculum and Instruction class (which was offered one semester earlier than the later) and Language Testing and the difference in the ranges of focus of attention was noticeable.

Here was one entry from ESOL Curriculum and Instruction class by Blanca.

For the discussion, let me introduce my experience in college class. In the middle and high school, I was very poor at science classes especially in astronomy. In college, I must take 'the revolution of space' class that was a required course for my graduation. I had to do some very difficult projects for me like 'observations of stars' or 'taking the pictures of moon's surface and calculating trigonometrically the accurate depth of pits' etc. Tasks were really frustrating and I was very passive in the class. However, the professor gradually made me become more self-confident. The factors that generated my activeness was not his lecture, but his teaching methodology. He always emphasized like this 'the key is not correct answers but your own thoughts based on the study and creative process itself, so I'm not very concerned about your correct answers'. Thanks to him, I could ask many question of him without any hesitation and manage to do my job. He helped me think over the matters for myself



with much joy. I could catch the things that had been uninteresting and never understandable. To me, it was magic! Incredibly I started to like astronomy! And I got an excellent grade in that class.

In this posting, Blanca focused on referring to personal experience exclusively.

It did not mean that the message conveyed by her was not valuable or important. On the contrary, she made a very good point about the teacher's role. However, it would be more convincing if she explained the teacher's role in a more professional way.

Here was one entry from Language Testing class also by Blanca.

A variety of alternative assessments should be imposed in the student-centered class because the purpose of assessment is not only for the teachers to score, but it is also for students to check the process of learning. For instance, one of alternative assessments' characteristics is, Huerta-Macias (1995) says, to provide information about both strengths and the weaknesses of students. Normally, traditional assessments have been failed to show this particular characteristic by only emphasizing the weakness based on the scores on the tests. It is true that alternative assessments haven't yet been accepted broadly because of issues of reliability and validity. I agree on Brown and Hudson, "the designers or users of alternative must take extra time and effort to validate the procedure and to show its consistency", so alternative assessments can be ensured.

It was obvious that in this example, she applied multiple intertextual techniques, such as direct and indirect quotations, using terminology, commenting and evaluating, to achieve her purpose of discussing the alternative assessment

During the discourse-based interview, she was amazed that she gradually became more professional in online discussions.

Yes, I think so too. I can see the difference. Here (pointing to the early entry) it all about me, me me. I did this, and I did that. But in this one (pointing to the later entry), I did not talk about me a lot. Instead, I used the professionals to back up what I want to say, I used all these terms 'alternative assessment, 'reliability, 'validity, and wah, I am pretty good.

When asked why she had the changes that she had seen, after a moment of thinking, the answer she gave was like this:

I guess at the beginning of using online discussion, this format, I did not think it is serious. I still think it is just talking, and I can say whatever I want to say and I don't need to be responsible for what I have said. Later, I realized my classmates are taking it seriously. In some cases, they provided really good points. I was enlightened by some of them. And I know what they said is not just something out of their imagination because they have proof of what they say. Then I am thinking I should do the same thing. The online discussion is not talking. What I put there will stay. I'd better look good too. it would be much better if I can give my classmates something from my postings.

It seemed from Blanca's description that students were really learning from online communication either by carefully preparing their own postings or by reading peers' entries with high quality. They shared and gained disciplinary knowledge specific for applied linguistics in their participation of CMC activities. The development of academic literacy developed consciously or subconsciously in the process and the result of it was that students could more or less communicate in the ways that experts used in the discourse community.

The analysis of focus of attention in the online activities indicated that participants of the study applied all the categories of techniques, whereas in the face-to-face classroom discussion, most frequently used technique was to state personal experience. The results showed that online communication provided a forum and extended opportunities for students to establish intertextuality, gain disciplinary knowledge, and develop their academic writing skills. The results also showed that students gained the capability to focus on more areas across time. The development of academic literacy happened in the process of online communication and negotiation.

## Completion of Academic Tasks

Question 2. How does CMC influence NNSs' production of academic papers in their disciplinary courses? This question consisted of two sub-questions. The first sub-question focused on how CMC influenced NNSs' completion of their assignments. The answer to this questions detailed the role of CMC on students' understanding of writing tasks at hand, the role of CMC on their writing performances, and the role of CMC on their citation and reference behaviors. The data used to answer this sub research question were from (a) class notes and researcher's reflective journal, (b) students written assignments, (c) sources from which students cited, (d) students' comments via CMC, (e) interviews and (f) discourse-based interviews. The researcher first examined the transcripts of interviews with non-native speaking students and their instructors. She then studied their written assignments to detect whether they did what they have claimed. The researcher also examined discourse-based interviews with students and instructors and intertextuality between online discussion and students' written assignments. Finally multiples themes to address the completion process of academic writing tasks were identified and each theme was presented in the section below. The second sub-question examined the role of computer-mediated communication in the products of students' academic papers? The answers to this question were explored from two aspects: the first one was how participants used the computer-mediated comments provided by either native or non-native peers in the class, and the second one was how students perceived the role of computer-mediated peer feedback in their acquisition of academic literacy. The data to respond to

participants usage of CMC were from (a) the participants' first and second drafts, (b) the feedback received from peers, (c) and the transcripts of the semi-structured and the discourse-based interviews and the data to answer their perceptions on the role of computer-mediated peer response in their acquisition of academic literacy were mainly from semi-structured interviews. The answers and analysis to the questions were presented in the section below.

Question 2a. How does CMC influence NNSs' completion of their assignments? As stated above, this research question focused on the role of CMC on the non-native speaking students' experience of understanding and performing written tasks in order to develop their academic literacy of applied linguistics. The themes that CMC had impact on were detected and the influence of CMC on each was explored.

#### CMC and Writing Tasks

Students started their journey of writing each academic paper from reading and understanding instructions of written assignments provided by professors (if there are any). Instructions conveyed important messages about the task requirements, therefore, played important roles in students' writing of academic papers. Therefore, students highly appreciated the detailed instructions. They heavily relied on the handouts with exact information on the topic, content and form of the written projects. Park just joined the program and had minimal experience of academic writing. Even if the report was not a strictly defined academic genre in applied linguistics, it still made no sense to him if no detailed guidelines were provided. Here is what he said during the interview.

“Oh, that’s very important to me. I don’t know how to write a paper without instructions. I mean, the paper that I have never had chance to write before. Even for the paper [format] that I am familiar with, I still prefer clear instructions because professors may want different things for different assignments. This is my first semester, but I already had to do many different forms of paper for three classes I registered. I only had experience of writing essays and free writing before I joined the program. So you can imagine how hard it is going to be for me to write all those papers without instructions.”

Clear and detailed instructions were welcomed by both new and continuing MA students. For the more experienced continuing students, the necessity to be guided in their writing was still obvious. Although they were more advanced in the program, they kept learning and performing the new genres in applied linguistics. The courses in this MA program were designed in the way that each class emphasized one subcomponent of applied linguistics. After students successfully completed the program, they were expected to have an overall understanding of the applied linguistics as a whole. Therefore, students constantly encountered new and repeating genres in each class. Instructions for writing tasks served as the channels for communication and negotiation between students and instructors to warrant the success of each assignment. However, tight class schedule did not allow much time for students to communicate and negotiate with their instructors in terms of instruction. Both participants and their instructors depended on computer-mediated communication for this purpose.

#### Computer-mediated Communication and Instructions

Instructions were delivered to student either on paper handout or online in Blackboard. However, the communication and negotiation of instructions were mainly

conducted in one channel: computer-mediated communication largely in the forms of emails and open forum of discussion boards. It was claimed by the participants that computer-mediated interaction provided extended opportunities for them to communicate their understanding as well as confusions to the instructions by the instructor. Computer-mediated communication was favored more by non-native English speaking students in the study because this format enabled them to have enough time to organize their thoughts and present their requests clearly and the returning messages from the instructor or more experienced peers in the same format were easy for them to retain and understand the information.

“We did not have too much time to talk about assignments in class because usually the teacher will give us assignment at the end of the class session. At that time, everyone wants to leave. I generally have more questions on the assignment when I read the instructions after class. I don’t mean I have questions for every assignment. But for those that I have questions, I will email the instructor for clarification. I usually get responses very quickly (Lee).”

Non-native participants of the study generally applied computer-mediated communication to ask for clarification and check their understanding of instructions. Very rarely, they used the forum to negotiation changes in the instruction with their instructor.

In the Methods of ESOL class, students were required to conduct observations and write reports based on them. This is the instructions given by the instructor:

1. Conduct your observation using the template prescribed by the instructor.
2. Shortly after the observation session, review your observation notes.
3. Place your name, the date of your observation, the name of the teacher, and

the class and level at the top of the page

4. Summarize your notes in narrative (descriptive step-by-step) form. Integrate into the narrative the questions and comments you noted as you were conducting the observation and any additional insights you might have as you are writing the report. (You may reference the books and other materials that have been assigned throughout the course, but there is no need to do additional research.)
5. Type and double-space your report.
6. Save it to a Word document using your last name and either OBS1 or OBS2.
7. Email your observation report within one week (7 days) of the observation to the instructor or TA. One of us will then post your observation report to Blackboard so that your classmates can benefit from your insight.

This instruction seemed clear to most of people. But some students still had some confusion. Pinky posted following messages in the online forum:

Can I ask something about this assignment? It seemed we had to record our observation step by step. Do we need to do questions or comments step by step too? I mean do I need to add some questions or comments immediately after the description of each step. What if I don't have any questions or comments for some steps? Is it ok that I included all my questions or comments at the end as well as additional insights? Thank you.

A few peers and the instructor responded to her posting in the forum. One of the responses by one of the peers was like this:

This is what I think. I think it's better to incorporate questions and comments immediately after each step is described. It will make the author think what is good about this step and what needs to be improved. If you include everything at the end, the reader may already forget what you have talked about before or you have to repeat what you have talked before. Questions and comments don't mean some negative to me. I think if you

don't have any questions or comments for any step, you may just say whatever you have. Hope this is helpful. This is just my opinion. I'd like to see what other people think.

The response by the peer was supported by a few other peers as well as the instructor. It seemed that Pinky had her confusion cleared with the help of her peers and the instructor in their computer-mediated communication, which was indicated in her last posting regarding this question.

Thank you all for your help. I think I know what to do now. I did think I could not question some of the steps the instructor did. I think they did excellent and learning did occur. I could not think of any improvement. I guess it is ok for me to describe what I have learned after steps like this. I can just very brief summarize everything at the end.

CMC was also relied on by students when they wanted to check their understanding. This was encouraged by the instructors to have students avoid major misunderstanding early on in their writing process. Some students did take advantage of CMC to confirm their understanding with their peers and instructors.

In another assignment of – Microteaching report in Methods of teaching ESOL class, the professor provided the following detailed guidelines:

Dedicate a paragraph to answering each of the following questions:

- How did you feel about your micro-teaching session?
- How do you think the students perceived you? How do you think they perceived the class overall?
- What do you believe you did well in this session? Explain why you think it went well.
- What do you believe could have gone better in this session? Explain what went “wrong.”
- In retrospect, what would you do differently if you could teach this session over again?
- How did the session reflect what you have learned in this Methods class?
- What additional comments would you like to share?

Park posted one entry in the online discussion board to check whether he could write the assignment in the way he thought would be appropriate:



The guideline for micro-teaching report is very clear. I decided to structure my paper in the order the questions are asked in the instruction. I also wanted to use these bullets as my subheadings because I don't think I need to try hard to think of something that means the same thing as those bullets. I'd rather just use them. It is ok to use questions as subheadings, right?

Several students in the class responded to his question with some different opinions. Some said it might not be appropriate; some thought although it was not commonly seen, it should be ok to use questions as subheadings; and some others really did some research and found out for Park that questions did serve as subheadings in some published articles. Based on the information provided by peers, Park did use those questions as subheadings. And he produced a paper with a good grade.

Although it was not very often, another thing CMC helped participants achieve was to negotiate changes of the instructions for some writing assignments. In the ESOL Curriculum and Instruction class, one of the components for an ESOL curriculum was objectives. The instructor gave somewhat detailed instructions on the objectives:

Considering one of the goals for the specific course that would be a part of the program: (20pts)

- Break it down into course objectives, creating at least one objective for each of Bloom's Cognitive domains (9pts)
- Discuss how these objectives contribute to fulfilling the course goal (3pts)
- Include in the discussion how you used the criteria discussed in class for creating the objectives (6pts)
- Provide your rationale for the creation of the objectives (2pts)

One of the non-native speaking students, Blanca, raised some questions on the instructions in the open forum of discussion board was supported and strengthened by some native peers in the class. Blanca's questions were:

Thinking of our audience of the curriculum, they are older, refugees, have no English and take the course to pass the citizenship test, do we need to create so many objectives to match each component of Bloom's Taxonomy? They barely come to class. I know Bloom's Taxonomy is great. But is it true that high level objectives along Bloom's Taxonomy are something too complicated for them? I think it is going to be hard for them to achieve.

Blanca's concern was quickly spread and students shared their thinking on the audience and course objectives and they all voted for a few low level objectives especially at the beginning. The discussion among students finally got attention from the instructor, who thought students' opinions were reasonable; therefore, he changed the first bullet into "Break it down into course objectives, creating several appropriate objective taking Bloom's Taxonomy into consideration." (9pts) After the change was made, it seemed it made more sense for participants to perform the task.

From the above description, it seemed that CMC played an important role to facilitate students' understanding of instructions of the course. With the help mostly from peers, they had their confusion cleared, understanding confirmed and ideas to negotiate instructions transferred to the instructor.

Rather than using emails, Park liked to put up his questions on the writing assignments in the main forum of discussion board. The discussion board function of Blackboard was used in each class for students to exchange ideas, share opinions and ask for help. A main forum was set up in some of the courses where students were encouraged to post general questions about the class and assignments for fastest help. All the students in the class were encouraged to check the main forum on regular basis to provide help to the peers in the class. The instructor was always an active

participant in the forum as well. Some students would like take the advantages of using open forum rather than email to get help from multiple sources instead of just the instructor. This was the feature that attracted Park to use open forum rather than contacting the instructor by email.

“I use main forum of the discussion board more often. I don’t want to bother my teacher with every problem. I will post my questions of the assignment in the main forum, sometimes I may get immediate response from one of my peers. I guess they are in the forum too. If they can answer my question, I don’t need to email or talk to instructor any more. Also my teacher sometimes will also post her response to my questions in the forum. I guess this is even better because it may also help others who may have the same questions. The instructor does not need to any the same question again and again for different students.”

The data from interviews with professors also revealed that professor also regarded CMC as facilitative not only in terms of helping students better understand the instructions, but also helped faculty members to reflect on their requirements.

Although it seemed faculty members had to spend extra out-of-classroom time to read and sometimes respond to student’s questions and concerns posted in the online forum, they did not consider conducting online discussion a waste of their time. To them, clear the confusion and solve the problems at early as possible would actually save them some time and efforts in the long run.

You know. I did not think so. I was thinking the same previously. But later I noticed sometimes students had discussion going without me and they made good points. Some other times, I posted some message to respond to students’ questions. You know, what I found? I found students’ had few problems in their paper. I remember before, I always had some crisis with some students’ papers and had to negotiate with them for some major changes. That took a huge amount of time from me. I guess this discussion board thing is working. At least students started thinking before they actually wrote the paper and make sure they are right on track and sought help on their problems. I definitely

see more questions from non-native speaking students in the forums than in the class. I guess they benefited a lot from doing this (Profession C).

Not only did instructors take less time to help students correct their major problems after the papers were graded, CMC also allowed instructors themselves to reflect on the instructions they gave to students. Many of them were flexible to make changes to the instructions if the problems raised by students were reasonable.

I did see some difference. Before, it's like I gave them the instructions and they will do the assignments according to the instructions. We don't talk about them quite often. At most, I will answer some questions if they have on the instructions. But right now, students talked about the instructions in the forum. And all the entries stayed there once they were entered by students. This gave me the opportunities to go over students' thoughts although it is not thoughts from one student. They are collaborated thoughts by several students. And it is easy for me to make decision whether there is really some problem with the instruction itself. I am not that kind of teacher that I did not change anything I put out. If there is a need for change, I won't hesitate to do it. I will explain it to students and give credit to them (Instructor A).

#### Section Summary

Computer-mediated online discussion could be regarded as facilitative in helping students understanding the writing tasks they had to perform, which was the prerequisite of composing a successful academic paper. Computer-mediated communication provided extended opportunities for non-native students to get involved with their immediate discourse community of their class and benefitted their development of academic literacy in this discipline through collaboration with more experienced peers. Via CMC, students had extended opportunities to collaborate with their peers or sometimes instructors to achieve their purpose of understanding the task messages and requirements from the instructors of the courses. The involvement of

CMC also reduced the number of unsuccessful papers and enabled the instructors to reflect on the messages sent to the class.

### CMC and Students' Individual Writing Activities

Performing academic writing is the most important way for students to acquire academic literacy in the discourse community. According to Casanave (2002), “academic writing consists of rule- and strategy-based practices, done in interaction with others for some kind of personal and professional gain, and that it is learned through repeated practice rather than just from a guidebook of how to play” (p. 3). With the inclusion of CMC in students' writing process, the portraits of influence of CMC on students' writing activities to perform various genres required for the discipline would illustrate whether CMC would facilitate the students' practice of the rules and strategies and understand their position and relationship to the discourse community, etc. The following section focused on the detailed introduction of the role of CMC on students' writing activities.

### CMC and Collaboration/Scaffolding

Due to the nature of some of the writing assignments and logistics of the class, group work was encouraged rather than individual one, such as needs analysis, language tests and test analysis reports. In some of these cases, students were assigned group space in the Blackboard with its own discussion board restricting the access only to group members and the instructors. Data from group discussion board showed that collaboration and scaffolding took place when students worked together with their group members to complete course projects. Students conducted various

activities to collaborate such as asking questions and providing feedback. One of them would be disclosed below:

In this activity, a group of students in the ESOL Curriculum and Instruction class with Blanca as one of the group members collaboratively worked on setting up the outline for their curriculum papers. They have already divided the task and Blanca was assigned to be responsible for the literature review part. Then they started to post their outline of their own parts under their group discussion board. The purpose of doing so was not only “to be aware of what team members’ are doing” but also to “detect problems as early as possible and correct them immediately” (Blanca). Since the whole group was writing one whole paper, the coherence between each part was very important. When Blanca first posted her outline for literature review, she had only the following:

#### Literature Review

ESOL programs

Adult ESOL Learners

Teaching of ESOL

Once this outline was posted, other group members started to give her advice on refining it. One of the peers suggested her to “be more specific on ESOL programs. There are so many ESOL programs but remember our focuses are adult immigrants who don’t have much English. It’s too broad to just say ESOL programs”. Based on the peer’s advice, Blanca changes the subtitle to Adult Migrant English Programs. This was not just changing the title, it enable her to narrow the topic down to the

relevant and manageable level. Similar advice suggesting Blanca to be more specific and closely focus on the population of study was also provided as well as suggesting her to break down the subheading into even smaller components. As a result of incorporating peers' suggestions, Blanca soon posted her revision on the outline:

#### Literature Review

##### Adult Migrant English Programs

Factors for success

Factors for failure

##### Adult ESL Learners with Special Needs

Types of Special Needs

Recommendations for Elderly Population

##### Teaching ESL to the Elderly

Common Problems

Recommandations

After this revised outline was posted, her group members were happy about the changes she made. However, some of them questioned the component she included under certain subheading. One of the group members "did not see the necessity to include a section on types of special needs. Although out there, there may be all kinds of different needs, but the most important characteristics of our population is they are the elderly. So rather than talking about various special needs, maybe it is a better idea to focus on what had been done for such population." This suggestion was supported by other members of the group and Blanca was also

convinced to further modify her outline to reflect the point made by the peer. Her 3<sup>rd</sup> revision, presented below, was taken by the group as their outline of the literature review part.

#### Literature Review

##### Adult Migrant English Programs

Factors for success

Factors for failure

##### Adult ESL Learners with Special Needs

Curriculum Strategies and Classroom Practices

Recommendations for Elderly Population

##### Teaching ESL to the Elderly

Common Problems

##### Recommandations

#### Intertextuality between Online Discussions and Written Assignments

The role of computer-mediated communication mainly in the format of online discussion on students' development of academic literacy were not only examined from students' statements during interviews, but more importantly examined in terms of its intertextuality with students' academic papers, that is, whether students had applied what they discussed in the online forums in the written assignments.

The analysis of online discussion entries and students academic papers showed that connections between online discussion and papers appeared in many of the students in the study especially when the discussion topics were closely related or



devoted to writing tasks. The intertextuality could be categorized in the following ways:

#### Direct Copy of the Discussions

Although it was not a common practice, there were a few students who did copy part of their own online discussion entries to their papers. Here are some examples:

In Solada's paper "A Comparative Study of English and Thai Languages" as the project for her Applied Linguistics class, she had the following paragraph:

Thinking of a language, it is hard to separate a written language from a spoken language even though written languages were invented about 5000 years ago. Regardless of shapes and forms and syntactic structure of sentences, all languages have a grammar, and grammars in languages are similar and equal. For instance, English and Thai languages have the same sentence structure and that is Subject – Verb – Object order. Yet, there are other features that both languages do not share. There are approximately 600 languages around the world, and learning to understand the system and structures of another language is like building a bridge across from one language to the next to understand the universal language.

This same paragraph (with a few wording changes) could be traced back to the online discussion forum specially designed for the final projects. During the discourses-based interview, Solada explained her rationale of directly copying the discussion entries to her papers.

I don't think it is inappropriate. Do you think it's ok? I thought it is the discussion is for. I feel I am preparing for my papers in the discussion. When I posted this paragraph, it seemed many other students think it is very interesting. And it made more confident in working on this topic. When I really start writing the paper, I feel this paragraph fit nicely in it. So I simply included it. I think it is a very good thing to do because it saved me a lot of time because it is already there. I think I included some of the other things in the discussion board in the paper. This works pretty good for me.

A few other students copied their discussion entries directly into their papers and regarded them as the natural components of their papers. The rationale behind such a behavior was overwhelmingly unanimous. Like Solada, they considered their writing process started once they started the discussion on the topic and everything that they input for discussion board was preparatory work for the real papers.

#### Indirect Copy of the Discussions

In most cases, students would not directly copy their discussion entries to their papers. They would either revise it after self-reflection or incorporate peers' comments for their posting.

Both of these two scenarios appeared in Blanca's part on the literature review of the needs analysis study.

When Blanca described the adjustment of refugees to the American society, she had the following paragraph in the paper.

Some of the common reactions to torture are grief, guilt, shame, anxiety, depression and post traumatic stress disorder. These and other obstacles hinder refugees' ability to successfully integrate into American society. Not only do they have to deal with their physiological and psychological problems, but also with the language barrier. During the 1980s up until 1995, refugees – especially those coming from South East Asia – “received some four to six months of ESL and work orientation classes as well as U.S. cultural orientation instruction in their native language” (Seufert, 1999). However these classes have been significantly reduced in order to focus on refugees' resettlement as quickly as possible. As a consequence, the task of offering refugees some kind of ESL training has been left in the hands of local refugee organizations such as the FSCT right here in the Tampa Bay area.

Whereas in one of the discussion forums, she had the focus more on the adaptation to the society in general.

A great many of the people in the refugee population have been exposed to both physical and emotional torture. Some of the common reactions to torture are grief, guilt, shame, anxiety, depression and post traumatic stress disorder. These and other obstacles hinder refugees' ability to successfully integrate into American society. One of the biggest tasks for them is to deal with their physiological and psychological problems. Some trauma could be healed over time, some others need professional help. Many services offered in the United States to help refugees to adjust to their new life at the beginning stage, including language help.

According to Blanca, such a modified version of discussion entries to the literature review of needs analysis was the result of self-thinking, which could be considered a type of scaffolding, that is, to collaborate with the self.

The reason that I made such a change is because when I am writing my paper on this part, I go back to the discussion board to see what I have said. It's pretty long time ago I posted it online. I could not remember everything. Once I read it again, I kind of thought my emphasis on language is too weak. You know, the focus of the study is on language training for refugee population. I don't think I need to describe their physiological and psychological trauma in detail. But I really should be more clear on the ESL services they have been receiving in the past and now. So I added the things you see in this paragraph.

The comparison of the above discussion entries and part of the academic papers and the analysis of interview transcripts showed that students tended to revise what they had composed in the online discussion boards and include the refined version into their academic papers. During the process of reflection and refinement, the development of academic literacy took place.

Also in the paper, Blanca had a paragraph on the introduction of the refugees (the target of the ESOL Curriculum). Here paragraph is cited below:

“During the 1951 United Nations (UN) convention related to the status of refugees, the term “refugee” was defined as follows:

a person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a

particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNCR), there are an estimated 17 million asylum seekers and refugees around the world. About 30% of the refugee population comes from the African continent; followed by 25% from European countries, 9% from Asia and the Pacific, and 7% from the Americas. As of 2003, the majority of refugees (86%) were referred to the United States, Canada and Australia. During 2004, the United States welcomed 52,000 refugees to its boundaries; this year, it has allotted a ceiling of 70,000 refugees (2004 Report to Congress).”

When her discussion entries for ESOL Curriculum and Instruction class were examined, the researcher found the similar entry as followed:

“I found some good resources from the website: [www.unhcr.ch](http://www.unhcr.ch). According to the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNCR), there are an estimated 17 million asylum seekers and refugees around the world. About 30% of the refugee population comes from the African continent; followed by 25% from European countries, 9% from Asia and the Pacific, and 7% from the Americas. As of 2003, the majority of refugees (86%) were referred to the United States, Canada and Australia. During 2004, the United States welcomed 52,000 refugees to its boundaries; this year, it has allotted a ceiling of 70,000 refugees (2004 Report to Congress). Hope this information is useful for you.”

Apparently, Blanca basically kept the information she found from the website in the paper. What she did differently was to add a definition of refugees. According to Blanca, this came from a question raised by some peers in the class.

“I think in my posting, I mentioned both asylum seekers and refugees. Some students replied my posting and asked me what asylum seekers are. Are they the same thing as refugees? Then I thought maybe I should give a brief introduction of the terms. Since my focus on this paper is about refugees, I provided a definition of the term. I think many people have some ideas of refugees in mind but are not really sure whether this person is regarded a refugee when they met. I think I definition is nice. So we can check against the definition to see whether the persons fall into this category.”

In this scenario, Blanca also included the revised discussion entry into her paper. What was different was that the revision was triggered by peers. Peers' questions raised the awareness of Blanca to carefully explain the key concepts of the paper to avoid confusion to the reader. It was apparent that scaffolding between Blanca and her peer enabled Blanca to present herself more professionally in her communication with her discourse community via the form of academic writing.

#### Borrowing Peers' Discussion Entries

Another type of scaffolding observed in the study of intertextuality was that students included some of their peers ideas or discussions into their papers. This happened a lot among students. An example could still be found from Blanca's literature review of needs analysis for ESOL Curriculum and Instruction class.

In her literature review, she mentioned the possible solutions and suggestions to solve the language problem for older refugee population. Here is what she said:

There are some solutions and suggestions that an organization that is dealing with the refugee population can try to implement in their ESL programs. According to Fitzgerald (1995), there are three identifying factors that relate to high levels of retention in adult ESL classes:

1. Learners who use support services provided by their programs (such as counseling, transportation, and childcare) persist longer than those who do not use these services;
2. Learners who attend day classes only tend to persist longer than those who study at night; and
3. Learners who participate in computer-assisted learning labs or show instruction includes independent study persist longer than those whose instruction is only classroom-based. (From paper)

However, when the researcher was reading the postings in the same forum, she came across a paragraph which struck her as seeing it somewhere else. After careful search and comparison, the researcher finally found it was in Blanca's paper, although

the format of presentation and the wording was a little different. Here is the posting

by one of the other peers:

Fitzgerald (1995) described three identifying factors that relate to high levels of retention in adult ESL classes: learners who use support services provided by their programs (such as counseling, transportation, and childcare) persist longer than those who do not use these services; Learners who attend day classes only tend to persist longer than those who study at night; and Learners who participate in computer-assisted learning labs or show instruction includes independent study persist longer than those whose instruction is only classroom-based. Consideration of these factors might be useful for offering ESL services. (From discussion board, not the entry by Blanca)

The rationale of borrowing peers ideas or discussion entries were explored during the discourse-based interviews. One possible explanation for such a strategy was that students found peers really raised some good points and those points fit well in the paper they were composing. Students also revealed that “all these ideas are there in the open forum. I understand open forum is a place where ideas are created, shared and incorporated if necessary. It’s fair to everybody because everyone is both provider and receiver. Posting to online discussion board and reading others’ posting is like a brainstorming session. I think it should be ok if I use other’s idea because I don’t mind others use mine (Blanca).”

### Section Summary

The messages conveyed from this section were clear. Some of the non-native speaking students in this study used the discussion board as their spring board for ideas, hints and suggestions for the papers and a platform to collaborate with peers in the class. Some of them directly used what were already there to be natural components of their written work. Through the online discussion with peers, students’

gradually learned the ways of communication in the field of applied linguistics was facilitated. Online discussion did provided students extra opportunities for scaffolding and collaboration, through which, the acquisition of academic literacy and learning of disciplinary knowledge took place.

### CMC and Citation Practices

It was widely acknowledged in the field of applied linguistics that citation was important in academic papers. In most cases, students in the MA program of applied linguistics in this study were required to provide references and citations on the papers they wrote. Although citation was covered in some course content and students were exposed to large amount of resources around them, malpractice and misunderstanding of citation was common among novice non-native speaking graduate students. With the inclusion of CMC component in the content area classes, it was important to find out the role of computer-mediated communication on students' learning of citation conventions and whether it is facilitative in students' understanding and learning the citation conventions. The following section would explore these questions in detail.

The analysis of data showed that computer-mediated communication facilitated students' citation behaviors mainly from three perspectives. First, students had the opportunity to directly ask questions on citation and references in the online forum.

Aki had some confusion regarding the citation with multiple authors. He asked the question in the discussion forum "There are three authors in the article that I want

to cite. Should I list all the names of the authors or should I just use the first author's last name and et al. I have seen people using et al. Is that the way it should be?"

The student got the answer from the response by one of the peers who replied: "If you are using the citation for the first time, you need to include the last names of everyone. However, if you are using the same citation again and again continuously, you can use the last name of the first author plus et al. format. Hope this is helpful".

The direct question and answer format enable novice students to get help from more experience peers, which allowed novice students possibly internalize the disciplinary knowledge passed upon to them by experienced peers in the discussion format and hopefully transferred to their own knowledge which could be applied by themselves or passed on to some other people.

Secondly, students were exposed with peers' postings with citation and references, where they consciously or subconsciously learned the APA style. In many cases, students treated online discussion not merely as an oral communication in the written format. But rather they treated it as a written task. Therefore, the citation and references often appeared in the postings, which was also greatly encouraged by the instructors. The message was conveyed during the interview process that inclusion of reference in the posting not only help students to practice their citation skills but also give them convenience and opportunities to learn from each other. One student's statements were cited below to illustrate this point.

I guess I learned a lot from other students in the class. When I read their postings, I will pay attention to their citation behaviors. I will think myself whether I will do the same way. If they did something special that I never did before, I will pay close attention and try to



remember how they did it. I learned how to cite materials from websites in the online discussion. If I see something suspicious or was different as the right way I thought, I can raise questions and tell them what I think the right way is. The result is sometimes, I am right which I am happy because I can help my classmate to learn and sometimes I am wrong which is ok too because I can learn from it. (Park)

The statements above from students indicated that CMC facilitated students' practices of citation. Students provided scaffolding for each other in order to conform to the proper citation conventions. The disciplinary knowledge of citation and reference was acquired by students in the process of scaffolding. Furthermore, the resource was convenient. Students did not need to make extra efforts to search for information. It was right there on Blackboard discussion board.

Thirdly, and most importantly, a lot of students' misunderstanding and malpractice of citation was discussed and corrected in the online discussion forums. Results indicated that misunderstanding and malpractice addressed in the online discussion forums included the following:

1. Students included citation in the paper only for the purpose of making papers look more professional.

This message was conveyed in the following discussion entry. When Lee's group member asked her to provide the citation for her part, she responded it the following way:

"I will cite a few authors when you put everything together. I don't think it is so hard to find some. I am sure our paper will look professional"

This entry was no doubt questioned by the peer:

“What do you mean you can find some? Did you really use them in your part? If not, we’d better not to include them.”

2. Students included citation in the paper to show they had done enough reading.

Some students in the study regarded the purpose of citation was to show they had done enough reading. Reference list at the end of the paper was like the reading list. Pinky disclosed in the discussion board that “I will create a long list with as many authors as I can find.” Her intention was stopped by her group peer saying that “I don’t think length means quality. I guess we can only cite the articles we really read and incorporated in our project. You don’t need to find other authors. What we already have is good enough.”

3. Students included mismatched citations in the paper and in the reference list. The forms of mismatched included students did not provide reference list although they cited in the paper; students had reference list without citing in the papers; or students had different sets of citations and reference lists.

One example of mismatched could be found at Sloada’s posting in online discussion board on the final project. In her posting, Solada contained a paragraph that she intended to include in her final project. At the end of the paragraph, she listed a few Internet resources such as Wikipedia. However, the question raised by her group members was what content in the

paragraph was from which resource. It was apparent that no clue was provided by Solada to connect the content and resource. Reflecting on questions made Solada take the action to correct her improper practice of citations.

4. Students paraphrased without including references

This malpractice of citations occurred frequently in students' postings and their writings. Not all of them were caught and questioned by peers. For those of the entries in the discussion board containing this malpractice found by the peers, students' awareness to cite for paraphrased content was strengthened.

Blanca's posting in discussion board on the ESOL curriculum was addressed by one of her peers in the class. The peer mentioned the content of her posting seems to be the paraphrase of one section of the textbook. However, author and textbook were not mentioned at all. Blanca admitted in the following posting that it really was the paraphrase of the textbook content and she mentioned in the interview that she "will remember to cite for the paraphrase. It is going to be embarrassed if I am caught again for not doing it. I guess she did help me to keep this in mind".

5. Students used citations which did not conform to APA or any other style.

Another common problem of citation was that students used citations that did not conform to the APA convention or any other conventions. One citation example in Park's discussion entry for the preparation of

Statement of Teaching Philosophy assignment was cited in the following paragraph:

“Education must provide the opportunities for self-fulfillment; it can at best provide a rich and challenging environment for the individual to explore, in his own way”. This is what Noam Chomsky said about education (1970, Language and Freedom). I strongly agree with this view because I believe the main role of teachers is to facilitate learning, not to direct the classroom using one-sided methodology. The ultimate goal of teaching is independent learning; the stage where learners can realize the meaning of new things without guidance from their teacher.

In this paragraph, Park cited Chomsky to strengthen his view of the role of the teachers. However, it was pointed by his peers in the discussion board that he made several mistakes. He did not provide the page number for direct quotation; he included both first and last names of the author; he included the name of the book. Park corrected his citation in the following way based on the advice from peers:

“Education must provide the opportunities for self-fulfillment; it can at best provide a rich and challenging environment for the individual to explore, in his own way” (Chomsky, 1970, p?). This is what Chomsky said about education in Language and Freedom. I strongly agree with this view because I believe the main role of teachers is to facilitate learning, not to direct the classroom using one-sided methodology. The ultimate goal of teaching is independent learning; the stage where learners can realize the meaning of new things without guidance from their teacher.”

### Section Summary

From the above description, it seemed that students were aware of the importance of citation when working with academic papers and had the intention to apply APA style properly. However, they sometimes demonstrated some inappropriate citation behaviors due to various reasons. Computer-mediated communication gave students opportunities to ask peer questions, study from peers' practice and have

many misunderstanding and malpractice in citation behaviors corrected. The scaffolding between peers enabled them to effectively learn the necessary disciplinary knowledge on citation and apply them correctly in the paper writing and show they had acquired the ability to intertextualize what they have learned with what other figures in the discourse community had claimed. Appropriate demonstration of such intertextuality showed students had made some improvement in their efforts of joining the discourse community of applied linguistics.

### Section Summary

In this section, the researcher tried to answer research question on how computer-mediated communication influenced non-native speaking students' acquisition of their academic literacy as reflected in their understanding of writing instructions, performing writing tasks and practicing of citation conventions. Scaffolding between novice student participants and more experienced peers in the form of online discussions always facilitated the learning of disciplinary knowledge and ways of communication on novice learners.

### Written Products and CMC

Question 2b. What is the role of computer-mediated communication in the products of students' academic papers? The answers to this question were explored from two aspects: the first one was how participants used the computer-mediated comments provided by either native or non-native peers in the class, and the second one was how students perceived the role of computer-mediated communication in their acquisition of academic literacy. The data to respond to the first sub-question

were from (a) the participants' first and second drafts, (b) the feedback received from peers, (c) and the transcripts of the semi-structured and the discourse-based interviews. The data to answer the second sub-question were mainly from semi-structured interviews.

#### Participants' Use and Provision of Computer-mediated Peer Feedback

Computer-mediated peer response activities were conducted in Methods of Teaching ESOL and Internship I classes. Coincidentally, they were both providing peer feedback on their Statement of Teaching Philosophy. For the participants in the Methods of Teaching ESOL class, they initiated their statement based on their learning and teaching (if they had any) experiences. For the students in the Internship I class, they revisited their statement produced early on in the program and refined it based on their intern experience. In order to determine the participants' use of feedback, textual revisions made on the initial drafts were examined as well as the rationales behind these revisions. The relationship between revisions and computer-mediated comments provided by peers was also explored.

Results indicated that most of the revisions made by the participants on the statement of teaching philosophy papers consisted of additions, deletions, polishing of language at the sentence level and reshuffling sentences. The participants mentioned they were not very satisfied with the comments provided by peers, although they also found it useful to improve the quality of the paper. Park's paper was taken as an example and studied in detail.

The statement of teaching philosophy written by Park (table 15) from the Methods of Teaching ESOL class was studied carefully. In this paper, Jin made a total of 96 textual revisions from the draft to the version he submitted to the instructor for grading. The reason to choose Park’s paper was because the other non-native speaking student in the same class did not make any revisions on her statement.

Table 16 presented the revisions made by Park on his statement of teaching philosophy. Of the 96 revisions made, 49 were polishing the language at sentence level, 35 consisted of addition of various kinds, 9 comprised deletions and 3 were reshuffling at or within sentence levels.

Table 15. Park’s Draft and Submitted Version and Types of Revision

Draft	Submitted Version	Types of Revision
<p>“Education must provide the opportunities for self-fulfillment; it can at best provide a rich and challenging environment for the individual to explore, in his own way.” This is what Noam Chomsky said about education. I strongly agree with this view because I believe the main role of teachers is not to lead the all progress with one-sided methodology, but to facilitate learning effectively. I mean the ultimate goal of teaching is the stage where learners can realize the meaning of new things even without their teacher.</p>	<p>“Education must provide the opportunities for self-fulfillment; it can at best provide a rich and challenging environment for the individual to explore, in his own way.” This is what Noam Chomsky said about education (1970, <i>Language and Freedom</i>). I strongly agree with this view because I believe the main role of teachers is to facilitate learning, not to direct the classroom using one-sided methodology. I mean the ultimate goal of teaching is independent learning; the stage where learners can realize the meaning of new things even without guidance from their teacher.</p>	<p>Addition</p> <p>Reshuffling</p> <p>Deletion</p> <p>Addition</p> <p>Deletion</p> <p>Addition</p>
<p>When driving to a certain place where we have never visited, we usually ask the direction of someone. People</p>	<p>When driving to a certain place where we have never visited, we may ask someone for directions along the way. The</p>	<p>Polishing</p> <p>Addition</p>

<p>explain how to get to the place in each style. But, the most helpful answer can be heard from the person who carefully explains as if he or she were driving. In other words, the clear explanation like ‘after passing the gas station, turn to the right’ is much easier to understand and more acceptable than the expression like ‘It is over there, right side from here.’ Although the person who knows the roads very well could make the latter explanation, it cannot help the driver much. I believe most people have experienced such situations. Education has the same characteristic.</p>	<p>people <b>providing the directions will explain how to get to the destination, each in their style and words.</b> But, the most helpful answer <b>will come</b> from the person who carefully explains as if he or she were driving. In other words, <b>clear and precise directions</b> like ‘after passing the gas station, <b>take the first right</b>’ <b>are</b> much easier to understand <b>and follow than vague explanations such as</b> ‘It is over there, <b>on the</b> right side from here.’ Although the person <b>providing directions</b> knows the roads very well, <b>their imprecise explanations may cause confusion that will not help the drive much.</b> I believe most people have experienced such situations. Education has the same characteristic.</p>	<p>Polishing  Polishing  Polishing Polishing Polishing  Polishing Addition  Polishing</p>
<p>Teachers should always consider learners’ position. They should explain contents as simply as they can, or learners can’t decide the exact direction when they meet the intersection. Teachers must explain the direction as if they themselves were driving. Remembering the first time when they got the place, they must understand learner’s feeling and predict learners’ progress with their feedback. Generally, the best teachers are experts who are well acquainted with the roads, who can explain which course is easy and safe, or who can provide very useful and easy maps (materials). However, new roads will be constructed and better courses would be explored. Therefore, teachers always should make every effort to learn new things and skills such as education with Internet. Once they find more useful course, they should introduce it to students.</p>	<p>Teachers should always consider learners <b>and their academic</b> position. They should explain content <b>materials</b> as simply <b>and precisely</b> as they can, or learners <b>may become lost.</b> Teachers must explain the direction as if they themselves were driving. Remembering the first time <b>they arrived at their destination</b>, they must <b>consider</b> learner’s feeling, <del>and</del> predict learners’ progress <b>and foster academic growth through feedback.</b> Generally, the best teachers are <b>the</b> experts who are well acquainted with the roads. <b>They help their students to navigate a safe and easy course through the content material by providing useful and easily understood maps (materials).</b> However, new roads <b>are continually being</b> constructed and <b>improved routes should always be</b> explored. Therefore, teachers <b>must</b> always <del>should</del> make every effort to</p>	<p>Addition  Addition Addition Polishing  Polishing Polishing Deletion Addition  Addition  Polishing  Polishing Polishing Deletion</p>





<p>student level and cultural background is especially important factor because this must be the first thing to be considered when teachers are planning the warm-up or jokes. As a teaching point, but, teachers should prepare much more delicious main dish with their technique than the appetizer. The lesson always should be clear and easy to understand as I stated above.</p>	<p><b>thing that teachers must consider when planning the warm-up activity or jokes is the cultural background and academic level of the L2 learners. After the interesting opening activity,</b> teachers should prepare much more delicious main dish with their technique than the appetizer <b>provided. Lessons should</b> always be clear and easy to understand as I stated above.</p>	<p>Reshuffling  Polishing  Addition Polishing</p>
<p>The learners should trust teachers' instruction without too subject evaluation of the lesson because qualified teachers are professionals in that they have already experienced almost all of the potential roads learners can pass by and they have prepared the most effective teaching method considering a variety of possibilities. Moreover, although learners can learn something without their teacher, only teachers can make learners approach the unknown world more safely and comfortably. Without teachers, learners have to consume somewhat useless time and make so many u-turns. Learners should actively contribute to the teacher's plan or strategy by asking questions or making comments when they discover something creative and valuable. This attitude can be beneficial for the teacher as well as the learners because the teacher is also one member of learners. Learners' dynamic participation can result in the complementary advancement. Teachers should be open-minded and tolerant about such learners' opinions.</p>	<p>The learners should <b>be able to</b> trust <b>a</b> teacher' instruction without <b>a critical evaluation of the lesson. Qualified</b> teachers are professionals in that they have already <b>traveled down the</b> roads that learners <b>will</b> pass and they have prepared the most effective teaching method <b>after</b> considering a variety of possibilities. Moreover, although learners can learn something without their teacher, only teachers can <b>help</b> learners approach the unknown world more safely and comfortably. Without teachers, learners <b>may</b> consume <b>valuable</b> time <b>finding their way and may have to</b> make u-turns. Learners should actively contribute to the teacher's plan or strategy by asking questions or making comments when they discover something creative and valuable. This attitude can be beneficial for the teacher as well as the learners because the teacher is also <b>a</b> member of <b>learning community. Learners' dynamic participation can result in the complementary advancement of both student and teacher knowledge.</b> Teachers should be open-minded and tolerant about <del>such</del> learners' opinions. <b>Teachers can learn valuable information from their</b></p>	<p>Polishing Polishing Polishing  Polishing Polishing  Addition  Polishing  Polishing Polishing  Addition  Deletion Addition</p>

<p>In conclusion, teachers must make contents as simple as possible with very clear and easy examples. Their professionalism should not be based on only their good knowledge. Rather, it should be more focused on the technical methodology which can lead students effectively. Also important is how to encourage students to develop their own skills for study. For this, teachers should recognize their roles as providing students with helpful and various opportunities as I said in the beginning.</p>	<p>students and adjust their teaching strategies to accommodate learner needs.</p> <p>In conclusion, teachers must present content material as simply as possible and provide very clear and easy examples. Their professionalism should not be based only on their expert knowledge. Rather, it should be more focused on the technical methodology that guides students effectively. It is also important is how to encourage students to develop their own skills for study. To accomplish this, teachers should recognize their roles as a facilitator and provide students with various helpful practice opportunities as I said in the beginning.</p>	<p>Polishing Polishing</p> <p>Reshuffling Polishing Deletion Polishing Polishing Deletion</p> <p>Polishing Addition</p> <p>Addition Addition</p>
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Table 16. Type and Frequency of Textual Revisions

Textual Revisions	Number	Frequency
Polishing	49	51.0%
Addition	35	36.5%
Deletion	9	9.4%
Reshuffling	3	3.1%

The rationale behind the revision behaviors was also explored during the discourses based interviews with Park. The reasons for the revisions were mainly from two aspects. On the one hand, he did not like the first draft very much and felt he could do a better job if more time was given. On the other hand, peers in his group gave him some advice through computer-mediated peer activity. It was clear the revisions were either self initiated or others initiated.

Although Park had two weeks' time from the writing task being assigned to being submitted to the instructor for final grading, he only had a week's time to complete

the initial draft because by the end the first week, this assignment had to be posted under Blackboard group discussion board for group members to read and provide asynchronous comments. The deadline for computer-mediated peer feedback was due in the middle of the second week and after that Park had only half a week to revise the initial draft for submission.

Park had no previous teaching experience before and he wrote this statement of teaching philosophy based on his experience of being a long term learner. Therefore, one week's time was tight for him to finish this task because as he said, he had to do some research first. So he posted his statement online for peer review at the last minute before he had a chance to revise it. It was interesting that Park found submitting this initial draft directly to the instructor unacceptable, while he was comfortable posting it online for group members to review because "it meant to be imperfect. With their (group members) help, I think I can get a better final paper. I know my teacher may look at it too. But that's ok. I think she can understand it is not perfect at this stage." There were three other members in his group and they all provided some comments for his statement. One piece of comments by one of the native peers was like this:

"I think your draft is very good. You use some excellent metaphors, especially learning as driving. Metaphors can be exceedingly difficult to handle artfully but I think you did a good job.

However, there are a few things I'd like to point out.

Although it is nice to bring your personal experience in the statement by those metaphors, I think you need to be careful about some of the wording. Phrases like "I mean" sound to colloquial. This happens in quite a few places in your paper. It would be nice if you relate to your personal experience in a professional style. Also be careful of some of the grammar points, especially the use of articles. I hope this is useful. Please let me know if you want to discuss".

Comments like this benefited Park a lot, at least in the sense that he knew the direction of modification. He knew what areas he needed to pay special attention.

“Although in the online discussion format, my native classmates cannot mark all the mistakes I have and make changes for me. I don’t think they will do it either in detail in the paper format. I did get the idea that I need to rephrase some sentences, make them sound more professional. I know I need to reduce the use of oral expressions in the papers and I know I have to be very careful in some grammatical points. To tell the truth, I was the person who really did the revisions. However, I will give my peers some credits for helping me detect some of the problems.”

However, Park expected more from the peers than he actually received.

“I know I have some problem in language. I think it is very important for native speakers to point out my superficial language problem for me. I definitely will make changes because that is the basis of a good paper. But I want more than that. I hope they can provide me some feedback and advice on the structure of the paper, on the content of the paper, and on the flow of the paper, etc. But most often, the feedback I received from my peers was not on those aspects.”

Another Statement of Teaching Philosophy under analysis was done by Lee in Internship I class. Below (table 17) was the comparison of the draft and final version of her statement. The content of the two versions were color coded. Besides black color, the rule applied to all the other colors that the same color represented the same content.

Table 17. Comparison of Draft and Final Version by Lee

Before Peer Review	After Peer Review
<p>After expending a whole semester observing a language classroom and having the opportunity to co-teach a class, I have come to conclude that the old adage “I only know that I know nothing” might truer than ever before for me. Not matter how much I think I am prepared to teach a lesson, students will find a way of taking me off-track. At first</p>	<p>It is hard for me to develop a personal teaching philosophy based on my limited experience. Nevertheless, I will try. I believe that the best way for students to learn is by allowing them to have certain amount of control of what they want to learn and how. A teacher should be able to inspire students into truly liking the subject matter of the</p>

I can become frustrated, but then I realize that each setback becomes a learning experience. I realize that there is no such thing as a perfect lesson. There are days when I am able to have a good lesson, and days when everything will be wrong. The trick to “survive” the not-so-good lesson is to be able to laugh at myself and demonstrate to the students that I am able to learn from my own mistakes.

A teacher should be able to inspire students into liking the subject matter of the class. To do so, the teacher herself should not only know the subject but also be passionate about it. At the same time, teaching is not a “pitch, you catch” proposition. In order for the successful transfer of knowledge to happen, students must be actively involved in every step of the education process. This is why I believe that the best way for students to learn is by allowing them to have certain amount of control of what they want to learn and how. It is my responsibility to learn what kind of students are they? How do they learn new information? Once this very important part is accomplished, I will put into practice various teaching approaches to help students accomplish their learning goals. The biggest problem that many young people face with education is that they are not able to see the application of the material they are learning to real life situation. It is my job as teacher to help them see the potential of what it is they have to learn.

class. To do so, the teacher herself should not only know the subject but also be passionate about it. But I am at my infancy as a would-be teacher. I think that the best thing to do for my continuing development is to observe more classroom situations and reflect on my past learning experiences. I have been thinking about some of the teachers who have positively influenced my life, and what was it about them that inspired me. My goal is to one day manage to amalgamate many of their qualities and create my personal style.

As I reflect on the things that I have accomplished in the past few years since I came to finish my education, I have come to realized that I have been involved in certain situations where I have been the teacher. During the past two years I have worked on the mass communication department. Here I have the responsibility of aiding young students with class production projects. I must admit that, due the volume of students, I have been overwhelmed at times. Sometimes they all seem to need my help at the same times. Sometimes it gets frustrating when I have explained the same concept to some students several times, and still they do not understand. Then I remember having the very same confusion and questions back when I was in that same place as they were. When students finally understand and execute a concept I have explained to them, they feel proud of their accomplishment. It is moment like those when I know why I want to be a teacher. Guiding others in the path of knowledge must be one of the most rewarding experiences on a person’s life.

At the same time, teaching is not a “pitch, you catch” proposition. In order for the successful transfer of knowledge to happen, students must be actively involved in every step of the education

	<p>process. The biggest problem that many young people face with education is that they are not able to see the application of the material they are learning to real life situation. It is my job as teacher to help them see the potential of what it is they have to learn. I must learn what kind of students are they. How do they learn new information? Once this very important part is accomplished, I will put into practice various teaching approaches to help students accomplish their learning goals.</p>
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From the comparison, the main differences between two versions were summarized as followed:

1. Lee added a paragraph to describe her experience of interning and the message conveyed was mainly unsuccessful experience
2. She reorganized her second paragraph in the draft. She kept all the components of it and distributed them differently in the final version.
3. She included a paragraph in the final version on how she came along wanting to become a teacher.

With these differences in mind, the researcher carefully studied all the comments Lee had received for her draft. There were three comments following Lee's draft. Apparently, Lee mainly followed the feedback for revision from one of them since the other two were positive comments on how they agreed her points. The constructive feedback received by Lee was like this:

“You have some valuable pieces here. It seems clear that you are thinking about how you will lead, and be a part of, your classes. That's a good place to start.

However, there are a few things that you might consider. First, you talked about your feelings of co-teaching for a semester. Does it have anything to do with your teaching philosophy? I mean it is related to

your teaching. But it seemed to me you are expressing your emotion here. I'd rather say something like your previous teaching experience, and what teaching means to you, etc. You had a lot of information in the second paragraph: the role of teacher, the role of teaching, and the challenges of teaching, etc. And each of them is pretty short. You will likely want to group some of this together and separate out other parts. I think it will be better if you elaborate a little bit more on each topic."

From the researcher's perspective by studying the papers, the writer incorporated the reader's comments into the revision; at least she intended to achieve it. This was also proved by the writer in the discourses based interview with her. Lee admitted that she tried to address each point the reader had raised. In order to respond to the point that she focused on the expression of her emotion, she deleted the paragraph on her emotional description of somewhat unsatisfactory practice co-teaching the language class, but instead, had a long paragraph on her reflection on her limited teaching experience and why she wanted to be a teacher. It was also very clear that she regrouped information contained in the draft about the role of the teacher, the role of teaching and challenges. She expanded on each topic and changed the order of presentation. She presented the role of teacher first and related was the ideal role and her current role as novice teachers. She then presented the role of the teaching and challenges and what were the possible solutions to solve the difficulty.

The above analysis focused on how students treated the computer-mediated feedback received from peers and revised their Statement of Teaching Philosophy accordingly. The following section directed the attention to the ways non-native students provide feedback to their peers.



There were three major types of feedback provided by non-native students in this activity. And amazingly, the students were persistent in the types of feedback they provided. The first type of feedback could be described as expanding, elaborating or reinforcing what the writer had stated in their statement. Lee provided four comments to different peers in Internship I class on their statement and they all belonged to this category, which could be clearly detected from the following quotes.

“Hi! Blanca! I've found a very interesting point you made in the passage "Young people face with education is that they are not be able to see the application of the material they are learning to real life situation". I sometimes myself have hard time to see the application what I've learned. I think it might be affected how I was taught in Korea and that's why it has difficulty to motivate students. Now, I'm trained myself to think further not only accepting what the knowledge is, but also applying how the knowledge uses in real life. Make more practical for them is critical in education.”

“One of the teacher roles is a motivator. As we all know, learning language seems never ending project. Nobody knows how define the mastery of language and how to learn or teach language is the most effective way. It depends on the theory you believe and the method you think it works for you. Apparently, acquiring languages are one of the tasks existed, and helping students learn languages are one of difficult jobs to do. In this reason, language teachers should be good at encouraging students because they don't see themselves as objectively as possible. The teacher, who has little bit more knowledgeable, can encourage them as brainwashing them with this phrase, "You can do it". I'm with you, xxx!”

“I totally agree with that teaching is important because it enables us to help other human beings to develop inner growth. Everyone who chooses to be a teacher has strong nature of helping people and the reward of helping people is priceless. Furthermore, the reason why we chose to taking classes in especially Applied Linguistics here is we want to know how to teach. In the future, if we could find out that one of our students has grown in a meaningful way at their own, the mission of helping people will be accomplished. ^ ^”

“Alice! I like the metaphor "house" you used in the TP. The metaphor fits perfectly in this situation. I want to mention about you try to have respect from the students, but your appearance can be worked as a disadvantage. I know that

where I'm from and where you started teaching are both Asian countries which Confucianism is one of big role in their society. It is really hard to have respect from people as a teacher. In those countries, people respect teachers more than anyone because teachers are seemed to be considered "the role model" for them. However, after you have established the respect from people, the respect is hard to break down. I guess the solution would be patient. As I just stepped one foot in teaching career, I have the same fear what people think about me as "rookey". Well... it will be matter of time and effort I make, right?"

It could be seen from the above quotes that Lee actually did not provide too much feedback on how her peers should change to make the statements better. She mainly focused on the points that struck her and made her have the motivation to expand or elaborate the points. She supported other new teachers in the similar situations as her. However, it was not clear that this kind of feedback was helpful in terms of the revision of the statement by peers. This kind of feedback worked better in a free discussion setting.

Another type of feedback which Park was a typical representative was that the feedback consisted of supporting and confirming comments to a large extent and one or two suggestions at the end. The quotes below were the comments Park gave to his peers.

“About your philosophy, I agree with your overall thoughts. When I read to the second paragraph, I was a little afraid that your image of a teacher could be too friendly to lead students with professionalism. However, in reading the last paragraph, I was satisfied because you skillfully balanced the roles of teachers and learners in your writing. Especially I liked your expression of “you are the teacher first, and then their friend”. I think that such recognition can be very influencing for teachers to continue to endeavor as a “teacher”. And teachers should know that this kind of attitude never means teachers’ authority itself over students. I think your writing would be much better with some specific teaching strategies like the methods of understanding learners’ background or with examples about learner-centered lesson outline that can make learners active.”

“In your draft, I can find many valuable and meaningful thoughts about the teacher’s role. As Michele mentioned, I especially liked the idea of “getting inside students’ heads”. I really agree that kind of ability to control the learning progress by students’ view is one of the most significant factors that can make lessons successive. I believe, however, that teachers often seem to play as “teachers” itself, not as one member of learners. When native speakers teach L2 learners, this inclination could be more serious than in other education fields because the teacher’s level of the target language has been ‘established’ while that of L2 learners is still being improved. Due to this, language teachers may often forget their positions as one of learners or may consider learners’ view somewhat less than need be. So, teachers actively should control their minds to prevent from feeling a sense of superiority which might result in low-grade lessons. They should keep sympathy for learners and make every effort to stimulate their interest. If I were you, I would flesh out the statement based on the thought about how to catch L2 learners’ thoughts effectively, what can be useful strategies to facilitate learners’ improvement, and some roles of learners with your “examples” as a learner or a teacher.”

It seemed Park followed a routine pattern in giving feedback to different people.

Basically, he stated the areas that he liked about the statements by giving specific examples or citing sentences from the statement. At the same time, he added his comments on why these points made a lot of sense. At the end of the comments, he gave some suggestions for revision. In the above examples, he advised the first writer to give specific strategies and examples and suggested the second writer flesh out the statement by a series of questions he raised. Feedback like this showed both Park’s appreciation of peers’ hard work on composing the statement of teaching philosophy and his care for his peers to produce better papers. The writer would have something to consider no matter whether they decided to take the advice.

And the third type of feedback was the one with multiple pieces of constructive advice. Pinky’s comments to both of her peers were like this:

“Good thoughts, especially your opening is a felicitous introduction.

Some things I recognized:

1) I think you need to bring more structure in your SoTP. Your thoughts are good, but it seems as if you wrote them down as they came in your mind.

What helped me to structure my SoTP was a mind map.

2) You mention your willingness and openness to learn several times: in the beginning, in the middle (workshops) and in the end (last paragraph). Maybe that is a little bit too much. You definitely should see yourself as a learner, but basically you are teaching your students. I know it is hard as you said you have not enough experiences.

3) You are talking about a wide variety of learning styles in the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph. Be more detailed: which learning styles do you prefer? Why?”

“First of all: Your statement is very readable!

Ok, now I try to be very critical as I think that helps the most.

1) I like your introduction (1<sup>st</sup> paragraph), it shows that you consider the teaching profession as very important and that you are aware of the effort a teacher should put in it, don't change that!

2) The second paragraph is good, but in my opinion it takes too long till you come to the point (“languages are important”). Also, put more personality in this paragraph, it is very general.

3) When you write about the importance of Internet in L2-classrooms and computer based lessons as motivation: Give examples how you would do that in class!

4) I like the “as a researcher as an instructor”- thing! It shows flexibility and openness, research interest and the willingness to self-reflection and self-evaluation.

Maybe divide your SoTP more clearly in paragraphs, then it is easier to read!

To sum up: My advice is to put more personality in it, your SoTP is very general. You write general paragraphs and then finish them by what you believe, but go more to detail, add examples. It is hard to picture yourself as an instructor on the basis of this SoTP, and I guess that is what the employer would like to be able to after reading that statement.”

This type of feedback was rare from a non-native speaking student. It showed her confidence in the discourse and her good intention to help people. Even if the writer might have different opinions on some of the points, the process of coming up with these constructive ideas for improvement was a very good practice for Pinky to improve her academic literacy.

To conclude, Park and some other students benefited from computer-mediated peer feedback and they incorporated peers' feedback into their revision. However, many peers probably did not know how to offer substantial feedback other than superficial grammatical or sentential problems. Training was needed to give students directions and guidelines for providing peer feedback.

#### Perceptions on the Computers for Peer Response

Peer review activities became more and more popular in writing in both first and second language. Much research revealed peer review helped students perform better in their composition tasks. However, peer review was seldom used in the academic papers for content area classes and in the format of computer-mediated communication. In this study, computer-mediated peer review activity was applied on the Statement of Teaching Philosophy assignment in the Methods of ESOL and Internship I classes. Although many students had experience of peer review in their writing classes, reviewing peers' Statement of Teaching Philosophy online was something new to them. Among 10 students for this case study, 8 new students never reviewed their peers' academic papers. The other two continuing students did this activity in their Introduction to Graduate Study class. Since this was something innovative, it was meaningful to explore how students treated the feedback provided by their peers, whether students' papers were improved after peer review and students' attitude toward this kind of activities etc. The following section was devoted on these issues.

Data used to answer the questions of the students' attitude toward the use of computer-mediated peer review mainly came from semi-structured interviews. The secondary data source for this question was the researchers' observation notes and reflective journals.

When asked their perceptions to the use of computer-mediated peer review in their development of academic literacy, the participants revealed some benefits and some drawbacks in the way computer-mediated peer review was used in this case study.

The first benefit came from the fact that it was easier for non-native students to point out the problems or concerns, or share their comments in the written format in the online setting.

Among 10 participants of the study, half of them came from Asian countries, 4 from Latin American and one from Europe. Unanimously, all the students from Asia and two ladies from Brazil preferred CMC peer review.

Lee described her feeling of providing feedback in the written format versus oral conference in the following:

“It’s hard for me to say other’s paper is not good. Even if I think the paper is good I feel if I ask questions on the paper, maybe it shows that I don’t think the paper is good enough. I am afraid the writer will be upset. If I talk to the person, I usually will say your paper is very good. I will hide it even if I have some doubts, especially when my peer is an American student. Who am I to say something to their papers? But I am ok the other way round. I think the feedbacks my American students gave me are usually very helpful for my paper. This time, we did not need to provide feedback to my peer’s paper fact-to-face. I think it is much easier for me. I don’t know. I just feel it easier if they did not see my face and hear my words from my mouth. I feel they will not take anything personally in this format. I feel more freely to give

my comments and I can take time to organize my thoughts to present my comments in a reasonable way.”

Park’s experience and feelings toward the online peer review was also typical for non-native students.

“I had peer review experience before. I remember I sat down with an American student and provided feedback for each other’s paper. That was not a very good experience. I had hard time to express some of my questions. You know, my English is not good enough to say anything I want to say. And he also had some hard time to understand my questions. Sometimes, I ask this, and he answers different questions. I don’t think that peer review is very effective. It is different this time. I can avoid my weak area. I don’t need to speak out my thoughts. I can put down in words. I felt it is more effective. I don’t need to go back and forth, just talking about one thing.”

These are the benefits of online peer review expressed from the perspective of the reader of the paper. The writer of the paper also benefited for the similar reasons.

“My English is not very good and I cannot remember everything people have told me if they are speaking English. It was always like I seemed to understand what the American students told me when we were together, but I can’t remember what they have said to me when we separated and I had to work on the paper on my own. I tried to take some notes, but I found I will either miss what they said or did not take what they said in the notes. It’s a little frustrating sometimes. I can benefit more from this format (online peer review) because I don’t need to worry whether I can take down everything from my peer. Everything is there and I won’t miss anything. It is much easier for me when I revise my paper.” (Park)

The second benefit came from the fact that the written feedback stayed in the discussion board and could be revisited by the students any time during the semester. One of the biggest differences between oral and written communication was that oral communication disappeared right after it was produced while written communication lasted. Online peer review in this particular setting was oral feedback in the written format, which combined the advantages of oral and written communication. Many

non-native speaking students in this study benefited from the features of computer-mediated peer review.

Blanca mentioned during the interview that she always got back to the feedback provided by the peers by logging to Blackboard. She did not need to specially save it to some place and she could keep the process going if she wanted.

“I think it is convenient. It’s inside the Blackboard and I can access to it anytime I want. You know, I may not start revising when the feedback is provided, I may wait for a few days. I may not finish revising one time. I need to do the work slowly to make sure the quality is good enough. The feedback is always there. I may open the file whenever I need. If I have any questions about the feedback, it’s easier for me to ask by posting another message. The answers to my questions will also be saved in the discussion board. It’s very easy for me to keep track of everything. Whenever I need to revise my paper, I just need to get to one place and everything related will be all together. This saved me a lot of time and energy. I am not very organized and I think this format helped me to organize things very well.” (Blanca)

However, nobody regarded online peer review perfect in helping them working and modifying their papers.

One of the drawbacks was related with the nature of online discussion where the communications between two or more parties were possibly delayed or stopped. Unlike face-to-face oral peer review where communication is generally continuous, online communication, in this case asynchronous communication was conducted without two or more parties being present at the same time. It was hard for all the related parties were online at the same time except it was predetermined. In most cases, one student worked individually and posted the feedback to others’ papers and left the forum. The peer whose paper was commented logged in sometime later and read the postings for his own paper and provided comments for others’. Since they



would not be online simultaneous, sometimes, it took a long time for the questions asked to be answered and in other times, the questions asked were totally ignored.

“I posted my paper many days before the deadline. I was hoping that my peer can read my paper as soon as possible and give me some feedback, so that I can revise. But once the paper is done and posted, it was out of my control. I cannot force my peer to read it and give me feedback. I can only gently remind him it is already posted. You know what. I got the feedback only a couple days before the paper is due. I did not have too much time left to give a good revision on my paper although I thought his comments are good to consider.” (Pinky)

“I had some bad moments in the activities. When I read the feedback provided by the peers, I had something I don’t understand. So I posted a follow up message to ask for clarification. But I never got anything back. I don’t know why. Maybe he forgot to answer me or maybe he did not know the answer himself. Anyway, I had to ignore that point. I am thinking if it is a face-to-face discussion, this will not happen. He should give me something no matter it is reasonable or not.” (Park)

Another drawback was that written peer feedback could not replace face-to-face peer review in the sense that not everything could be conveyed in the written format. They felt they still needed the opportunities to discuss the papers.

Pinky was one of the students who pointed out the need for oral language in peer response. She thought it was easier to discuss the peers’ papers orally than in written language. She admitted the advantage of written feedback because of its convenience for organizing her thoughts and to help her keep track of all the ideas from her peers and the ones she wanted to give to her peers. However, she could say more if she had the opportunities to sit down with the person or even talking to the person through the phone conversation. “I don’t think these bulleted feedback covers all the things I want to say to my peers”. In the interview, Pinky talked about the importance of oral communication in helping her to improve her papers.

“This format (online written peer review) is good. But I don’t think it can replace oral communication. I mean, we don’t need to choose one over the other, saying one is better. Nothing is perfect. Why don’t we combine them to make it work best. What I am saying is that oral communication on the papers is still necessary because even if you spent time to write an extensive list of comments, you still cannot cover everything. And sometimes, the ideas will come out while you are discussing something else. The worst time is when I feel the paper has too many problems. How can I write down every single problem I feel the paper has? There is no way I can do that. If we have both face-to-face meeting and online peer feedback session, I can talk about some minor problems and write down some major problems. Anyway, I just feel talking to each other is a step that we should not miss.”  
(Pinky)

Lily was another student that referred to the necessity of oral communication.

She perceived that oral communication was efficient and fast. In the interview session,

Lily said:

“There are some questions I need immediate answer. If I am just waiting for my peers’ written reply in the discussion board, who knows how long I can wait. I don’t like this kind of feeling. It influenced my progress. I want to finish revising my paper as soon as possible once I started. Therefore, I prefer to call my peer if I cannot get immediate feedback. I think I called my peer several times to revise this paper. She called me too. It’s very helpful to clarify something that is not clearly expressed in the posting. Certainly, I talked with her on the paper too when we met in the class. But I called her more because I tended to contact her when I was working on the paper out of the class.”

#### End of Section Summary

The use of computers in the peer review activities on academic papers was welcomed by most of the students in the study. Computer-mediated communication was considered beneficial by the participants because it could help non-native speakers avoid any possible disadvantages to the successful revision of the paper due to their language limitations and was easier for them to keep track of the changes and

organize their ideas. The written feedback was revisited more or less by students in their revision process and the inclusion of feedback could be traced in the revised papers. Students valued the potential of improving their academic literacy with the help of written feedback. However, they still felt the necessity of oral communication in the computer-mediated peer response.

### Perceptions on Computer-mediated Communication

Question 3. How do nonnative students perceive the role of computer-mediated communication in their acquisition of academic literacy? The data used to answer this research questions were mainly from (a) class notes and the researcher's reflective journal and (b) interviews.

Computer-mediated communication mainly in the form of online discussion was involved in each class of investigation. Students in this study were submerged in all kinds of online discussion questions related with the course contents and their writing assignments. In this section, students' perceptions on the role of CMC in helping them acquire academic literacy were explored in detail.

During the interview with each participant, students share their likes and dislikes of CMC in their content area classes. Constant comparative methods were used to analyze the interview data and themes were detected in terms of their perceptions. The results were presented as followed:

Most participants in the study perceived CMC helped them produce longer discussions in online environment than in the class. Some of them also stated that CMC enabled them to provide discussions with higher quality.

“I think online discussion is better for me. In the class, usually I did not get chance to speak. Even when I get chance to speak, it’s going to be very brief. Sometimes I feel I am not prepared to make long comments in class. I have to prepare before I say anything. And once I feel I am ready, the teacher has already moved to the next topic. Sometimes I will miss the teachers’ lecture if I am still thinking about the previous topic. I think it is a good idea to continue discussions in the bulletin board after class because I don’t have the time pressure. I can take my time and write my opinions and ask questions if I have. Although comparing to other students in the class, especially those native speakers, my postings are still short. But it is much longer than the comments I ever provided in the class. In most of the class time, I think I am very quiet. It does not mean that I am not thinking. It’s just I did not get chance to share my thinking with others.” (Lee)

"In the class discussion, I usually only will talk about my personal experience if I have the chance to speak in the class. That’s the only thing always in my mind and I can talk about it anytime. Once we were talking about the teaching methods in class. I shared with the class my memory of one of my English teacher when I was in middle school in my home country. One thing that she will do at the beginning of each class is the dictation. She will read the vocabulary learned from the lessons in Chinese and we are supposed to write them down in English. She will also read some sentences in Chinese and we need to translate them in English. This left me very deep impressions and I will never forget about it. However, I just talked about my experience and did not relate it to any of the teaching methods we discussed in the class. Later in online discussion, I gave some thoughts on this. I realized my teacher is actually still using grammar-translation methods in her teaching. I did not see the problem of this method, but I think there is some problem in teaching if this method is the only method and used everyday. I combined my thoughts and my experience and post it into the discussion board. I felt it is much better than only talking about my experience.” (Zhang)

It was also perceived by students they participated more often in online discussion than in classroom discussion. All 10 students in the study participated in online discussions, whereas, some of them seldom participated in class discussion. Park did not speak much in the 16 class sessions of applied linguistics class except that he was assigned to present to the whole class or discuss within the groups. However, in online discussions, he tended to provide long and thoughtful entries.

Compared to his zero participation in Applied Linguistics, he posted at least twice for five of the online discussion questions throughout the whole semester. Here was the explanation from him.

“I am new in this program and still at the learning stage of English. Sometimes I am not very confident speaking in the class. There are almost 30 students in the class (Applied Linguistics). Class time is so limited and I don't think I have any chance to speak in the class. This may be the reason why you saw I am always quiet. Online discussion is certainly different. I kind of find a place where I can also state my opinions. My classmate will not see me stutter and I have more time to think and write. I feel I am more confident posting messages in the discussion board than speaking in class, although I still have some problem writing English. Anyway, I will put what I don't have time to say or don't want to say in the class in the online forum. I don't know about others. I think the online discussion works for me.”

Many students in the study also regarded CMC provided them opportunities to show their professionalism and served as a good forum for knowledge display. They claimed they used quotes and referred to multiple resources in online discussion, whereas it was rarely applied in class discussion. In class discussion, students would most often ask questions or state something related with their personal experience. However, in the online environment, it was apparent that they always quoted some authors to support their statements. The author might just be the author of the required textbooks. Even this was very rare in class discussion. Lee explained to me what this was the case.

“I guess the reason for this is that people did not give too much thought on what we say in the class. I just express what I had in my mind at that moment. Even if I want to quote something, I may not remember what to quote. After I speak something, it will be gone. So it does not matter too much whether my statement is valid or not. But in online discussion, I think I have more time to give it more thoughts, and I may check the reference if I want to quote something. I wanted my posting to be right because once I posted it, it will be there all the time. Other students and

my teacher may see it any time during the semester, I don't want to sound silly. So I usually make sure what I said is right. I cited some authors to support my ideas."

Students in the study perceived online discussions more like writing rather than speaking although it was free discussion. Students would plan, organize, and relate to other resources, like what they would do for a writing assignment.

"I feel online discussion and class discussion are different. Online discussion is more like a writing assignment to me. It always takes me a lot of time. Because I am not like a native speaker, I have to think through before I post. I usually will start in the Word document and then copy and paste it to the discussion board. It's not like writing a paper that I am going to submit to my teacher. But still, it is not speaking to me. I will do a little research and try to sound professional. I always have textbooks or other references beside me when I write the paragraphs for posting." (Anita)

Another perception students in the study had toward CMC was that they found themselves responding to others' statements from either native speakers or other non-native speakers more often than they did in the classroom discussion. This was very rare in face-to-face class discussions. The students believed this change was for good because the reason that their voices were lacked in class was for the most part due to their inability to do so.

"I'd also like to comment in class. But it always goes so fast and I cannot catch up with the speed." Another reason stated by students in the study was that they were unable to provide comments due to the fact that they did not fully understand what was going on in the class. (Lily)

"There is no way for me to do the same thing (providing comments) in class. Sometimes, some American classmates make very long statements and they speak very fast. I cannot fully understand what they are talking about. I may catch the main ideas sometimes. Other times, I am totally lost. There is no way to ask them to repeat. I will just skip and move on. I noticed American students who made long speech in class also post long passages online. But this time, it's different. I can take my time to read their postings. If I don't understand for the first time, I can read it again. If I have any questions, I can ask the sender by posting a replying message. I can also state my comments on their postings. It's to me a totally different

practice. I kind of prefer to comment online discussion because at least I know what I am commenting on.” (Park)

Another important perception on the online discussion was that L2 students favored the addition of the online discussion component to the class to help them understand concepts of applied linguistics better and facilitate their process of writing academic papers. The purpose of online discussion was not only for students to share their ideas on their understanding of the course concepts, but more importantly a forum to facilitate their acquisition of academic literacy. The online discussion forums were set up in such a way that students would not only reinforce the concepts they discussed in class, but also discuss the writing assignments at the same times because writing assignments were closely related with the key concepts conveyed in the class.

“When I was working on the language data analysis paper, I remember I had some questions on phonology. I posted my questions on the discussion board about phonology. I received more than five replies. That helped me a lot. I finally worked out the section on phonology” (Zhang).

This was not the only way for students to obtain help in their development of academic literacy by asking questions. Some students also claimed that they benefited simply by reading others’ discussion entries. Blanca was one of them.

“I enjoyed reading others’ postings because I can always get help for my own writing. Some students will post very detailed answers to the particular question. That may help me understand that question. I mean this is a very convenient way. I don’t need to go out to find books and articles and read them. I can do some and other students can do some. We all post the gist of our reading in the discussion board and everyone can benefit from it. Everyone can have a complete picture. The reading in the forum save me a lot of time and gave me a lot of good ideas in my writing. Some students are not very active in online discussion. If everyone is very active, I believe the information in the forums must be very rich.”

It was also stated by some students that the involvement of CMC enabled them to develop the strategies of referring to discussion postings either by themselves or others when they wrote their papers. Discussion board served as their handy references in their performance of writing tasks.

“I think I have to give discussion board some credits for my papers. Once when I have to write a paper for the methods of ESOL class, I want to do something on the communicative language teaching. But you know, that topic was covered in the class some time ago, and I don’t exactly know what I can focus on although at the time when we are discussing this method, I have a lot of ideas. Luckily, we had an online discussion on this topic. I put up all my ideas of how to use this method in teaching English as a second language in the discussions. And I remember other people had some useful ideas there. I immediately log on to Blackboard, found that discussion board and reviewed all the postings. I think that helped my writing a lot. It made the thinking process short and writing process easy. That is not all of it. During the writing, I went back to the forum several times if I feel it is necessary for my paper.” (Pinky)

Not only did students get involved with discussion board, instructors of all classes participated in online discussion with different degrees. This was also one of the benefits of discussion board perceived by a lot of the students in the study.

“To tell you the truth, I don’t care too much about what other students say in the class or discussion board. But I like the format of online discussion because I can interact with the instructor more often in this format. In the regular classroom, the chances to interact with the instructor in class were usually taken by native students. I don’t blame them for that. It is just I cannot keep up with the pace of their discussion and by the time their discussion is over, it is already end of the class. This will never happen in the online discussion. I can throw out my questions to the teacher anytime I have them. I don’t need to fight for my turn. There is no conflict with other students. I did get personal attention from the instructors for the questions I raised. So although I am not very crazy about online discussion, I did feel it works better for me. A lot of my questions got clarified in the online discussion board rather than in the class.”(Park)



Unlike Park, most of students preferred to have more communication with both native and other non-native peers in the class. They considered that helpful for their development of academic literacy in applied linguistics. Therefore, most of them were also delighted by the fact that they could know better about their peers' thinking from discussion boards because they might not understand fully statements made by their native peers in the class.

“Yeah, sometimes, some of my classmates made long speeches in the class. They are Americans, and they speak very fast. Sometimes I can understand 80% of the talk, sometimes much less. Also sometimes I have hard time understanding people from other countries. They have some accents. I am very frustrated. It is different in the online discussion. There is not talking speed problem and there is no accent problem. Some American students will write long paragraphs. But it does not matter if I don't understand it first time I read it. I can read it again and again. So I should say discussion board is helpful for me in this way.” (Aki)

Although there were a lot of positive voices regarding online discussion itself and its help for the acquisition of academic literacy in applied linguistics, not all the subjects favored online discussions. Some L2 students in this study disliked this format for various reasons.

One of the complaints for online discussion from L2 students was that they thought online discussion was difficult for them. The source of difficulty mainly came from the nature of the online discussion, which was writing instead of speaking although discussion was meant to be informal.

“I thought online discussion was difficult for me because I have to put down what I have to say in writing. It's not the writing I will do when I write an email to my friend. The writing is formal to me. Sometimes I have to read something before I put my thoughts into writing. I feel I have to use those terms to discuss with others. Its' not easy for me. I am not very good at writing in English. It's even more difficult for me

to write on some concepts related with the class. Anyway, it takes me a lot of time to come up with one paragraph to post online.” (Lee)

Some L2 students perceived that CMC posed extra burden for them. They considered reading postings and responding to them was a waste of time.

“I don’t know. You know sometimes, some students will post long long messages. They even will attach a few pages paper. You know in order to respond what they talked about, I have to know what they talked about first. So I have to read their long postings first. Oh my God, it is not that easy to understand every time. Sometimes I have to read some part several times. Too much of my time is used on this. I did feel I get what I should get from reading this considering the time I spent on this. I feel especially frustrated if after reading the long passages, I did not know what he is talking about. What he said did not make any sense to me. Also reading it is not all I have to do. I have to respond to it after reading. That takes too much of my time also. I have to think what and how to respond. I don’t see how that will help to either.” (Lily)

From what Lily said, it could be seen that some students did not see how CMC could help them in their writing. Although some students regarded online discussion forums as the springboard of their idea generation and handy references in their writing, some other students did not set up the connection between their online discussion and writing assignments. They regarded online discussion solely as some assignments that they had to perform and when they were writing their academic papers, they might not relate what they had discussed on the topic they intended to pursue in the online discussion board to their current writing assignments.

One major complaint of online discussion was that the discussion sometimes went off track. Although the discussion might be heated, they were easily diverted into something more interesting but had nothing to do with the topic of discussion. Park gave an example of this.

“Once we are supposed to discuss various methods of teaching ESOL, you know, those methods we talked about in class: TPR, CLT, etc. I

remembered in one of the first postings, one student started to talk about how did the teachers changed him from hating astrology to loving it. Basically he said the teacher was very nice and did not give any pressure on him. So he had some time to digest the materials and found the beauty of this subject. Other students replying his posting started to share the good or bad memories of the teachers they had during these years of study. I feel people are more interested talking about their real experience and they want to share theirs with others. The result is no one was actually discussed the teaching methods but their teachers.”

Park expressed that although these kinds of discussion were fun, he did not actually learn anything. Instead, he had to use a lot of his time to read all the stories told by each student. Those stories would not facilitate his understanding of the effective application of ESOL teaching methods. The discussion on the actual ESOL teaching methods would be more beneficial.

It was not a rare case as described by Park. Many discussions went off track to some degrees. Sometimes, the discussion diverted a little and went back on the topic after some efforts from either students or the instructor. Other times, the direction of the whole discussion had totally changed. Since it was so frequent, it was meaningful to explore the reasons from the students’ perspectives. One of the reasons mentioned by students was that some discussion questions were too broad to enable effective discussions, which might attribute to the off tracking of the discussions to some degree. In ESOL Curriculum and Instruction class, one of the discussion questions was like this: “According to your experience, what are the important elements of needs analysis that you have to focus on if you have limited time and resources?” One of the students responded the question in this way. “This is a very broad question and is hard to answer. I would expect a potential teacher to have a tiny bit more

information about a class they are going to teach (such as the sponsor of the class, and a little about who the students might be, etc.). Even this little bit of information can help determine which course materials to select, i.e., can the students afford to buy a textbook, is it likely they will have access to a computer, etc.” (Blanca) Many other students had the similar concerns. Since the questions were too broad, it was hard for them to know what they should focus on. And they grabbed the things that they were interested in and stuck to those topics. Another reason mentioned by students was that the rubrics were not very clear all the time. Some guidelines were too abstract to be easily understood by L2 students. The rubrics provided to online discussion for ESOL Curriculum and Instruction class were as followed (figure 5):

#### Discussion Rubric

All assigned discussions will be graded based on a rubric so you know what to expect. Discussions are one form of interaction between students in the class and with your instructor. As you will learn this semester, these interactions are a very important part of this course. Please be sure you understand how they will be graded.

<b>Discussion Rubric</b>		
<b>Objectives</b> - Student participates substantially in weekly discussions, contributing to the learning community by posting original messages, and/or replying to those of others in the class.		
<b>1 Point</b>	<b>2 Points</b>	<b>3 Points</b>
You will get 1 point if your entries do not add to the discussion in any substantial manner. These are typically entries that simply agree with what someone else	You will get 2 points if your entries contribute some original thinking to the discussion but a) are still somewhat superficial in thought or b) do not use the	You will get 3 points if your entries contribute substantially to the discussion and use the theoretical terminology of the course. These entries

said or just restate what someone else said. Original postings that do not answer the question also fall into this category	theoretical terminology of the course or c) if you simply reply to another posing and do not enter an original posting of your own.	are what we are striving for as a scholar group working toward graduate degrees.
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Figure 5. Discussion Rubric

Some students mentioned they were not very clear what kind of postings would be considered superficial and what would be substantial. It's hard for them to draw a line between these two types of postings. One student suggested the rubrics be more specific using the terms such as giving examples, etc.

#### Section Summary

To conclude, computer-mediated communication in the form of online discussion benefited the students in the sense that students had more and extended opportunities to communicate with the instructors and peers, organize their thoughts and therefore, they provided longer and better quality discussions in the online environment than in the classroom setting. Online discussion also helped some students in their performance on major writing assignments because CMC discussions not only deepened their understanding of each component of the assignment, but also gave them forums that they could refer to constantly in the process of writing their assignments. However, the problems did exist with this format. It was also the challenge faced by the instructors to attract students to online discussion, make them interested in doing it, connect it better with writing assignments, raise appropriate questions and provide clear guidelines.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This section provides a summary of the research findings, discussion of the findings, important implications for teaching, and recommendations for future research.

#### Summary of Findings

The focus of this case study was to examine the role of computer-mediated communication in the acquisition of academic literacy by a group of non-native speaking students enrolled in a master's program of applied linguistics. Three research questions were addressed. The first question examined how the non-native students in this study negotiated their academic literacy in the computer-mediated environment as realized in online discussions. Two aspects of online literacy communication were explored: language functions students applied and their focus of attention. Results indicated that the participants used primarily explaining language functions in their online communication. Most participants used a combination of multiple language functions in different circumstances. Many students started with single or limited types of language functions and changed to applied more and varied functions as they became more comfortable with this format and more knowledgeable with the discourse community of applied linguistics.

Results also indicated that participants focused more on applying either direct or indirect quotations, using terminology, commenting and evaluating in the online discussion on the topics or concepts of applied linguistics, whereas they focused more on stating personal experience in face-to-face classroom discussion. This was probably because computer-mediated communication provided students more time and ease to organize their thoughts, refer to the references, and thoroughly read peers' ideas before offering comments.

The second research question examined the role of computer-mediated communication such as online discussion in students performing written tasks for each class they are taking. This question comprised two aspects of the students' writing activities: their process of completing written assignments and their writing products. Different themes were detected to answer the question of the process to complete their written academic papers. The themes included CMC influence on students' understanding of assignment instructions, their performing of writing assignments, and their practicing of citation conventions. Results on the analysis of this research question showed that computer-mediated communication gave students opportunities to get involved in communication, negotiation, and interpretation of tasks at hand and corresponding disciplinary knowledge. Results also indicated students adopted different strategies and approaches to prepare their writing assignment in the discussion board. Some of the directly copied what they have composed in the discussion board to the academic paper, some of them incorporated peer feedback into the discussion posting and then into their writing, and some others

included the ideas from peers in the discussion board into their papers. They took the advantage of scaffolding to move their acquisition of academic literacy to a new level. Their understanding of the discourse community and pedagogical genres of applied linguistics was improved as the result of collaboration with peers. Computer-mediated communication played some facilitative roles in students written products. Many of them incorporated what they have discussed and learned in the online discussions from peers and instructors in their writing assignments. Computer-mediated communication was regarded facilitative in helping participants acquire citation skills for academic literacy. Many students benefited from online discussion and sharing to raise their awareness of importance of citation and correct their misunderstanding and malpractice.

Participants' written products were studied in the context where students participated in the online peer review activities. Analysis of the students draft and final papers in the online peer review activities indicated that students incorporated peers' feedback into their revisions and benefited from such activities although they claimed high quality feedback was still not enough.

The third research question examined how the participants' perceived the inclusion of computer-mediated communication in helping them acquire academic literacy in the field of applied linguistics. Resulted indicated that the participants perceived that L2 students favored the addition of the online discussion component to the class to help them acquire academic literacy in applied linguistics and perceived that CMC provided a medium for them to have their voices heard which decreased



their sense of isolation. They stated that they could have interaction with the instructor more often because the chances to interact with the instructor in class were usually taken by native students. The participants in the study were also delighted by the fact that they could learn more about their peers' thinking from discussion boards because they might not understand fully statements made by their native peers in the class. And most importantly, CMC discussions helped them in their performance on major writing assignments because CMC discussions not only deepened their understanding of each component of the assignment, but also gave them forums that they could refer to constantly in the process of writing their assignments.

Students, however, perceived that computer-mediated communication had some major issues. One major complaint from students was that the discussions sometimes went off track. Some other students considered reading and responding to the discussion entries (especially those went off track) a waste of time. Another problem perceived by the participants was that the evaluation rubric was not very clear. Some guidelines were too abstract to be easily understood by L2 students. Some participants also thought that some discussion questions were too broad to enable effective discussions, which might attribute to the off-tracking of the discussions to some degree.

This case study provided rich information on the role of computer-mediated communication on students' acquisition of academic literacy in the discourse community of applied linguistics and learning the rules of writing academic papers in various genres such as statement of teaching philosophy, literature review of ESOL

curriculum paper, etc. The section below is a discussion of the findings and their relationship with the existing literature.

### Discussions

The notion of discourse communities has played a major role in the theory and research of students' acquisition of academic literacy (e.g. Berkenkotter, Huckin, & Ackerman, 1988, 1991; Faigley, 1985; Herrington, 1985; Walvoord & McCarthy, 1990). This line of research concerns about how novice writers are inducted into the discourse communities of selected discipline. The current study also focuses on the same concern. However, the current study strengthened the literature in the following aspects. First of all, the existing studies mainly focused on the final products to examine whether students had acquired the required genres and disciplinary knowledge. In the current study, students' process of how to produce their final texts under the influence of CMC was explored. More insights were provided from such an addition that the process of learning genres and disciplinary knowledge was facilitated with the scaffolding between peers as easily realized in the computer-mediated communication in the form of online discussion. Second, the current research added to the literature the importance of intertextuality provided by CMC in helping students accomplish their academic papers. The investigation on intertextuality indicated the paths that students took to proceed from online communication to their personalized writing products. CMC provided forum which allowed the intertextuality between students' own texts and texts from peers, which facilitated students writing process.

The current study also strengthened the existing literature in other ways. Much

of the existing research focused on the types and nature of tasks students are expected to perform in the “popular” disciplines such as business, engineering, sciences (e.g. Braine, 1989, 1995; Bridgeman & Carlson, 1984; Canseco & Byrd, 1989; Carson, 2001; Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Eblen, 1983; Hale et al., 1996; Horowitz, 1986; Johns, 1981; Kroll, 1979; Ostler, 1980; West & Byrd, 1982; Zhu, 2004). However, the study reported the findings in the less researched field of applied linguistics to give the line of research a more balanced view. The current study also went beyond merely identifying the types of tasks students were required to perform, but focused more on the role of computer-mediated communication on students’ development and acquisition of disciplinary knowledge and academic literacy through their performance of academic assignments. The focus shift from what to do to how to do it reflected social perspective of academic literacy acquisition was much emphasized where scaffolding and mediation play important roles.

The current study also expanded the research on the relationship of context and learning of disciplinary writing. With the inclusion of CMC in the process for students to acquire academic literacy, the context of student learning seemed to become more complicated. Students have to communicate with peers and instructors in both face-to-face and online communication. The result of the analysis showed that the complication of learning context did not complicate students’ learning, but rather facilitated students’ acquisition of academic literacy in many ways.

This dissertation study also expanded the line of research focusing on non-native speakers of English studying in the Anglophone universities (e.g. Belcher, 1994;

Casanave, 1992; Connor & Cramer, 1995; Schneider & Fujishima, 1995; Shaw, 1991).

Integration of computer-mediated communication in their process of academic literacy acquisition enable students extended opportunities for interaction and scaffolding in local discourse community and for being exposed to the culture of western academy. The labyrinth of discourse community and was to some extent demystified with the help from more experienced peers. The chances of communication missed by students in the class were somewhat compensated in the online discussion.

To conclude, students in this study were at the transitioning stage from being a pure novice to stepping into the profession of applied linguistics. In the local discourse community of the program, they performed various written tasks to be able to satisfactorily move toward getting a master's degree. Students were performing the pedagogical genres which were mainly read by the instructors for course evaluation (Casanave, 2002). However, the situation has been changed since computer-mediated communication (CMC) started to be incorporated into content area classes. With the involvement of CMC, the nature of writing assignments has been changed. They are no longer isolated individual activities, but rather collaborative efforts where scaffolding between peers play important roles. Learning occurs through ongoing participation in the online communication and performance of writing tasks. They do some literature review on certain topics related with ESOL teaching, design tests for ESOL population, write summaries for research findings, construct reference lists, etc. CMC communication facilitated the process of performing all the above mentioned

activities. Apparently, students were not merely absorbing static disciplinary knowledge and rigid mechanisms of writing, but were actively engaged in academic literacy practices. One key feature out of these practices is that their relationship to the texts they have performed has been changed. According to Casanave (2002), “their relationship to texts becomes more complex and layered, involving more aspects of themselves and of the people around them. All novice academic readers and writers, in other words, must learn to treat their readings and writings as media through which they are interacting with authors, professors, peers, and gatekeepers and to recognize the paradox of ownership and multivocality in their own writing” (p. 79). CMC mainly in the form of online discussion and online peer review activity facilitated the interaction and scaffolding of students with their local community. And students were getting closer to become a member of discourse community of applied linguistics. Like English language that students applied in the communication with peers in the same local discourse community, CMC also served as a mediator in the process of students’ acquisition of academic literacy. They formed the tool kits together with writing, which is available for students to use whenever needed.

CMC is not replacing the various face-to-face communications among students and teachers in the local discourse community. The weakness conveyed from the findings indicated that the best practice is the combination of face-to-face and computer-mediated communication.

## Recommendations for Future Research

Future research can be conducted to investigate the role of other types of CMC tools in students' acquisition of academic literacy. Asynchronous online discussion tool was mainly investigated in this study. In the future research, synchronous tools such as virtual classrooms and online chat or other asynchronous tools such as email communications could be explored. Effect of synchronous and asynchronous tools and different tool within one category can be examined.

The role of computer-mediated communication on peer review needs to be further explored. In this study, only the effect of online peer review on one genre was studied: Statement of Teaching Philosophy. Statement of Teaching Philosophy is a somewhat unique genre for the future teaching professionals. Computer-mediated peer reviews on other genres such as usually longer and more theory based research papers need to be explored.

Eight of ten participants in this study were only studied for one semester for one or two classes. Further research can address student longitudinal development of academic literacy in the computer-mediated communication enhanced environment.

## Implications for Instruction

Based on the results of the study, computer-mediated peer response should be used in the content area classes to facilitate the process of students' acquisition of academic literacy. Benefits of such inclusion were obvious, especially for non-native speaking students. The opportunities for non-native speakers to participate in discussion forums were increased and limited oral proficiency and cultural issues

which prevented them from face-to-face communication in classroom were not a major issue.

However, to conduct engaging and effective online discussions and other types of computer-mediated communication was not as easy as it seemed to be. There were a few things that needed to be taken into consideration by the instructors when considering incorporating computer-mediated communication in the form of online discussion or online peer review to enhance their teaching.

It was not a very wise idea to conduct online discussions on the topics that were already fully explored during the class portion of the discussion. Students may feel “nothing else to say” which resulted in very minimal participation. The better topics for discussion were those which were touched upon in the class, students seemed to be interested in talking about them, and there was much more on these topics to be further explored. Instructors needed to be alert to the potential meaningful discussion topics.

It was not a wise idea to give very general topics for discussion as well. Students may also feel “nothing to say” but because they did not know what were expected from them. This frustrated students in the study more than instructors imaged and also resulted in no or minimal participation from some of the students. It may take more time and efforts for the instructors to come up with some specific discussion topics, but the efforts will be worthwhile since students can benefit more. It’s also wise for instructors to consistently observe and sometimes participate in the online discussions. In doing so, instructors may easily find what went wrong, what

needed to be changed, redirect the discussion if it is off track, and provide their expert opinions to some students who need desperate help. It is definitely more work to do from the instructor's perspective to conduct online discussions than oral discussions in class. They need to be prepared and develop a system that works best.

It was also not a good idea to give a discussion topic where there was no room for discussion. Some of the discussion questions in the study had the problem in which there was only one correct answer. In this case, after the first student posted their response, what other students can only say was "I agree" or "I disagree" and provided right or wrong answers. The better discussion topics should not ask students provide yes or no answers, but rather push them to think, to explore more resources, and to allow them to exchange views with others. It was sometimes also a challenging task for instructors to prevent this from happening.

On the other hand, it was a good idea to connect online discussion topics with students' writing tasks. As the results indicated in this study, participants did not learn to write academic papers from lectures. They mainly developed their writing skills on various genres through engaging in disciplinary discussion and online discussion forum is a convenient platform easily accessible to students. It was detected from this study that those discussions closely related with writing assignments were frequented by most of the participants. It is not super hard to link these two components together because online discussions and writing tasks are both checking students' understanding of the course content. It might be a good method for instructors to design their courses this way. One of the recommendations obtained from students



was that the instructors could break the writing tasks into a few interrelated components and propose an online discussion question matching each component. In this way, students prepare their written assignments while they are performing the online discussion, which may facilitate writing process to a great extent.

Online peer review activity is something that instructor can consider using in their content area classes. Students like to have the readers of their papers besides the course instructor. Online peer review activity works well in content area classes for academic papers at least in the sense that students have time to digest what the writer wants to convey and provide some meaningful and constructive feedback. However, peer reviewing academic paper might not be a very easy task for students, especially the non-native speaking students. It would be better to provide some training on how to conduct effective peer review on academic papers.

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## APPENDICES



## Appendix 1: Course Syllabus: ESOL Curriculum and Instruction

University of South Florida  
Department of World Language Education  
Summer 2005 B

### **TSL 5372: ESL Curriculum and Instruction**

Instructor: xxx  
Office: xxx  
Office Phone: xxx  
E-mail: xxx  
Office Hours: By appointment

### **Course Goals**

This course is designed to

1. Enhance and improve students' knowledge of the basic principles of curriculum design: understanding needs analysis, determining instructional goals and objectives, analyzing and developing syllabi, developing lesson plans, and evaluating materials.
2. Provide students the opportunity to work collaboratively on the development and presentation of ESL/EFL curricula that can be adapted for all levels of English language proficiency.
3. Improve and enhance students' knowledge of ESL materials through evaluation activities.
4. Encourage professionalism in the field of TESL through focus on research and scholarship in the areas of curriculum design, second language acquisition, specific language skills, and language teaching methodology and activities that support professional development.

### **Course Materials**

#### TEXTS

Brown, J. D. (1995). *The elements of language curriculum: A systematic approach to program development*. Boston, MA: Heinle and Heinle Publishers.

Graves, K. (2000). *Designing language courses*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

#### Selected Articles

#### Student requirement and class policies

Students are expected to assume individual responsibility and initiation in all work related to the class: Completing all reading assignments prior to the class session at which they are discussed; participating in class activities and group assignments; participating in online activities; taking one exam; and completing the curriculum project.

All assignments are due on the dates announced. Late work will be accepted but one percentage point will be lowered for each day an assignment is late. Oral and in-class

assignments, when missed, cannot be made up. Work missed or turned in late because a student is absent for religious reasons will be dealt with in accordance with the University Religious Preference Absence Policy provided below. More information about the course assignments will be provided following the weekly schedule. All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, and with each page numbered. Students' written work will be evaluated based on content, completeness, organization, effective use of English, and appropriate academic format (i.e., APA format).

It is assumed that all written work represents the student's original thinking. Academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance with the University Academic Dishonesty Policy (see Graduate Catalog).

Regular class attendance is required. Absence for religious reasons will be dealt with in accordance with the University Religious Preference Absence Policy provided below. Failure to attend the presentations of the curriculum projects will negatively affect a student's participation score.

The exam will be given as scheduled. If a student cannot take the exam as scheduled, please contact the instructor and make arrangements in advance. Incompletes will be handled according to the university policy on this issue.

Notes or tapes of class lectures are not permitted for sale.

Religious Preference Absence Policy: USF policy states that "NO student shall be compelled to attend class or sit for an examination at a day or time prohibited by his or her religious belief. Students are expected to notify their instructors if they intend to be absent for a class or announced examination...prior to the scheduled meeting. Students absent for religious reasons will be given reasonable opportunities to make up any work missed." This policy will be implemented.

Students' uncollected papers will be kept for a year by the instructor. That is, they will be kept until the end of the final exam week of the Summer B 2006 semester and will then be disposed of at the instructor's discretion.

#### GROUP WORK

It will be very difficult to complete the curriculum project individually; therefore, it is **highly** recommended that you work on the project in small groups (2-4 people).

#### Grading

Students will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

Comprehensive Exam	25%
Blackboard Assignments and Activities	10%

Curriculum Project	60%
Project	55%
Presentation	5%
Class and online Participation	5%

Note: The plus/minus grading system will be used in this class.

A+ 97-100	A 94-96	A- 90-93	B+ 87-89	B 84-86	B-80-83
C+ 77-79	C 74-76	C- 70-73	F 69 and below		

**Class Schedule** (Subject to modification; Changes will be announced in class)

July 6	<p>Introduction of course and participants  Discussion on the curriculum project  Choose members and organize groups for project  <b>Blackboard Assignment #1:</b> Answer the question on Blackboard Discussion Boards (<b>Due: July, 13</b>) (Note: The question will appear after class)  <b>Read</b> for the next class session: Brown, Chapter 2  Graves, Chapter 6</p>
July 11	<p>Needs assessment/analysis  Readings: Brown, Chapter 2  Graves, Chapter 6  <b>In-class group Activity:</b> Identify an ESL program for your project and begin discussing assessment instruments  <b>Read</b> for the next class session: Brown, Chapter 3  Graves, Chapter 5</p>
July 13	<p>Goals and objectives  Readings: Brown, Chapter 3  Graves, Chapter 5  <b>In-class Group Activity:</b> Identify an ESL program for your project and begin discussing assessment instruments  <b>Blackboard Assignment #2:</b> Answer the question on Blackboard Discussion Boards (<b>Due: July, 20</b>) (Note: The question will appear after class)  <b>Read</b> for the next class session: Brown, Chapter 1. pp. 7-14;  Chapter 5. pp. 140-157</p>
July 18	<p>Syllabus Design I  Readings: Brown, Chapter 1. pp. 7-14; Chapter 5. pp. 140-157</p>
July 20	<p>Syllabus design II  <b>In-class Group Activity:</b> Identifying syllabus types  <b>Blackboard Assignment #3:</b> Answer the question on Blackboard Discussion Boards (<b>Due: July, 27</b>) (Note: The question will appear after class)  <b>Read</b> for the next class session: Brown, Chapter 5 pp. 159-163  Graves, Chapter 8</p>

July 25	Materials evaluation and selection Readings: Brown, Chapter 5 pp. 159-163 Graves, Chapter 8 <b>In-class Group Activity:</b> Evaluating materials <b>Read</b> for the next class session: Brown, Chapter 5 pp. 163-171 Graves, Chapter 9
July 27	Materials development Readings: Brown, Chapter 5 pp. 163-171 Graves, Chapter 9 <b>Blackboard Assignment #4:</b> Answer the question on Blackboard Discussion Boards ( <b>Due: August, 3</b> ) (Note: The question will appear after class) <b>Read</b> for the next class session: Brown, Chapter 4 pp. 108-138 Graves, Chapter 10 pp. 207-210
August 1	Assessment Readings: Brown, Chapter 4 pp. 108-138 Graves, Chapter 10 pp. 207-210 <b>Read</b> for the next class session: Brown, Chapter 6 pp. 179-216
August 3	Teaching and lesson planning Readings: Brown, Chapter 6 pp. 179-216 <b>In-class Group Activity:</b> Examining sample lesson plans <b>Blackboard Assignment #5:</b> Answer questions on Blackboard Discussion Board ( <b>Due: August, 10</b> ) (Note: The question will appear after class)
August 8	Exam
August 10	Project presentations <b>DUE TODAY: All curriculum projects</b>  Further Details on Course Assignments

In-Class/Group Activities: There will be several in-class group assignments designed to help you develop your final curriculum project. All members of the group must sign their names to receive credit for participation in each assignment. If you are absent on the day of an in-class group assignment, you will not receive credit for it. Although these assignments will be started in class, they may need to be completed outside of class. If this happens, assignments must be turned in no later than the following class period.

Blackboard discussion Assignments: There will be several blackboard discussion assignments to also help you develop your final curriculum project. All students must participate in answering all the questions in the course discussion boards to receive credits. Responding to other's answers is highly encouraged. Rubrics will be provided and distributed to you at the first class meeting. All online discussion assignments have to be finished by the due date. **There is also going to be a special forum called Open Discussion under Blackboard Discussion Boards. This is a forum where**

**you can express all your concerns, problems and experience or ask for help.**

Curriculum Project: You should develop a curriculum appropriate for an existing ESL program to which you have access. A set of guidelines will be provided to assist you in conceptualizing your project.

All portions of the project must be typed, double-spaced, page-numbered, and well edited. For group projects, each member of the group must contribute to the project, and all members of a group will receive the same grade from the instructor.

Individual grades, however, can vary. Teacher evaluation will account for 70% of the grade for the written project; peer evaluation will account for the other 30%.

Any sources used for the curriculum project must be properly paraphrased or quoted, and cited/documented.

You must prepare an oral presentation describing your project at the end of the semester. For group projects, each member must contribute to the presentation. The presentations should run approximately 30 minutes each. Please make a 1-2 page summary handout for your classmates.

Appendix 2: Course Syllabus: Methods of Teaching ESOL

METHODS OF TEACHING A SECOND LANGUAGE

TSL 5371-001

Fall 2005

Instructor: Dr. xxx

Office: xxx

Classroom: xxx

Phone: xxx

Office Hours: Mondays 1:00-3:00 pm / Thursdays 3:00-5:00 pm

E-mail: xxx

Fax: xxx

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Methods of TESL is designed for graduate students who want a foundation in the theory and pedagogy in Teaching English as a Second Language. The main objectives of the course are:

1. To provide students with a foundation in *current theoretical approaches* to second language learning and teaching
2. To introduce students to *current second language teaching methods* and to assist students in attaining knowledge of the theoretical bases of these methods
3. To identify major *characteristics* of different methods and *assess the appropriateness of these methods* in different situations, settings, programs and for different language skills and learners
4. To develop the ability to *teach a second language*
5. To familiarize students with the *relevance and importance of empirical research to classroom teaching*
6. To provide students with opportunities to *reflect* on and examine their own experience and beliefs in, assumptions of, and attitudes towards second language learning and teaching
7. To introduce students to *instructional technology* and strategies for using technology for language teaching.

Class format will include lecture, class discussion, viewing videos, group/pair work, observation of second language students, peer teaching, and micro-teaching at the ELI.

**TEXTS AND MATERIALS**

### Required

Nunan, D. (1999). *Second Language Teaching and Learning*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Richards, J. & Rodgers, S. (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Additional materials will be placed on BlackBoard or on reserve at the USF Tampa library.**

### Optional

Flaitz, J. (Ed.) (2003). *Understanding Your International Students: An Educational, Cultural, and Linguistic Guide*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Class Observations**

This assignment will give students an opportunity to observe second language classes at the English Language Institute and to reflect on their observations via BlackBoard. Students are expected to make **two class observations** and complete all related written work. More information about the observations will be provided later in a separate handout.

### **Peer Teaching**

This assignment, to be done individually, will give students an opportunity to put their knowledge of second language learning and teaching to use—i.e. to plan and teach a mini-lesson to their classmates. Each peer teaching session is a short (30-35 minutes) presentation of part of an L2 lesson. Presenters will base their lessons on one of the school environments described in Flaitz (2003) *Understanding Your International Students* or Flaitz (forthcoming) *Understanding Your Refugee and Immigrant Students*. The presenters will be the “teachers” and the rest of the class will be the “students.” Students may use any props or visual aids they like in the mini-lesson. Each presenter will provide a written copy of the lesson plan to each member of the class.

### **Micro-teaching and Written Reflection**

This assignment will give students an opportunity to plan and teach a lesson to ESL or foreign language students and to reflect on the micro-teaching experience via BlackBoard. More information will be provided in a separate handout later.

### Exams

The purpose of the exams is to give students an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of the topics covered in the lectures and readings, to synthesize their understanding of the main ideas covered, and to apply their knowledge of language learning and teaching to different teaching situations. The exams in this class cover all materials from the lectures, the readings, and class discussions. Both the mid-term and the final exams will be administered via BlackBoard, and will be available for 5 full days (see Weekly Schedule). However, once the student enters the exam, s/he may not leave and return to it at a later time/date. Instead, s/he must complete each exam within 3 hours.

### Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Although most students in the course have limited experience teaching second or foreign languages, all hold certain assumptions and beliefs about learning and teaching. Using a rubric presented by the instructor, students will craft their first iteration of the Statement of Teaching Philosophy, a document that will be revised in the second internship and placed in the student's portfolio.

### GRADING

Course grade will be determined based on the following criteria:

Micro-teaching and Written Reflection	25%
Mid-term exam	20%
Final exam (not comprehensive)	20%
Class Observations	15%
Peer Teaching	10%
Statement of Teaching Philosophy	10%

### WEEKLY SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION; CHANGES WILL BE ANNOUNCED)

Date	Topic	Assignment Due
Sept. 1	Introduction of course and participants Popular Ideas About Language Learning	
Sept. 8	5:00 – 6:00 MA Student Reception in CPR 459 Conceptual Basis of L2 Teaching and Learning Empirical Basis of Second Language Teaching and Learning	Nunan, chapter 1-2 (pp 3-68)
Sept.	Sign up for micro-teaching at ELI	



15	Issues in Second Language Teaching and Learning Communicative Language Learning	Nunan, chapter 3 (pp 69-92) Richards & Rodgers, chapter 14 (pp 153-177)
Sept. 22	Using Instructional Technology to Teach Second Language Guest presenter: Iona Sarieva in CPR 467	
Sept. 29	Focus on Language Focus on the Learner Teaching Listening	Nunan, chapters 4-5 (pp 93-170) and chapter 7 (pp 199-223)
Oct. 6	Teaching Speaking Teaching Refugees and Survivors of Torture <b>Peer Teaching</b>	Nunan, chapter 8 (pp 225-248)
Oct. 13	Teaching Grammar <b>Peer Teaching</b>	<b>Reading TBA</b>
Oct. 20	Language Learning Strategies Writing a Statement of Teaching Philosophy <b>Peer Teaching</b>	<b>MID-TERM EXAM (complete on BlackBoard between 8:00 pm Oct 13 and 8:00 pm Oct 18)</b> Nunan, chapter 6 (pp171-196)
Oct. 27	Teaching Reading <b>Peer Teaching</b>	Nunan, chapter 9 (pp 249-270)
Nov. 3	Audiolingual Method Total Physical Response Silent Way Community Language Learning Suggestopedia <b>Peer Teaching</b>	} Guest Lecturer Richards & Rodgers, chapter 4-8 (pp 50-107)
Nov. 10	Teaching Writing <b>Peer Teaching</b>	Nunan, chapter 10 (pp 271-300)
Nov. 17	The Natural Approach Cooperative Language Learning <b>Peer Teaching</b>	Richards & Rodgers, chapters 15-16 (pp 178-203)
Nov. 24	Thanksgiving Holiday – no class	
Dec. 1	Task-Based Language Teaching <b>Peer Teaching</b>	Richards & Rodgers, chapter 18 (pp 223-243)

Dec. 8	Statement of Teaching Philosophy peer reviews <b>Peer Teaching</b>  Class will meet in ELI computer lab (CPR 467)	<b>Statement of Teaching Philosophy due</b> <b>Microteaching report due</b> <b>FINAL EXAM (complete on Blackboard between 8:00 pm Dec 8 and 8:00 pm Dec 13)</b>

## STUDENT REQUIREMENTS and CLASS POLICIES

Students are expected to assume individual responsibility and initiative in all work related to the class. They should complete all readings prior to the class session for which they were assigned, demonstrate a mini-lesson, participate in class activities, take two exams, make two class observations at the ELI, and complete the micro-teaching assignment.

All assignments are due on the dates announced. Late observation reports and microteaching reports will be accepted, but one letter grade or equivalent will be lowered for each day an assignment is late. Oral and in-class assignments, when missed, cannot be made up. Work missed or turned in late because a student is absent for religious reasons will be handled in accordance with the University Religious Preference Absence Policy provided below. More information about the exams and assignments will be provided following the weekly schedule. All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, proofread, and numbered. Students' written work will be evaluated based on content, completeness, organization, effective use of English, and appropriate academic format (i.e., APA format). Teacher-provided instructions must be followed when students complete the assignments.

It is assumed that all written work represents the student's original thinking. Academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance with the University Academic Dishonesty Policy.

Regular class attendance is important to student success and is required. Absence for religious reasons will be handled in accordance with the University Religious Preference Absence Policy provided below.

Exams will be given as scheduled. If a student cannot take an exam as scheduled, please contact the instructor and make arrangements in advance. Incompletes will be handled according to the university policy on this issue.

Notes or tapes of class lectures are not permitted for sale.

Religious Preference Absence Policy: USF policy states that “NO student shall be compelled to attend class or sit for an examination at a day or time prohibited by his or her religious belief. Students are expected to notify their instructors if they intend to be absent for a class or announced examination...prior to the scheduled meeting. Students absent for religious reasons will be given reasonable opportunities to make up any work missed.” This policy will be implemented.

Students' uncollected exams and papers will be kept for a year by the instructor. That is, they will be kept until the end of the final exam week of the Fall 2006 semester and will then be disposed of at the instructor's discretion.

## Appendix 3: Course Syllabus: Applied Linguistics

Department of xxx,  
Course Syllabus Fall 2005  
Applied Linguistics, LIN 5700  
Wednesdays, 5-7:50 pm

**Instructor:**  
xxx

**Office:** xxx  
**Phone:** xxx  
**Email:** xxx

**Office Hours:**  
M & W: 3:00-4:45  
Other times by appointment

### **Required Text:**

O'Grady, et al. 2005. *Contemporary Linguistics*. Fifth edition

*Note: This syllabus has been developed using as guidelines syllabi for this course developed in the past by Dr. xxx.*

### **Course description:**

Linguistics is the study of human language, in general, and the study of specific human languages—how they are organized, how people use them, how they change over time, and how the facts of language can be discovered. This course will introduce all the systems of linguistic knowledge (phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax, discourse, and pragmatics) in the context of understanding social and psychological phenomena of language. “The systematic analysis and discussion of language in an objective way is an essential step forward towards any world in which mutual respect and tolerance is a reality.” (D. Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*, p. 1) Because language is complex, the solutions to language problems are rarely simple, and very few people have had the opportunity to study language systems. This course is that rare opportunity.

### **Course Goals:**

Adapted from Fink, L.D. (June 2003). “Creating Significant Learning.” *NEA Higher Education Advocate*, 20 (5), pp. 5-8.

“The ultimate goal of all teaching is for students to learn things that will have a positive, substantial, and lasting influence on their personal and work lives and their ability to contribute to the multiple communities of which they are a part.”

1. **Foundational Knowledge of Language:** students should understand and remember the basic content of the course as presented **in the text** and throughout the course: terms, concepts, principles, and facts (terminology in bold face, end of chapter summary material, key exercises, and world language geography)
2. **Application:** students will analyze, diagram, transcribe, solve problems, and otherwise describe language phenomena using the tools of linguistics.
3. **Integration:** students should apply their linguistic skills to original, possibly group projects undertaken in their graduate program including the Tools Exam and Graduate Portfolio required of MA in applied linguistics students.
4. **Human Dimension:** students should identify the personal and social implications of linguistic knowledge, including their individual roles as real-world linguists providing critical, objective information about language to the public and within the profession.
5. **Caring:** students should appreciate how linguistic objectivity empowers

language users—empowers them to value their individual language heritage, to value linguistic diversity, to contribute to conflict resolution, and to support academic accomplishments that far exceed monolingual English speaker norms.

6. **Learning How to Learn:** students should keep on mastering the skills of linguistic analysis and learning about languages and their speakers after the course is over by forming professional support groups, participating in professional activities which include local and regional publications and conferences, considering a doctorate in linguistics, and volunteering to provide useful linguistics activities in the community: language and linguistics for school-age children, home language literacy activities for preschool children, home language scribe or reader for the elderly, etc.

**Attendance Policy:** First day attendance is mandatory to fulfill course enrollment requirements per USF policy. Specific to this course, in general, students are expected to attend all classes for the full 2 hours and 50 minutes and to arrive on time. Please account for all absences by e-mailing me with the general reason.

**Accommodations:** Students benefit from working with study groups and tutors. Students with **special needs** are encouraged to consult me as soon as possible each term. If accommodations such as interpreters, alternative format for documents, or note takers are needed, a letter from the Office of Student Disability Services (SVC 1133) will be required. Do not hesitate to get the support you are entitled to.

**Assessment and Grading :**

Homework = 20%

Midterm Exam = 15%

Final Exam = 15%

Quizzes = 10%

Project(s) = 20%

In class presentations = 10%

Blackboard discussion = 10%

Homework (20%) will typically consist of reading pages assigned from the text and writing your solutions to the exercises assigned for each chapter. Handwritten, legible work on white, 8½ x 11, lined or grid paper, stapled if necessary, and with no ragged spiral edges is expected. Three-hole punched paper is fine. You are encouraged to do your homework in partners or in groups; however, be sure to credit the people you worked with by adding their names to your homework paper. Typically during class, you will have the opportunity to correct your own work as it is reviewed in lecture or small group discussion. *In class corrections are to be written in a color of ink that is clearly different from your original homework draft.* (So bring colored pens or pencils to class!) Students are asked to keep all homework documents in a clasp folder and to bring this folder to all office visits.

Homework Assessment Rubric

**3 points (check plus)**

- + all exercises are completed and
- + all errors are corrected and
- + corrections are indicative of understanding

**2 points (check)**

Homework Grading, 20% of final grade.

Homework must be turned in during class to receive a grade. (No late work or make-up work accepted.)

B 3.00

B- 2.67

C+ 2.33

- all exercises are attempted but some are incomplete or  
C 2.00  
C- 1.67
- most errors are corrected or  
D 1.00
- exercises turned in but student absent  
D- 0.67  
F below

**.5 points (check minus)**

- one or more exercises is omitted or
- three or more errors are not corrected

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Exams: Two exams will be given during the semester – a Midterm in class Exam (15%) and a take home Final Exam (15%).

Quizzes (10%): Regular quizzes will be given on Blackboard to motivate mastery of course material. Test items will be based on terminology used in the text (bold faced), homework exercises, class activities and lecture. In addition, all languages mentioned in the text are eligible for a test question in the form of “Where is language X spoken?” Multiple attempts will be allowed, only the last attempt will be recorded.

Project(s): 20% Four point rubrics are used to assess learning through projects, and scores are averaged for 30% of the final grade. (3.2-4.0 = A, 3.1 = B+) See details on projects below.

In class presentations: (10%) At the end of each topic, students working in pairs will make an interactive summary for about 30 minutes. The goal of the presentation is to summarize the topic, link it to personal and professional experiences, and to discuss it with other the class members. See the presentation schedule in the class schedule.

Blackboard Discussion (10%): Working in groups, you will discuss certain topics related to the course material using the Class Discussion board on Blackboard. The class schedule indicates when the discussion questions will be posted and when they will be due.

The University of South Florida has an account with an automated plagiarism detection service which allows instructors to submit student assignments to be checked for plagiarism. I reserve the right to submit assignments to this detection service. Assignments are compared automatically with a huge database of journal articles, web articles, and previously submitted papers. The instructor receives a report showing exactly how a student’s paper was plagiarized. Also see [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) and <http://ugs.usf.edu/catalogs/0304/adadap.htm#plagiarism>.

**RELEVANCE (25 points max)**

**The postings show understanding of and critical thinking about the readings. The student’s postings are relevant to the discussion topics.**

**COLLABORATION / PARTICIPATION (25 points max)**

**Each student should participate in the discussion by reading and responding to previous postings; the messages should be responsive to comments already made.**

Please sign your messages, do not dominate the discussion or post too many messages at once. The best way to have a productive on-line discussion is to post regularly and frequently.

**DEVELOPMENT (25 points max)**

The postings should provide detail, focusing on specific themes and details in the readings and supported with the good insights or relevant thoughtful questions. Each group member should strive for offering knowledge and experience that teammates may not have and for stimulating critical thinking and discussion.

**ANALYSIS (25 points max)**

The postings should demonstrate student’s ability to perceive and interpret critically the discussed topics and the readings by making inferences, synthesizing information, analyzing it, comparing/contrasting facts, connecting the new knowledge with previous knowledge and experiences.

LIN 5700: Linguistics

Course Projects

The goal of student projects in this course is for students to demonstrate that they are “learning things that have a positive, substantial, and lasting influence on their personal and work lives and their ability to contribute to the multiple communities of which they are a part.” (L.D Fink) Please review the course goals described on the first page of your syllabus.

Maximum possible points for total Projects is 4.0, which is equivalent to letter grade A

In other words, students may choose to write 4 short reports, or 2 short reports and one longer report, or they may choose to present.

However, enthusiastic students are not to be discouraged from generating more than the minimum work—post as many items as you like. You may be developing ideas for other classes or for more elaborate projects built over several semesters (like an Honors thesis maybe?).

<b>Project Format</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Required Content</b>	<b>Points</b>
Short Report posted to the Blackboard (based on field experience which required at least <u>two hours</u> of observation or participation.)	250-300 words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes what you did</li> <li>• Describes language in an objective way (using course content)</li> <li>• Identifies personal dimensions of learning</li> <li>• <u>Respond to at least one other projects posted on Blackboard</u></li> </ul>	1.0 each
Longer Report posted to the Blackboard (based on several hours of	500-700 words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes the facts of language in the selected material/experience</li> </ul>	2.0 each

outside reading on topics in linguistics—novels, texts, or research articles.)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies systematic patterns in the language material being discussed</li> <li>• Distinguishes your independent ideas from summaries of other work</li> <li>• <u>Respond to at least one other project posted on Blackboard.</u></li> </ul>	
Lecture/Demonstration posted or presented in class (video or audio data collected by the student and analyzed or described with written commentary—may use power point or ‘handouts’ which will be posted to the Blackboard.	15 min of presentation time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents samples of language that can be heard/seen by the viewer</li> <li>• Identifies systematic patterns in the language material being discussed</li> <li>• Distinguishes your independent ideas from summaries of other work</li> <li>• <u>Respond to at least one other project posted on Blackboard.</u></li> </ul>	4.0

LIN 5700: Applied Linguistics

Class Schedule

W: 05:00pm-07:50pm

WEEK 1: AUGUST 30

**Class overview and group/pair building**

Chapter 1: Language: A Preview

Chapter 2: Phonetics

**Week 2: September 7**

Chapter 2: Phonetics (cont.)

Chapter 3: Phonology

**Week 3: September 14**

Chapter 3: Phonology (cont.)

Student Presentation 1: Phonetics & Phonology

*Blackboard Quiz 1: Phonetics & Phonology posted (due October 19)*



*Blackboard discussion posting 1 (due October 19)*

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**Week 4: September 21**

Chapter 4: Morphology

*Blackboard Quiz 2: Morphology posted (due October 19)*

*Blackboard discussion posting 2 (due October 19)*

---

**Week 5: September 28**

Chapter 5: Syntax

Student Presentation 2: Morphology

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**Week 6: October 5**

Chapter 5: Syntax (cont.)

Chapter 6: Semantics

Student Presentation 3: Syntax

*Blackboard Quiz 3: Syntax posted (due October 19)*

*Blackboard discussion posting 3 (due October 19)*

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**Week 7: October 12**

Chapter 6: Semantics (cont.)

Student Presentation 4: Semantics

*Blackboard Quiz 4: Semantics posted (due October 19)*

*Blackboard discussion posting 4 (due October 19)*

Midterm Review

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**Week 8: October 19**

**MIDTERM EXAM**

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**Week 9: October 26**

Student Presentation 5: Historical Linguistics & Language Classification

Chapter 7: Historical Linguistics

Chapter 8: The Classification of Languages

*Blackboard Quiz 5: Historical Linguistics posted (due December 14)*

*Blackboard Quiz 6: Language Classification posted (due December 14)*

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**Week 10: November 2**

Student Presentation 6: Indigenous Languages and Natural Sign Languages

Chapter 9: Indigenous Languages of North America

Chapter 10: Natural Sign Languages

*Blackboard Quiz 7: Indigenous Languages of North America (due December 14)*

*Blackboard Quiz 8: Natural Sign Languages posted (due December 14)*

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**Week 11: November 9**

Student Presentation 7: Brain and Language

Chapter 13: Psycholinguistics

Chapter 14: Brain and Language

*Blackboard Quiz 9: Psycholinguistics & Brain and Language posted (due December 14)*

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**Week 12: November 16**

Student Presentation 8: Language Acquisition

Chapter 11: First Language Acquisition

Chapter 12: Second Language Acquisition

*Blackboard Quiz 10: First and Second language Acquisition posted (due December 14)*

*Blackboard discussion posting 5 (due December 07)*

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WEEK 13: NOVEMBER 23

Student Presentation 9: Language and Social Contexts

Chapter 15: Language and Social Contexts

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**Week 14: November 30**

Chapter 15: Language and Social Contexts (cont.)

Chapter 18: Computational Linguistics

*Blackboard Quiz 11: Language and Social Contexts posted (due December 14)*

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**Week 15: December 7**

Student Presentation 10: Computational Linguistics

Chapter 18: Computational Linguistics (cont.)

Final Exam Review.

*Blackboard Quiz 12: Computational Linguistics (due December 14)*

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**Week 16: December 14**

Blackboard Quizzes 5-12 due

**FINAL EXAM (due 12/14)**

## Appendix 4: Course Syllabus: Language Testing

### **WLE TSL 5471.001: Language Testing**

Fall 2005

University of South Florida

Instructor: Dr. xxx

Department of xxx

Office: xxx

Phone: xxx

Office Hours: T 2-5pm; others by appointment

E-MAIL: XXX

FAX: XXX

**Course Objectives:** This course is designed to introduce graduate students to language testing, focusing on testing in the ESL context. Main objectives are:

- A. To help students understand the fundamental concepts, principles, and concerns of testing in general, and of language testing in particular;
- B. To help students understand the purposes and uses of language tests;
- C. To introduce students to methods, techniques, and processes involved in language testing;
- D. To equip students with tools useful for testing various language skills;
- E. To help students develop the ability to construct and evaluate language tests and interpret the results of language tests; and
- F. To encourage and support student professional development through a variety of activities.

CLASS FORMAT WILL INCLUDE LECTURES, CLASS DISCUSSION, GROUP WORK, AND STUDENT PRESENTATIONS. THE LECTURES AND DISCUSSIONS WILL FOCUS ON THOSE AREAS WHERE TEACHER PRESENTATION AND CLASS DISCUSSION CAN GREATLY PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTENT COVERED.

#### TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Hughes, A. (2003). *Testing for language teachers*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Cambridge University Press.

Alderson, J., Clapham, C., & Wall, D. (1995). *Language test construction and evaluation*. Cambridge University Press.

#### Articles

Brookhart, S. (1997). A theoretical framework for the role of classroom assessment in motivating student effort and achievement. *Applied Measurement in Education*, 10, 161-180.

Brown, J., & Hudson, T. (1998). The alternatives in language assessment. *TESOL*

*Quarterly*, 32, 653-675.

## STUDENT REQUIREMENT AND CLASS POLICIES

Students are expected to assume individual responsibility and initiation in all work related to the class: Completion of all reading assignments prior to the class session at which they are discussed; participation in discussion; taking two tests, and completing a term project.

### **Assignments**

All assignments are due on the dates announced. Late written assignments will be accepted but one percentage point or equivalent will be lowered for each day an assignment is late. Oral and in-class assignments, when missed, cannot be made up. Work missed or turned in late because a student is absent for religious reasons will be dealt with in accordance with the Religious Preference Absence Policy stated below. More information about the tests and the assignments is provided following the weekly schedule. All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, and with each page numbered. It is essential for students to follow instructions given on each assignment. Students' written work will be evaluated based on content, organization, effective use of English, and appropriate academic format (i.e., APA format).

It is assumed that all written work represents the student's original thinking. Academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance with the University Academic Dishonesty Policy (see Graduate Catalog).

### **Class Attendance**

Regular class attendance is important to student success and is required. Absence for religious reasons will be dealt with in accordance with the Religious Preference Absence Policy stated below. Failure to attend presentations of term projects will negatively affect a student's participation score.

### **Tests**

Tests will be given as scheduled. If a student cannot take a test as scheduled, the student must contact the instructor and make arrangements in advance. Make-up tests will only be given in cases of emergency. Incompletes will be dealt with according to the University policy on this issue.

### Tapes or Notes

Notes or tapes of class lectures are not permitted for sale.

### **Religious Preference Absence Policy**

RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE ABSENCE POLICY: USF POLICY STATES THAT “NO STUDENT SHALL BE COMPELLED TO ATTEND CLASS OR SIT FOR AN EXAMINATION AT A DAY OR TIME PROHIBITED BY HIS OR HER RELIGIOUS BELIEF. STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO NOTIFY THEIR INSTRUCTORS IF THEY INTEND TO BE ABSENT FOR A CLASS OR ANNOUNCED EXAMINATION...PRIOR TO THE SCHEDULED MEETING. STUDENTS ABSENT FOR RELIGIOUS REASONS WILL BE GIVEN REASONABLE OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE UP ANY WORK MISSED.” THIS POLICY WILL BE IMPLEMENTED.

### **Uncollected Exams and Papers**

Students’ uncollected exams and papers will be kept for a year by the instructor. That is, they will be kept until the final exam week of the Fall 2006 semester and will then be disposed of at the discretion of the instructor.

#### **GRADING CRITERIA AND SCALE**

Your course grade will be determined as follows:

Participation (preparation, in-class and Blackboard discussion, and miscellaneous assignments)	10%
Test 1	25%
Test 2	15%
Term project	50%
Language test	20%
Project report	25%
Presentation	5%

The plus/minus grading system will be used in this class.

A+ 97-100	A 94-96	A- 90-93	B+ 87-89	B 84-86	B-80-83
C+ 77-79	C 74-76	C- 70-73	F 69 and below		

#### **WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

(Subject to modification; changes will be announced)

Week One	August 30 Introduction of course and participants Relationship between SLA research, language teaching, and language testing Hughes, Chapters 1 & 2
Week Two	September 6 Different types of tests Achieving beneficial backwash Hughes, Chapters 3 & 6
Week Three	September 13

- Validity and reliability of language tests  
Hughes, Chapters 4 & 5  
\*Discussion via Blackboard
- Week Four September 20  
The testing process and test construction  
Alderson et al, Chapter 2; Hughes, Chapters 7 & 8  
\*Discussion via Blackboard
- Week Five September 27  
The testing processes continued; Testing grammar and vocabulary  
Testing overall ability  
Alderson et al, Chapter 3; Hughes, Chapters 13 & 14
- Week Six October 4  
Testing reading  
Hughes, Chapter 11  
\*Discussion via Blackboard
- Week Seven October 11  
Testing listening  
Hughes, Chapter 12  
\*Discussion via Blackboard
- Week Eight October 18  
Testing speaking  
Hughes, Chapter 10  
\*Discussion via Blackboard
- Week Nine October 25  
**Test 1**
- Week Ten November 1  
Conferences on project
- Week Eleven November 8  
Testing writing, Hughes, Chapter 9; Alderson et al, Chapter 6  
**Language Test Due**  
\*Discussion via Blackboard
- Week Twelve November 15  
Test validation and administration  
Alderson et al, Chapters 4, 5 & 8  
Hughes Chapter 16  
\*Discussion via Blackboard
- Week Thirteen November 22  
Alternatives in language assessment  
Brown & Hudson, 1998  
Role of classroom assessment  
Brookhart, 1997  
\*Discussion via Blackboard
- Week Fourteen November 29  
**Test 2 (take home) due**

FCAT and other tests  
Test for young learners  
Hughes, Chapter 15  
Week Fifteen December 6  
Project presentations  
**Project Report due**

#### FURTHER DETAILS ON EXAMS AND MAJORWRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Tests. The purpose of the tests is to give you an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of the topics covered in the lectures and readings, to synthesize your understanding of the main ideas covered, and to apply your knowledge to solving testing problems. The tests in this class cover all materials from the lectures, the readings, and class discussions. The tests will be non-cumulative. Each test may include some or all of these types of questions: multiple-choice questions, true/false statements, term definitions, short answers, essay questions, analysis and evaluation of language tests, and writing test items. Specific details will be given prior to each test.

Term project. The term project should give you an opportunity to develop and analyze a language test. The project can be completed individually or in small groups (2-4 members). Members in a group will get the same grade from the instructor on the written project. Peer evaluations of each other's contributions will account for 30% of the grade on the project. There are three components: a language test, a project report, and an oral presentation of the project (given during the last week of the semester). More details concerning the project will be provided in a separate handout later.

I will be glad to discuss your project with you, to suggest sources, and to direct you to handbooks or guides for format. Feel free to talk with me if you have any questions.

Participation . Students are expected to participate in class discussion actively. This includes contributing to in-class discussions and activities as well as discussions via Blackboard and completing miscellaneous assignments (e.g., writing sample items and peer critiques). In preparation for class discussion of key testing concepts and processes (weeks marked with \*Discussion via Blackboard), each student is expected to post one question for discussion before class and respond to one of the questions posted by fellow classmates.

## Appendix 5: Background Information Questionnaire

This questionnaire was designed to obtain information about yourself and your background knowledge of academic writing in English and computers. Your responses will help the researcher have a better understanding of the subjects being studied.

Please answer all the questions below.

### **PERSONAL INFORMATION:**

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: MALE \_\_\_\_\_ FEMALE \_\_\_\_\_

Age Range: 20-25 \_\_\_\_\_ 26-30 \_\_\_\_\_ 31-35 \_\_\_\_\_ 36-40 \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Level: MASTER \_\_\_\_\_ PH.D \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been in the program? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your country of nationality? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your native language? \_\_\_\_\_

What other language(s) do you master? (List all) \_\_\_\_\_

What language(s) do you speak when you are with your family? \_\_\_\_\_

If English is not your native language or you were not born in the United States,

Where did you study English? (List all the places) \_\_\_\_\_

How many years of English study experience did you have? \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS

How long have you been in the United States? \_\_\_\_\_



**ACADEMIC WRITING**

What is your previous degree and area of study?

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What kind of writing do you most frequently do in your previous degree?

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What kind of writing do you most frequently do in your native language?

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---

Do you think general composition and academic writing require the same skills?

Explain?

---

---

What kind of writing do you most frequently do in your current program?

---

---

Do you think academic writing is difficult? Why or why not?

---

---

What kinds of academic writing do you have experience with? (e.g. research proposal, book review, research critique, annotated bibliography, lesson plan, etc.)

---

---

Among all the academic writing types that you have done before, which do you think is(are) most difficult and why?

---

---

What do you think will help you to succeed in the academic writing?

---

---

## COMPUTERS

Do you have easy access to computers with internet? YES / NO

Where do you have the access? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your level expertise with the following software and computer applications?

1. No Experience
2. Novice
3. Intermediate
4. Very Experienced

\_\_\_\_\_ Blackboard

\_\_\_\_\_ Sending emails

\_\_\_\_\_ Attaching files

\_\_\_\_\_ Searching the Internet

\_\_\_\_\_ Using Discussion Boards

\_\_\_\_\_ Using Chatting

\_\_\_\_\_ Using word processing

## Appendix 6: Consent Form

(For non-native speaking primary participants)

Space below reserved for IRB Stamp – Please leave blank

### **Informed Consent**

Social and Behavioral Sciences  
University of South Florida

### **Information for People Who Take Part in Research Studies**

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The following information is being presented to help you decide whether or not you want to take part in a minimal risk research study. Please read this carefully. If you do not understand anything, ask the person in charge of the study.

**Title of Study:** The role of Computer-mediated Communication on Non-native Speakers' Acquisition of Academic Literacy

**Principal Investigator:** Rui Cheng

**Study Location(s):** University of South Florida

You are being asked to participate because you are a non-native speaker of English and enrolled in a graduate level course which involves computer-mediated communication (CMC) and emphasizes the importance of academic literacy and academic writing conforming to the genres of applied linguistics. We would like to elicit information about your perceptions about CMC use in helping you acquire academic literacy as a second language learner, and how CMC influences the process and product of your academic writing etc. As CMC is more and more often involved in teaching and learning in every discipline, the results of this study will contribute to the much needed literature in this field.

### **General Information about the Research Study**

The purpose of this research study is to explore the effect of computer-mediated communication (CMC) on acquisition of academic literacy in applied linguistics of non-native speakers. The research design employed is a case study. Different sources of data and different methods are used to realize a triangulated and contextualized perspective on student's online discussions and writing. The design is particularly aimed at gathering data that have received less attention in previous studies: significance of CMC in discipline, peer roles in online discourse, language functions and focus of attention of online interactions, and final written products as a result of online communication.

### **Plan of Study**

If you participate, you will be asked to answer a short background information questionnaire as well as being interviewed twice for one hour each. The first interview is semi-structured and focuses on your perceptions on using CMC in helping you acquire academic literacy through academic writing in your discipline. The second interview is discourses-based and the purpose is to explore your approaches of communication in developing your academic literacy and your

ability of disciplinary writing. All interview sessions are going to be audio taped for transcription and accuracy purposes. Since this study will take place in the natural class setting, classroom observations will be conducted by the researcher. Your assignments and online discussion entries will also be collected for data analysis purpose. Assignments include everything such as drafts and final versions, online discussion postings, source documents, etc. that students submit to the instructor in the classroom or via Blackboard.

### Payment for Participation

You will not be paid for your participation in this study.

### Benefits of Being a Part of this Research Study

We believe the results of the study may provide the information about how to make good use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) to facilitate your acquisition of academic literacy in the discipline as well as the aspects that CMC may not work so well. The study will also help raise your awareness and your understanding of the process of developing disciplinary literacy and writing in particular.

### Risks of Being a Part of this Research Study

There's no known risk involved in this study.

### Confidentiality of Your Records

Your privacy and research records will be kept confidential to the extent of the law. Authorized research personnel, employees of the Department of Health and Human Services, and the USF Institutional Review Board and its staff, and any other individuals acting on behalf of USF, may inspect the records from this research project.

The results of this study may be published. However, the data obtained from you will be combined with data from others in the publication. The published results will not include your name or any other information that would personally identify you in any way.

Code names will be used instead of real names. Only the primary investigator and her faculty advisors have access to the data. You may have access to your own information if you are interested. All the collected data along with audiotapes will be stored locked in the primary investigator's office. Only primary investigator has access to the audiotapes and other data although the PI will invite another researcher to listen to about 10 percent of the tapes and code about 10 percent data to reach high inter-rater reliability. Any personal information of the participants will not be disclosed to the coder. All the data and audiotapes will be stored in PI's office for 3 years and destroyed afterwards.

### Volunteering to Be Part of this Research Study

Your decision to participate in this research study is completely voluntary. You are free to participate in this research study or to withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in the study. Your decision about participation, non-participation or withdrawal will in no way affect your student status as well as your course grade.

Questions and Contacts

- If you have any questions about this research study, contact Rui Cheng at (813)910-9568 or rcheng@mail.usf.edu.
- If you have questions about your rights as a person who is taking part in a research study, you may contact the Division of Research Compliance of the University of South Florida at (813) 974-5638.

Consent to Take Part in This Research Study

By signing this form I agree that:

- I have fully read or have had read and explained to me this informed consent form describing this research project.
- I have had the opportunity to question one of the persons in charge of this research and have received satisfactory answers.
- I understand that I am being asked to participate in research. I understand the risks and benefits, and I freely give my consent to participate in the research project outlined in this form, under the conditions indicated in it.
- I have been given a signed copy of this informed consent form, which is mine to keep.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Investigator Statement

I have carefully explained to the subject the nature of the above research study. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the subject signing this consent form understands the nature, demands, risks, and benefits involved in participating in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator  
Or authorized research investigator  
designated by the Principal Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix 7: Interview Guideline

### Guiding Questions for Semi-Structured Interview

(Students)

Please give me your thoughts on following questions?

1. What do you focus on when you are engaged in online discussions with peers?
2. When you encounter a piece of written assignments, how would you start and what would you do during the process?
3. What kinds of source materials do you refer to when you compose your academic writing?
4. What is the teacher's role in helping you accomplish your academic writing assignments?
5. What is the peers' role in this process?
6. What do you see as the purpose of computer-mediated communication (CMC) in this course? Why?
7. What do you see as the role of CMC in your understanding of and performance in writing in this discipline?

## Appendix 8: Teacher's Interview Guideline

(The professor)

Please give me your thoughts on following questions?

1. Why do you decide to use computer-mediated communication (CMC) in this course? Why?
2. Do you think the CMC environment promotes or prohibits your students' understanding of and performance in their writing in this discipline?
3. What do you think is your role in helping students in their academic writing?
4. Do students meet your expectations all the time?



Appendix 9: Sample Coding Scheme for Language Functions

Language Functions	Examples
Support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I like your introduction.</li> <li>2. The second paragraph is good.</li> </ol>
Critique	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. But in my opinion it takes to long till you come to the point.</li> <li>2. Your SOTP is very general.</li> </ol>
Advice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maybe divide your SOTP more clearly in paragraphs.</li> <li>2. To sum up, my advice is to put more personality in it.</li> </ol>
Elicit	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Give examples how you would do that in class.</li> <li>2. Be more detailed.</li> </ol>
Explain	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. And teachers should know that this kind of attitude never means teachers' authority itself over students.</li> <li>2. In the middle school and high school, I was very poor at science classes especially in astronomy.</li> </ol>
Admit	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You are right regarding the length of my paragraph.</li> <li>2. From time to time, I just use too many words to hit the point.</li> </ol>
Question	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Which sentence has more information?</li> <li>2. What should you do to make two sentences have the same meaning?</li> </ol>
Show doubts/disagreement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I believe, however, that teachers often seem to play as "teachers" itself, not as one member of learners.</li> <li>2. The only thing I was wondering: How could the teacher manage it that students are online at the same time so that a conversation takes place?</li> </ol>
React	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hi, guys, I was reading your comments and started thinking about the translation of acronyms.</li> <li>2. I think it is more common in English than Portuguese.</li> </ol>

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rui Cheng received her Bachelor's Degree of Arts in English for Science and Technology from Shanxi University and her M. A. in Teaching English as a Foreign Language from Capital Normal University in China. During her study for Master's degree, she has taught English to college students and middle school teachers. While in the Ph.D. program of Second Language Acquisition and Instructional Technology, Rui Cheng was a graduate assistant in the Florida Center for Instructional Technology and the Secondary Education Department in the College of Education. Her duties include assisting faculty member to integrate technology into teaching and teaching undergraduate students ESOL classes. She also presented her research in various regional and national conferences such as TESOL.