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**An Investigation into the English  
Academic Writing Strategies Employed  
by Students of HE in the NE of England  
with Particular Reference to their  
Nationalities and Gender**

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requirements of the University of Sunderland for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## ABSTRACT

The research compared native (NSE) and non-native (NNSE) learners' academic writing strategies in higher education (HE), where natives are learners who were born and educated in Britain, and non-native participants are nationals of Mainland China and Libya. This comparison was made in order to determine similarities/differences in strategies employed by the three groups (British, Libyans, and Chinese) as well as to provide possible explanations for the findings. The study also explored a further effect, namely gender. This research utilized a mixture of quantitative (structured questionnaire) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) approaches.

The results of the first stage of this study were primarily based on a questionnaire completed by 302 HE students. This examined patterns and variations among NSE and NNSE academic writing use, finding important differences between these groups in terms of their nativeness, nationality, gender, age, qualification, length of residence in the UK, IELTS score, and subject area. The second stage focused on semi-structured interviews with twelve British, Libyan and Mainland Chinese students (four of each). These presented a more complex picture of NSE and NNSE problems in academic writing and the strategies used to overcome them as it looked not only for what they used, but also how and why certain strategies were employed. Interestingly, these findings indicated that even on the occasions when NSE and NNSE use a similar strategy they tend to approach it differently.

The study deepens our understanding of the issues associated with writing strategy use in both L1 and L2 HE students and shows that very little may be assumed in cross-cultural research. Despite some variations, there is a general tendency for all three groups to adopt similar writing strategies. Moreover, the individual variations, cultural and educational background are more significant in accounting for the use of the writing strategies than the actual differences in writing by gender, nativeness and nationality.

There are clear lessons to be learnt about the informal and unguided way that most participants, regardless of nativeness, nationality and gender, seem to learn how to write. They use a variety of sources as a model, including other students' assignments, and samples of varying standards would help them differentiate between good and bad writing. As efficient academic writing cannot be assumed, there needs to be a concerted effort by EAP teachers to improve their methods of promoting more effective writing. I believe that current methods are inadequate, and suggest two more integrated or holistic approaches. These approaches seek to reduce prevarication in writing and are referred to as the 'sink' approach and the 'shuttling' approach. The 'sink' approach involves pouring down whatever thoughts come to mind. Some of these will be included in the final version, while others may be discarded (down the sink)! 'Shuttling', which is particularly prevalent in the NNSE, refers to using a variety of sources and is a useful method of assimilating information. This may take place after the commencement of writing, where more inspiration is required, though conversely, 'shuttling' could take place before the commencement of writing.

The outcomes of this research, therefore, are important in informing pedagogy on the one hand for two countries where the learning of English has become an important educational requirement and on the other for a country where teaching English is a growth industry.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my late father Sassi Abdul-Rahman who died on 13 August 2010. His death occurred towards the end of my four year study in England. No matter what, my father had always expressed his pride in my accomplishments. I wish to thank my father – ‘Thank you’ will never be enough though – for this opportunity and I trust that his support was not in vain.

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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, all the material in this thesis represents my own work. In addition, whatever I have cited or paraphrased has been mentioned in my reference list.

Signature.....

Date: .....

## ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
EAWSQ	English Academic Writing Strategy Questionnaire
HE	Higher Education
L1	First Language or Mother Tongue
L2	Second Language
LLS	Language Learning Strategy
MA	Master in Arts
MSc	Master in Science
NE	North East of England
NSE	Native Speaker of English
NNSE	Non-native Speaker of English
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SILL	Strategy Inventory for Language Learning
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
ANOVA	An analysis of variance
IELTS	International English Language Test System
TOFEL	Test of English as a Foreign Language



## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

This study investigates the academic writing strategy use employed by students of Higher Education (HE) in the North East (NE) of England who are Native Speakers of English (NSE) and Non-Native Speakers of English (NNSE), with particular reference to their nationality and gender. This chapter provides a brief background to the study and includes the research objectives; significance of the study; the scope and limitations of the study; a brief introduction to the methodology used; and the general chapter organisation of the thesis.

### **1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

A commonly expressed concern by university lecturers is that the students do not have the necessary writing strategies which are crucial in enabling them to become autonomous in their general learning and, in particular, their learning of language (McCarthy, 1991: 12). As a second language learner and teacher I have noticed that most Libyan students' writing in English at university level tends to lack a clear structure and sense of cohesion. Nunan (1991: 88) says that writing as a skill is difficult for many people writing in their first language (L1) this is an even greater problem for foreign learners of a language writing in their second language (L2). With regard to the L1 British students, it is clear in the majority of circumstances that students have acquired the necessary language in that they possess knowledge of the minimum level of vocabulary required at university level and are grammatically competent, but lack the necessary academic writing strategies. In the case of Libyan and mainland Chinese students' L2, however, the situation is more complex as it cannot be assumed that they have either the necessary language or the necessary academic writing strategies.

### **1.2. OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH**

The aim of this research was to compare native and non-native learners' academic writing strategies in Higher Education where native participants are learners who were born and educated in Britain and non-native participants are nationals of mainland China and Libya. This comparison was made in order to

determine similarities and/or differences in strategies employed by the three groups, as well as to provide possible explanations for the findings. The study also aimed to explore a possible further effect, namely gender.

### **1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research questions of the study were:

1. Do native and non-native students use similar or different academic writing strategies? If so, what are they?
2. What is the relationship, if any, between nationality and the academic writing strategies used?
3. What is the relationship, if any, between gender and the academic writing strategies used?

### **1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Recent research into the writing process of L2 writers has produced a range of conclusions. They indicate two different views: the composing process in L1 is different from L2 (Silva, 1993); and L2 writing strategies are similar to L1 writing strategies (Matsumoto, 1995; Beare, 2000). Due to the contradiction of the research findings, the limitation of generalisability, and their being based on think-aloud protocols about which there are methodological doubts, Hyland (2003: 13) stresses the importance of further research into the writing process. Drawing on the role of strategies, Sasaki highlights: "The quality of written L2 texts is more strongly associated with the quality of the students' L1/L2 writing strategies rather than with their L2 proficiency" (2000: 261). However, within the current literature, there is a lack of research overtly addressing what part nationality and gender might play in writing strategy use.

This study is different from previous studies in that it will also examine writing strategy use among Libyan HE students, a student population which has not been included in published studies on writing strategies so far. The scarcity of research on the writing strategy use of students learning in the context of a western country is another reason for conducting this study. Also, I would like to

find out if there were any differences in the use of strategies among these students according to certain background variables such as gender and nationality, and to what extent some of the strategies preferred by each nationality can be explained with reference to the educational background in which they learn English. The comparison between NSE and NNSE was not made on the assumption that NSE have greater proficiency, skill and experience in academic writing; rather, the NSE group was examined in order to discover the most commonly used strategies of the HE British students using their L1 in their native land. Moreover, I would like to find out if there were any underlying factors that indicate the overall patterns of strategy use in this native-speaking group of students. Considering the theoretical and practical significance of any patterns in English native speakers' academic strategy use, there is surprisingly little research addressing this issue.

Moreover, language learning strategy (LLS) research to date is usually characterised by the use of quantitative data collection methods, mainly self-report survey questionnaires such as the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). In language learning research, it is common to use numerical data gathered from a standardised instruments to establish relationships between language learning strategy and learner characteristics such as L2 proficiency, gender, and nationality. However, there have been doubts about the use of standardised scales because of possible contextual influences (Woodrow, 2005; Wu, 2008). There is therefore a need to gather qualitative data in LLS research as quantitative data can only provide us with a restricted account of insight into the phenomena under study.

Available research, in short, appears to indicate that the cultural background and the educational pattern in which a second language is learnt influence the choice and frequency of strategies used by the learners (Litosseliti, 2006; Ehrlich, 1997; Green & Oxford, 1995). As suggested by the literature, the relationship between language learning strategy and gender in general seems to be well-researched, while the relationship between writing strategies and gender in particular remains under-researched (Belcher, 1997; Belcher, 2001; Micciche, 2001; Fazaeli, 2005). This, together with the dearth of research into

the relationship between writing strategies and nationality (Soames, 2006) has encouraged me to fill this gap in the literature.

### **1.5. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY**

- By comparing native and non-native learners' writing strategies, it is hoped that the findings will contribute to the picture concerning patterns and variations of the use of these strategies. Although the research into LLSs has produced initial interesting insights, further research on nationality and gender variables in writing strategies specifically is needed as suggested by previous literature.

Surprisingly little research to date addresses the theoretical and practical significance of any patterns in native speakers' academic writing strategies use. Therefore, it is important and interesting to compare how NSE students and NNSE students of HE employ academic writing strategies.

- The comparison of the three groups is not just a matter of strategy use; it is a different experience altogether. This research, then, can illuminate a number of other aspects of learning strategies and, in this way, can contribute to the development of the theory of L2 learning strategies. This study will fill a gap in current knowledge as it is the first research to compare the academic writing strategies employed by NSE and NNSE HE students. Previous studies have concentrated on the similarities between writing in one's native language and writing in a second language. On occasion when NSE and NNSE were compared, the comparisons were made on reading strategies (Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001) and aspects of grammar such as the passive voice (Dabrowska & Street, 2006), processing of English wh-questions (Williams & Mobius, 2001), and the use of first person pronouns (Martinez, 2005). It is also the first study that compares three groups of HE students of different nationalities, different cultures, different L1, and different educational background, but are all studying in a western context.
- I am not aware of any study that has thoroughly investigated the academic writing strategy used by Libyan students of HE studying in the UK context.

- Classification of writing strategies of my own: the questionnaire was based on previous research on LLSs and writing strategies in general and the taxonomies devised by Soames (2006) and Petric & Czar (2003) in particular. It was divided into three sections: 1) before writing, 2) when writing, and 3) when revising. I made the items under each section more explicit and accessible than the previous ones, particularly for NNSE. See Chapter 3 for more clarifications. The results of my qualitative research have also produced a taxonomy which combines both NSE and NNSE writing strategy use (see appendix F).
- Previous instruments were used as a tool for measuring non-native students, while my EAWSQ (English Academic Writing Strategies Questionnaire) was developed to measure both native and non-native HE students. Therefore, additional items were added according to my own experience as a second language teacher and learner to make the instrument suitable for both native and non-native students.
- There is a contribution to the pedagogic literature that teachers may use. Descriptions of the strategic processing of HE students when they write academically in both L1 (Britons) and L2 (Libyans and mainland Chinese) could provide teachers with insight into the untaught strategies used by these groups of learners. Moreover, the identification of learning strategies at different levels, gender and three nationalities with different languages can provide a basis for developing and integrating instruction on strategies into language programmes.

## **1.6. CONTEXT**

The research of this study took place in the North East of England where these students were engaged in academic writing. The study focused on academic writing strategy use. The sample comprised 202 NNSE students and 100 NSE students who were studying at Newcastle, Northumbria, Teesside, Sunderland and Durham Universities. They were either enrolled in the third year of undergraduate degree programmes such as Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Commerce or were postgraduate studying at Master of

Arts, Master of Science, Master of Education, Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy level. All the participating students had graduated from secondary, high school prior to their enrolment in the aforementioned universities.

## **1.7. THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

For the design of this study, a mixed-method approach was used. By creating a design using diverse methodologies, I am not claiming to prove the certainty of the first method, nor does agreement between the results of the two methods prove the validity of the second method. Moreover, I am not assuming that propositions and answers derived from different methods can agree or disagree with each other. Rather, I am trying to achieve a greater insight than if I followed the most frequent method encountered in the literature of language learning strategy in general and writing strategy in particular, namely think-aloud protocol and Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). The following data collection techniques were used:

- Structured questionnaire: this included a background questionnaire and the 72-item EAWSQ.
- Semi-structured interviews with twelve learners, four from each nationality. The interviews were aimed at obtaining deeper insight into how and why certain strategies were employed. Interviews were also designed for triangulation purposes.

The methodology used in this study is discussed in full in Chapter 4.

### **1.7.1. Self-Positioning of the Author**

It is inevitable that my own preconceived views and opinions have some influence on my role as researcher. My position as a Libyan female, a teacher of language and writing – also influenced by previous research – must have a bearing on my beliefs. I was personally involved in all aspects of interviews, distribution of and analysing questionnaires.

As an interpretivist, I must accept responsibility for my role and acknowledge my own influence on the research outcomes. I found my gender to play a role in the investigation and my manifestation as a female Muslim researcher affects the way I was perceived in the field and the roles and motives that are attributed to it. In most cases my role and motive was perceived as the one of a female Muslim researcher, but for some I was a post graduate student and a possible future colleague. I tried my best to be explicit on how my self was a significant influence on the process of the inquiry. This includes my motives for carrying out the study, feelings that arose during interactions with participants and responses to those feelings, challenges in managing my role as a researcher, and strategies to make meaning of gathered data. I honestly reflected all aspects of my research, including mistakes and alterations as my study progressed.

### **1.8. CLARIFYING TERMS**

In order to avoid ambiguity, key vocabulary terms utilised in this work are listed below. While there is a great deal of scholarly debate regarding precise definitions, it is not within the scope of this study to create definite definitions. Rather, the working definitions for the purpose of this study are given as:

*Native speakers of English* (NSE) are learners who were born and educated in the UK and for whom English is their first language or mother tongue. “The British” is the term I use interchangeably to refer to the NSE.

*Non-native speaker of English* (NNSE) are nationals of Libya and mainland China and for whom Arabic and Chinese respectively are their first language or mother tongue. Accordingly, English is not their mother tongue but rather was acquired later in childhood/young adulthood.

The term *writing process*, as used in this project, refers to pre-writing, drafting, feedback, revising and editing, as part of a non-linear model.

*Learning strategies*: while a variety of definitions of the term learning strategy have been suggested in the literature, this thesis will use the definition first suggested by Collins who saw learning strategies as “behaviours and thoughts

that a learner employs during learning and that are intended to influence the learner's encoding process" (1994: 4).

*Academic writing strategies* is the specific techniques, approaches, behaviours and actions that students take in order to make their writing more efficient and effective (Petric & Czarl, 2003: 189; Cohen, 1998: 4; Oxford, 1990: 8; Wenden, 1987: 6).

*Mixed-method approach* is used to refer to the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data sequentially in a single study and the integration of the data will be at the interpretation stage.

*Mmethodological triangulation* refers to the combination of several research methodologies in one study such as the use of different data collection techniques within the same study (Cohen, 2007: 142). See Chapter Four for further information.

## **1.9. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

There are two primary limitations of this study. First, the quantitative findings presented in this study may not be generalised to all settings since they are not based on a random sample. Although every attempt was made to use randomisation, this was not possible due to data protection issues. I was not permitted to access students' contact details. Unfortunately I needed to approach students myself (for example, in university libraries and cafeterias). This resulted in having a convenience sample as opposed to a random sample. See Chapter Four for further information.

The second limitation of this study is that the student participants also diverged in a number of ways other than the factors intended (nativeness, nationality, gender). Examples of additional variants include length of residence in the UK, level of study, area of study, age and International English Language Test System (IELTS) score. Having said that, interesting results and findings emerged from the inclusion of the above factual information in the questionnaire. See Chapter Five on the analysis of the data.



## **1.10. STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS**

This thesis consists of eight chapters. Chapter One describes the background of the study and presents the purpose and the significance of carrying out this study, as well as a brief introduction of the methodology adopted. Chapter Two reviews the literature of LLSs, including the theories of language strategies and language learning strategy classifications. Chapter Three focuses on the literature of first and second language writing rather than learning in general, including first and second language writing theories and writing strategy classifications. Chapter Four handles the methodology of the study, including descriptions of the quantitative and qualitative samples, data collection procedures, and data analysis. Chapter Five presents the results of Phase I of the study which were mainly quantitative in nature. Chapter Six displays the qualitative results obtained from the semi-structured interviews. Chapter Seven discusses the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative data with reference to previous research on academic writing strategy use. Chapter Eight primarily sums up the main findings and outlines the limitations of the study and its pedagogical implications.

## **1.11. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This chapter has introduced the research aims and questions to be investigated. It has also outlined the significance of the study and set out the context of the project. The contributions to knowledge and certain limitations of the study have been stated and it has concluded with the global structure of the thesis.

In the following chapter issues in language learning strategies are discussed.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW I LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES**

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter serves to fulfil the basic functions of a literature review as described by Norris and Ortega: “to get a sense of what we already know about a particular question or problem, to understand how it has been addressed methodologically, and to figure out where we need to go next with our research” (2006: 5). Specifically, it examines conceptual framework of Language Learning Strategies (LLSs) definitions, their classifications, factors that influence learners’ choice of LLSs, LLS theory and LLS instruction.

### **2.2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF LLSS**

A survey of the literature in the field of LLSs reveals that we still do not know very much about language learning (Hyland, 2003; Macaro, 2003: 250). It is important, therefore, not to base any approach of learning and teaching too narrowly on one theory. Lack of agreement among teachers on the ideal approach to adopt within different sociocultural background settings throws up an exciting new research environment which needs exploration due to the lack of data regarding strategies that can help learners produce acceptable pieces of writing. Moreover, understanding the role of culture in learning strategies may play a crucial part of the processes in both learning and teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Hence I have chosen to research the influence of nativeness, nationality and gender – all cultural factors on a specific area of language strategy use. Therefore the next sections are needed to introduce LLS definition, classification, theory and factors that influence the strategies preferences.

#### **2.2.1. Definition of LLSs**

All language learners use LLSs either consciously or unconsciously when processing new information and performing tasks in the language classroom. Learning strategies are “techniques, approaches, or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information” (Wenden, 1987: 6). Oxford considers that “any

specific action taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations” (1990: 8) is a language learning strategy. According to Stern, “the concept of learning strategy is dependent on the assumption that learners consciously engage in activities to achieve certain goals and learning strategies can be regarded as broadly conceived intentional direction and learning techniques” (1992: 261). Meanwhile, Brown gives a more comprehensive definition (2000:113):

Strategies are specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information. They are contextualized ‘battle plans’ that might vary from moment to moment, or day to day, or year to year. Strategies vary intra-individually; each of us has a number of possible ways to solve a particular problem, and we choose one—or several in sequence—for a given problem.

### **2.2.2. Types of LLSs**

According to Carter and Nunan, the major types of LLSs are: cognitive; mnemonic; metacognitive; compensatory; affective; and social. Definitions of these given below, although it should be noted that despite attempts to distinguish between these six types, “the boundaries are still fuzzy ... since learners sometimes employ more than one strategy at a given time” (2001:167).

#### **2.2.2.1. Cognitive strategies**

Cognitive strategies help learners make and strengthen associations between new and already known information (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990) and facilitate the mental restructuring of information. Examples of cognitive strategies are: guessing from context; analysing; reasoning inductively and deductively; taking systematic notes; and reorganising information (Carter & Nunan, 2001: 167). Cognitive strategies usually impose hypothesis testing such as searching for clues in surrounding material and one’s own background knowledge, hypothesising the meaning of the unknown item, and determining whether this meaning makes sense; if not, then repeating at least a part of the process.

#### **2.2.2.2. Mnemonic strategies**

Mnemonic strategies help learners link a new item with something known. Whilst this would seem to be similar to cognitive strategies, they differ because, unlike cognitive strategies, mnemonic strategies do not typically foster deep associations; rather, they relate one thing to another in a simplistic, stimulus-response manner. These strategies are useful for memorising information in an orderly string in various ways. Examples are: sounds; body movement; and locating an item on a page or a blackboard. These are often the first steps in learning vocabulary or grammar rules.

#### **2.2.2.3. Metacognitive strategies**

Metacognitive strategies help learners manage themselves as learners, the general learning process and specific learning tasks. Self-knowledge strategies include identifying one's own interests, needs and learning style preferences. In relation to the meaning and learning process in general, metacognitive strategies include identifying available resources, deciding which resources are valuable for a given task, setting a study schedule and finding or creating a good place to study. This set of strategies also includes general goals for language learning as language learning might be hindered if goals are unclear or in conflict. Besides helping learners with the overall process of language learning, metacognitive strategies assist learners in dealing effectively with a given language task. Examples are: deciding on task-related goals for language learning; paying attention to the task in hand; planning for steps within the language task; reviewing relevant vocabulary and grammar; finding task-relevant materials and resources; deciding which other strategies might be useful and applying them; choosing alternative strategies if those do not work; and monitoring language mistakes during the task.

#### **2.2.2.4. Compensatory strategies**

Compensatory strategies help learners make up for missing knowledge when using English, particularly in spoken and written communication. Compensatory strategies for speaking include using synonyms, circumlocution and gesturing

to suggest the meaning. Compensatory strategies for writing encompass several of the same actions such as synonym use or circumlocution.

#### **2.2.2.5. Affective strategies**

Affective strategies include identifying one's feelings such as anxiety and anger. They also include awareness of the learning circumstances or tasks that evoke such emotions. However, the acceptability of affective strategies is influenced by cultural norms. For example, some cultures do not encourage individuals to probe or record their own feelings in relation to learning (Kubota, 1999). Negative attitudes and beliefs can reduce learners' motivation and harm language learning, while positive attitudes and beliefs can do the reverse. Thus, using affective strategies can be useful for learning language.

#### **2.2.2.6. Social strategies**

Social strategies facilitate learning with others and help learners understand the culture of the language they are learning. Examples of social strategies are: asking questions for clarification or conformation; asking for help; learning about social or cultural norms and values; and studying together outside of class. It is worth noting that while cognitive theory tends to downplay social strategies in favour of cognitive and metacognitive strategies (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990), social strategies are nevertheless crucial for communicative language learning.

#### **2.2.3. Classification of LLSs**

A commonly expressed concern by scholars about researching LLSs is that "they cannot usually be observed directly; they can only be inferred from language learner behaviour" (Griffiths, 2004: 11). As Ellis describes, "It is a bit like trying to work out the classification system of a library when the only evidence to go on consists of the few books you have been allowed to take out" (1986: 14). Given the difficulties of such a task, "the challenge has been to devise a means first of all to record and subsequently to interpret the phenomena involved" (Griffiths, 2004: 11).

Classification of LLSs has primarily followed the theory of cognition (Macaro 2001). Cognition refers to how the brain works for information processing and retrieval. Classification of strategies has many advantages. Strategy subsets enable researchers to describe the correspondence between mental processes and strategic processes (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). According to Gamage, Strategy inventories may also serve as a valuable reference guide for educational instructors in the process of promoting autonomy in the language learner (2003: 3). Therefore, research into what learners do to learn a language has resulted in both the identification of specific strategies and attempts to classify them in some way. In the following sections, different classifications of strategies will be presented in chronological order.

#### **2.2.3.1. Wenden and Rubin's (1987) classification**

Wenden and Rubin (1987) classify learning strategies into two categories: cognitive (steps used by learners to process linguistic and socio-linguistic contents) and self-management (planning, monitoring and evaluation), on the basis of their learning functions.

#### **2.2.3.2. Rubin's (1987) classification**

Rubin (1987) classifies strategies into three main categories which are learning strategies, communication strategies, and social strategies.

1. Learning strategies contribute directly to the development of the language system which the learner constructs. Rubin (1987) includes cognitive and metacognitive strategies in the first type of her classification as they contribute directly or indirectly to language acquisition. The six cognitive strategies are: clarification or verification, guessing or inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning, practice, memorisation and monitoring. The four metacognitive strategies are: planning, prioritising, setting goals and self-management.
2. Communication strategies are used to encourage communication with others such as the use of synonyms, use of gesture or mime. This type of strategy relates indirectly to learning.

3. Social strategies are activities that learners use in an attempt to increase exposure to the language. These strategies also contribute indirectly to learning.

#### **2.2.3.3. O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) classification**

O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 99) have divided strategies into three groups: cognitive, metacognitive and social/affective.

1. Cognitive strategies operate directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning, for example, inferencing meaning to context; using dictionaries and grammar books; retaining information through memorisation, repetition, mnemotechnic tricks and writing it down; and retrieving information.
2. Metacognitive strategies are higher order executive skills that may entail planning for, monitoring or evaluating the success of a learning activity, for example, self-management involves setting goals, monitoring and self-evaluation.
3. Social/affective strategies involve either interaction with another person or ideational control over affect, for example, co-operating with classmates, friends and teachers or speaking English with other speakers of English.

#### **2.2.3.4. Oxford's (1990) classification**

As mentioned in Section 2.2.2.1, the concept of learning strategies is based in part on cognitive learning theory in which learning is seen as an active, mental, learner-constructed process. The most comprehensive language learning strategy scheme, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), developed by Oxford, separates strategies into two strategy orientations and six strategy groups. The strategy orientations are: 1) a direct learning orientation consisting of memory, cognitive, and linguistic deficiency compensation strategy groups; and 2) an indirect learning orientation consisting of metacognitive, affective, and social strategy groups.

1. Direct learning orientation strategies are those requiring mental processing of the language which involves the identification, retention, storage, or retrieval of words, phrases, and other elements of the target language.
2. Indirect learning orientation strategies concern the management of the learning and include such activities as: needs assessment, activities planning and monitoring, and outcome evaluation. The indirect strategies also involve aspects that aid the learner in regulating emotions, motivation, and attitudes. These include routines for self-encouragement and the reduction of anxiety, and those which address the actions learners take in order to communicate with others, such as asking questions for clarification and cooperating with others in communication.

According to Oxford (1990: 9), the six groups of strategies are explained as follows:

1. Memory strategies have a highly specific function which is to help students store and retrieve new information, for example, grouping or using imagery.
2. Cognitive strategies enable learners to understand and produce new language by many different means, for example, summarising or reasoning deductively.
3. Compensation strategies allow learners to use the language despite their often-large gaps in knowledge, for example, guessing or using synonyms.
4. Metacognitive strategies are “actions which go beyond purely cognitive devices, and which provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process” (Oxford, 1990: 136). Examples are: centring one’s learning, evaluating and monitoring.
5. Affective strategies deal with emotion, attitudes, motivations, and values. Examples are: lowering one’s anxiety and encouraging oneself.
6. Social strategies include asking questions, cooperating with peers and proficient users of the target language, and empathising with others.



Each of these six strategy groups can be further subdivided. Oxford's model outlines a comprehensive, multi levelled, and theoretically well-conceived taxonomy of LLSs. This taxonomy usefully encompasses a continuum of strategies, from affective personal management and general approaches to basic learning to specific language learning, memory, and communicative techniques.

Macaro (2001), however, views all LLSs as standing on a continuum without a clear line dividing the strategy types into particular areas. Nonetheless, regardless of how they are classified, "the exact number of strategies available and how these strategies should be classified still remain open for discussion" (Gamage, 2003: 4). A comparative analysis of various types of strategies classifications described in literature supported the view that O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) classification of strategies into cognitive, metacognitive and socio/affective strategies as well as Oxford's six-subset strategies taxonomy are more consistent with learners' use of strategies than the direct and indirect dimensions (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002).

### **2.3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGY THEORY**

As Griffiths puts it "over the years many different methods and approaches to the teaching and learning of language to and by speakers of other languages, each with its own theoretical basis, have come into and gone out of fashion" (2004: 5). Despite being fuzzily defined (Ellis, 1994: 529) and controversially classified (O'Malley et al, 1985: 22), LLSs are still the focus of contemporary educators as they are considered to be crucial tools to augment learning.

One of the theoretical assumptions which inspires current ideas on LLSs is the comparison of successful and less successful learners. Along with McLaughlin (1987), Griffiths states that (2004: 10):

Language learning strategy theory postulates that, other things being equal, at least part of this differential success rate is attributable to the varying strategies which different learners bring to the task. From this perspective, which views students as being able to influence their own learning, the learning of language becomes a cognitive process similar in many ways to any other kind of learning.

On the contrary to the above view, Krashen's Monitor and Acquisition/Learning Hypotheses (Krashen, 1976; 1977) state that conscious learning strategies are not helpful in the development of language as it can be only acquired unconsciously through natural communications

Except for the Monitor and Acquisition/Learning Hypotheses, Griffiths considers LLS theory "works comfortably alongside most of the contemporary language learning and teaching theories, and fits easily within a wide variety of different methods and approaches" (2004: 10). To support this claim, Griffiths provides examples of how LLS can work easily alongside other theories (2004: 10):

[M]emory and cognitive strategies are involved in the development of vocabulary and grammar knowledge on which the grammar translation method depends. Memory and cognitive strategies can be involved to make the patterning of automatic responses characteristic of the audio-lingual method more effective. Learning from errors (developed from interlanguage theory) involves cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Compensation and social strategies can easily be assimilated into communicative competence theory and the communicative language teaching approach. Methods such as suggestopedia involve affective strategies.

### **2.3.1. The Good Language Learner**

Many studies focus on characteristics of 'the good language learner'. For example, Rubin (1975) identifies a number of characteristics of the good language learner including: being a willing and precise guesser who has a strong drive to communicate and is uninhibited and therefore willing to make mistakes, focuses on form by looking at patterns and using analysis to take advantage of all practice opportunities, monitors his or her speech and that of others, thus paying attention to meaning.

There has been a lot of further research into what makes a good language learner. The following is a brief summary of the characteristics supposed to be crucial for good L2 learners suggested by Rubin (1975), Reiss (1985) and Ramirez (1986). Good language learners think about how they are learning. They try to find out what works for them and what does not. If they do not understand the purpose of a particular topic, they ask for help. Good language

learners are risk-takers and researchers. For example, they will try out different ways of learning vocabulary until they find the way that suits them best. They are also not afraid of making mistakes because they know that these will help them master the language. Good language learners are realistic. They know that it will take time and effort to become proficient in English, and that there will be periods where they do not seem to be making much progress. Good language learners are independent. They do not expect to learn English just by sitting in the classroom and do not rely on the teacher to totally direct their learning.

Good language learners are organised and active. They use their time to learn English sensibly and are always looking for opportunities to develop their language both inside and outside of the classroom. Good language learners have a balanced concern for communication and accuracy. Some students are experts at communicating their thoughts but do not worry that they make many mistakes in doing so. The good language learner, on the other hand, is concerned with both communicating and doing so as accurately as possible.

The above are the qualities that have been found in the studies of 'the good language learner', yet, there are still many other factors that influence how quickly and effectively a learner learns a language. Such studies have led to investigations comparing more successful language learners with less successful peers. At first it was thought that the former, compared with the latter, employed more strategies and did so with greater frequency, more awareness and better ability to describe their strategy use. However, none of these factors consistently distinguished between more or less effective language learners. Research revealed that more successful learners typically understood which strategies fitted the particular language tasks they were attempting. Moreover, more effective learners are better at combining strategies as needed (Abraham & Vann, 1987).

The results of several good language learner studies suggest that successful foreign language (FL) learners use a variety of strategies to assist them in gaining command over new language skills (O'Mally, 1987). The selection of

appropriate learning language strategies enables students to take responsibility for their own learning by enhancing learner autonomy, independence and self-direction—necessary attributes for life-long learning (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989). By understanding the strategies that successful FL learners use, less competent learners may be able to improve their skills in a foreign language through training in strategies evidenced among those who are more successful.

Nevertheless, Chamot & El-Dinary (1999) and El-Dib (2004) suggested that identifying and describing learning strategies used by language learners and the correlation of these strategies with other learner variables such as proficiency level, age, gender, motivation and the like are still under-researched.

### **2.3.2. Learning and Autonomy**

According to Rausch (2000) mastering learning is a vital component of mastering a foreign or a second language. This mastery is essential in assisting language learners in many aspects of language learning, such as consolidating vocabulary, acquiring basic structures, accumulating the necessary linguistic and communication skills, as well as placing the learner in active control of their own learning processes. As he puts it (2000: 1):

The process of becoming successful at learning nurtures learners who are autonomous and seek individualized approaches to specific learning objectives. An approach which includes conscious consideration of the process of learning as well as a mastery of typical language syllabus content not only contributes to more effective mastery of that specific content in the traditional educational setting, but it also helps lead to the development of lifelong learners, be that in language learning or some other area of interest that requires metacognition.

However, it has been found that culture and practice affect the development of such an orientation to learning (Oxford, 1996; Rausch, 2000). In Japan, for example, the adherence of a teaching-centred approach as opposed to a learning-centred approach might be considered as a key factor that reticent motivation as it reduces learner autonomy. The outcome of such educational practice leads to lack of student motivation towards learning and encourages the desire on the part of many Japanese students to receive and passively

absorb knowledge provided by teachers which barrier effective learning in Japan (see, Dadour & Robbins, 1996).

According to McMullen (2009: 419), strategy use facilitates second language acquisition, improves student performance and endorses greater learner autonomy as appropriate strategies choice allows learners to take more responsibility for their own learning. Moreover, this enables students to “keep on learning even when they are no longer in a formal classroom setting” (Oxford & Crookall, 1988, cited in Oxford & Nyikos, 1989: 291).

### **2.3.3. Self-Regulated Learning**

Paris & Paris, (2001) and Zimmerman, (2002) define self-regulated learning as the ability to control and influence one’s learning processes positively: the learners take personal initiative, apply powerful strategies to achieve individually valued learning goals and scrutinize their understanding in order to detect and eliminate possible comprehension problems. According to Nückles, Hübner & Renkl, “self-regulated learning skills are crucial at almost all levels of education” (2008: 2).

#### **2.3.3.1. Cognitive and metacognitive strategies in models of self-regulated learning**

Following Schraw (1998), cognitive skills are essential to perform a task while metacognition is necessary to understand how the task was performed. Thus metacognition can be conceptually distinguished from cognition in that it takes cognitive processes or skills as its object (Winne & Hadwin, 1998). According to Schraw (1998), there are two components of metacognition, knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition. Knowledge of cognition, or metacognitive knowledge, includes declarative knowledge about the individual as a learner as well as procedural and provisional knowledge (that is, knowledge about how, when, and why to use cognitive strategies), also called meta-strategic knowledge (Zohar & Peled, 2008). Regulation of cognition incorporates strategies that permit students to manage their learning (Schraw, 1998). Three essential regulatory strategies can be distinguished: 1) planning, which refers to the selection of appropriate cognitive strategies in relation to a specific task; 2)

intentional monitoring of one's comprehension and task performance; and 3) judgment, which refers to the ability to assess the products and effectiveness of one's learning process.

The dynamic interaction between cognitive and metacognitive (that is, regulatory) strategies is proposed in process models of self-regulated learning (Perels et al., 2005; Zimmerman, 2002). Zimmerman's model describes self-regulated learning as a cyclical and interactive process that proceeds through three phases: 1) In the forethought (that is, planning) phase, the learner selects appropriate learning strategies in order to achieve learning goals perceived as personally applicable. 2) In the performance phase, the learner employs the selected strategies and continuously examines his/her task performance and comprehension. 3) In the self-reflection phase, the learner evaluates the product of the performance phase in order to decide how contented s/he is with the results and which conclusions and goals can be adopted for the next learning cycle. Thus, the self-reflection phase of a previous learning cycle naturally extends into the forethought phase of the subsequent learning cycle (Zimmermann, 1999).

#### **2.3.3.2. Self-regulation in writing**

As academic writing is a complex process involving continuous problem solving in an often ill-defined task, research (Perels et al., 2005; Zimmerman, 2002) suggests that good writers regulate their writing through a cyclical process of goal setting, monitoring, modifying strategies, and evaluating progress and product.

### **2.4. FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CHOICE OF SECOND LANGUAGE (L2) LEARNING STRATEGIES**

Over the past decades, the focus of the growing body of research has been on the relationship between language learning strategy use and influencing variables such as gender, nationality, age, language proficiency and area and level of discipline (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Ok, 2003; Griffiths, 2003; Fazali, 2005; McMullen, 2009; Tercanlioglu, 2004; Wharton, 2000; Lan & Oxford, 2003). The following sections discuss these aspects.

### **2.4.1. Gender as a Factor in Strategy Selection**

In many cultures around the world, strategy use often differs by gender—but not always. Females typically seem to report more strategy use than do males in many different cultures and with many different target languages (Oxford, 1996). Yet, studies which have examined the relationship between gender and strategy use have come to mixed conclusions. Since Oxford's call for more research in the area of gender and LLSs, a number of studies have been conducted worldwide.

Most of these studies reported higher strategy use among females. For example, Green and Oxford (1995), Ehrman and Oxford (1989), Oxford and Nyikos (1989), Wang (2002), Ok (2003) and Fazali (2005) discovered distinct gender differences in strategy use. Oxford, Nyikos and Ehrman (1988) summarized four studies concerning gender differences in language learning, confirming that females use a greater range of LLSs. Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1990) discovered that girls use metacognitive strategies, such as goal-setting, planning, keeping records and monitoring, more than boys. According to Green and Oxford (1995), 15 out of 50 strategies on the SILL (Oxford, 1990) showed differences between women and men in terms of strategy use, with women using them more frequently, while only one strategy was used more often by men than women. Oxford and Ehrman's (1995) comprehensive study on 520 language learners over an average of 20 weeks, also discovered that females' use of strategies was more frequent than males'. Lan and Oxford (2003) found that with Taiwanese children's SILL, significant differences in strategy use between girls and boys were present for 11 out of 50 strategies, with these differences in favour of greater strategy use by girls.

However, a number of studies revealed no significant gender difference in strategy use. Ehrman and Oxford's (1990) study, for example, failed to discover any evidence of differing language learning strategy use between males and females. Moreover, no significant gender difference was found in studies whose participants were Arabic-speaking students (Salem, 2006; Shmais, 2003; Al-Otaibi, 2004; McMullen, 2009). In McMullen's (2009), no statistically significant difference was noted between male and female Saudi EFL university students.

However, female students reported using language learning strategies more frequently than males. Unfortunately, the researcher did not posit reasons for such tendencies.

Similar studies from Asia have also reported no significant gender difference among their respondents (Peng, 2001; Phakiti, 2003). Bilingual college students in Singapore evidenced no statistically significant gender effect in their reported strategy use (Wharton, 2000). According to the researcher, this may be attributable to an overall superiority in language learning ability and expertise on the part of bilingual students which may have equalized any potential gender differences in strategy use. Regardless of gender, Korean students are not typically encouraged to talk with classmates, so it stands to reason that social strategies might not show a significant gender effect. This may also be true in such countries where teachers are authoritative figures (Lee & Oxford, 2008).

Interestingly, Tercanlioglu's study (2004) reports a higher employment among Turkish males in overall strategy use. Nevertheless, the researcher attributed the over-reporting on the part of males and under-reporting on the part of females as a result of cultural factors. According to the researcher, the higher male scores could have less to do with actual strategy use; rather, it could have more to do with low female self-esteem and over-confidence of men in a "male-dominant Turkish society" (Ibid, 2004:8).

In contrast to these significant gender differences, there are also studies showing a less clear distinction in strategy use between males and females (Dadour & Robbins, 1996; Oh, 1996; Park, 1999). Kaylani (1996) found that girls are different from boys in terms of strategy use, not because of gender alone but because of gender in relation to proficiency. It might be concluded from such a review that although men and women do not always demonstrate differences in language learning strategy use, where differences are found women tend to use more LLSs than men (Oxford, 1989: 239; Kaylani, 1996:84).

Litosseliti states that "in terms of foreign language acquisition, findings are inconsistent and depend on various factors" (2006: 89). The limitation of fixed notions of gender differences in second language acquisition (SLA) research is



also addressed by Ehrlich (1997), who recommends focusing on social and linguistic constructions of gender. Along with Sunderland (2000), Ehrlich argues that the focus on male/female variation tends to exaggerate and over-generalise the dissimilarities, create a fixed and static notion of gender differences in language-related behaviours, and ignore the social, cultural and situational contexts in which language is acquired and used.

More recently, gender is seen as a less 'fixed' and unitary phenomenon than it used to be, with studies emphasising, or at least acknowledging, considerable diversity amongst female and male speakers; the shifting relationship between gender and other aspects of identity; and the importance of context in determining how people use language. From this perspective, importantly, gender is seen less as a prior attribute that affects language use and more as an interactional achievement—something that may be performed (or negotiated and perhaps contested) in specific ways in different contexts.

Although gender has been a social variable in quantitative studies of language variation carried out since the 1960s, the methodology adopted in a range of studies have however been criticised by a number of language and gender researchers (Cameron, 1992; Coates, 1986; 2004). Particularly interesting insights into such phenomena have come from recent studies of language and sexuality. Studies have also explored different discourses associated with femininity and masculinity. There has also been valuable discussion of methodological issues, for example, what different approaches can bring to the study of language and gender. This includes variationist and interactional sociolinguistics; linguistic ethnography; conversation analysis; critical discourse analysis; discursive psychology; feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis; and corpus linguistics (Swann & Maybin, 2008).

#### **2.4.2. Nationality as a Factor in Strategy Selection**

According to Oxford, "[n]ationality or ethnicity influences strategy use" (1990: 13). In this context, nationality refers to a group of people divided by their language background such as Chinese, Japanese, German, Libyan and French. Cultural background, referred to as nationality in this study, has been

linked to the use and choice of LLSs (Wharton, 2000). Studies which have investigated nationality as a factor in LLS use are not easy to find, although Griffiths and Parr (2000) published findings where European students reported using LLSs significantly more frequently than students of other nationalities. Griffiths (2003) discovered significant statistically differences in his study according to nationality. In a study involving a questionnaire and group interviews in Taiwan, Yang (1998) made several interesting discoveries about her students' LLS use, including strategies for using dictionaries. She also reported in a later study (1999) that her students were aware of various LLSs but few actually used them. Using a journal writing method, Usuki (2000) discussed the psychological barriers to the adoption of effective LLSs by Japanese students. Politzer and McGroarty (1985) discovered that Asian students exhibited fewer of the strategies expected of good language learners than did Hispanic students (see Section 2.3.1 for further information). Wharton (2000) found that bilingual Asian students learning a third language (English) favoured social strategies more than any other types. The findings of Altan's study (2003), however, indicate that very few differences in overall strategy use emerged among Chinese, Hungarian, and Turkish background ELT-major learners. Sheorey (1999) indicates that the students' cultural and educational background may have an influence on the strategies they use, a result consistent with some of the previous studies which have examined the relationship between cultural and educational background and strategy use (for example, Oxford, 1996).

Past research on the learning of Chinese learners has shown the importance of taking into considerations contextual influences (for example, Chen, Lee & Stevenson, 1996). For example, Asian students were found to use LLSs which are different from those of other cultural backgrounds (Griffiths, 2003; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985). Oxford (1996) points out that culture is one of the factors which influence LLS use. Among the various reasons for the cultural differences in LLS use between Chinese learners and others, Confucianism has been the most widely suggested (for example, Marton, Dall'Alba & Tse, 1996). However, recently there have been warnings that the influences of culture on language

learning might be over-represented in past research (Shi, 2006). In addition to culture, other contextual factors such as the role of English in society and the education system might influence the LLS use of Chinese ESL learners.

Findings of past research on the LLS use of Chinese ESL learners have contributed to the stereotype of Chinese learners as rote-learners who tended to use a limited range of LLSs in their learning. For example, Biggs (1996) as well as Marton, Dall'Alba and Tse (1996) suggest repetition and memory-based strategies are important in facilitating understanding because of the high value placed on effort and perseverance in Confucianism. Other research findings and observations (e.g. Harvey, 1985; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985) also suggest that Confucianism is a prominent factor which contributes to the stereotype of Chinese learners as rote learners. However, with the proliferation of research, Chinese ESL learners were found to use a variety of learning strategies (e.g. Goh & Foong, 1997). Besides, more and more research seems to provide evidence which is contrary to the earlier conclusion that Chinese learners are rote-learners. In Goh and Foong's (1997) study of ESL students from China, the following metacognitive LLSs were found to be popular among the respondents: planning, monitoring, and evaluating. Among other studies on the LLS use of Chinese ESL learners, Bedell and Oxford (1996) found that compensation strategies were the most frequently used LLSs among 353 secondary and tertiary students in China. Surprisingly, memory strategies were found to be the least frequently used LLSs.

While earlier studies on LLS use focused more on the integrated use of LLSs, more recent studies focus on the use of LLSs in specific language tasks. Asian students were found to have high resistance to using the cognitive LLS of grouping in learning vocabulary (O'Malley et al, 1985) and imagery in learning vocabulary (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Gu and Johnson (1996) reported that in learning vocabulary, Chinese ESL learners used selective attention and self-monitoring frequently. In listening, Goh (2002) found that Chinese ESL learners used inferencing, directed attention, elaboration, contextualization, and self-encouragement more frequently. More proficient Chinese ESL listeners were found to use planning, monitoring, self-evaluating more frequently than other

cognitive and social LLSs (Wang, 2002). In reading, Chinese-speaking university students in Canada were found to use a number of LLSs, namely using background knowledge, translation, self-questioning, summarizing and prediction to plan, monitor, evaluate and remedy their comprehension (Li & Munby, 1996). There has been a lack of research in the LLS use of Chinese ESL in speaking and writing (Zhang, 2003).

In the Hong Kong context, Peacock and Ho (2003) investigated the LLS use of tertiary students across eight disciplines. They found that compensation strategies were the most frequently employed LLSs. They were followed by cognitive, metacognitive, social, memory and affective LLSs.

As mentioned earlier, in several studies of the above review (e.g. Biggs, 1996), there is a tendency to over-emphasise the role of Confucianism in influencing the LLS use of Chinese ESL learners. However, it should be remembered that culture is only one among many contextual factors which determine the learning behaviours of learners. In addition to Confucianism, the role of English in the Hong Kong context and the education system are suggested as factors influencing the LLS use of Chinese ESL learners in Hong Kong. Another observation from the above review is that there is no common pattern of LLS use found among Chinese ESL learners. There is a need for ELS teachers to identify the LLS use patterns of specific ESL learners.

Wu (2008: 79) studied LLSs employed by Chinese students in Hong Kong by using semi-structured interviews and found that social/affective LLSs were more popular than metacognitive and cognitive LLSs among the participants. Besides, research participants were found to use different LLSs for different tasks and in different situations. Three contextual factors, namely the role of English in Hong Kong, the education system and Confucianism, in addition to some learner characteristics, are suggested as possible influences on LLS use.

Hong-Nam and Leavell state that “culturally-specific strategy use may be a by-product of instructional approaches favoured by specific cultural groups as opposed to inherent predispositions based on nationality ... of the individual” (2006: 3). For instance, students educated in the environments of a lecture- and

textbook-centred teaching approach may use different strategies compared to students trained in student-centred contexts (Kashani et al, 2006). As language is so culturally situated (Garcia, 2005), it is difficult to determine whether differences between groups are a result of differences in instructional delivery, socio-cultural elements, or other culturally specific factors.

Such different and various research findings do nothing but accentuate the difficulties of reaching consensus in the area of LLSs. Within the current literature, there is a distinct lack of research overtly addressing what part education they have experienced because of their nationality might play in writing strategy use. This is the gap which I want to fill.

### **2.4.3 English Proficiency as a Factor in Strategy Selection**

As much research about L2 learning strategies is rooted in the distinction between good and poor learners, there are many studies based on the relationship between strategy use and L2 proficiency. Some use actual proficiency test scores (Dreyer & Oxford, 1996; Green & Oxford, 1995; Phillips, 1991), while others use proficiency self-ratings (Wharton, 2000). Most researchers concur that more proficient learners employ a wider range of strategies more efficiently than less proficient learners (Green & Oxford, 1995; Kaylani, 1996; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Oxford, 1996; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995; Philips, 1991). In Dreyer and Oxford's study (1996), strategy use was significantly correlated with English proficiency scores of university students learning English as a second language (ESL) in South Africa. Research in Asian countries, such as Thailand (Mullins, 1992), Japan (Watanabe, 1990), Korea (Kim, 2000; Lee, 2000; Lee & Oh, 2001; Park, 2001; Park, 1999; Yoon, Won, & Kang, 2001), and Palestine (Shmais, 2003) also showed strong, positive correlations between strategy use and EFL proficiency.

Other findings have exposed a relationship between students' perceptions of their language proficiency and strategy use. Wharton (2000) demonstrated a significant correlation between the two factors, indicating the higher a student's language proficiency self-rating, the more frequent strategy use was. Moreover, Sheorey (1999) found that the students with higher proficiency in English are

more frequent users of learning strategies, particularly functional practice strategies, than those whose proficiency is lower, which is consistent with the findings reported in other studies of learners studying English in English-speaking countries as well as those studying in environments where English is a foreign language. Research, thus, has repeatedly shown that the conscious, tailored use of such strategies is related to the language achievement and proficiency.

#### **2.4.4 Age as a Factor in Strategy Selection**

Students of different ages and stages of L2 learning used different strategies, with certain strategies often being employed by older and more advanced students. Many strategy studies have been conducted with college students or adults (Dadour & Robbins, 1996; Green & Oxford, 1995; Leki, 1995; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995; Phillips, 1991). Some studies have focused on younger students or have compared younger learners with college students (Dörnyei, 1995; Kaylani, 1996; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Lee, 2000; National Capital Language Resource Center [NCLRC], 2000). Several studies showed that young learners tended to use social strategies more than other types of strategies, including discussing with and asking help from others (Lee, 2000; Wong Fillmore et al., 1985). In contrast, adult learners have shown high use of metacognitive strategies for planning, organizing, and evaluating their own L2 learning (Oh, 1992; Toubia, 1992).

#### **2.4.5 Subject Area as a Factor in Strategy Selection**

Similar to age, gender and proficiency, academic subject area generally affects students' use of learning strategies. Generally speaking, students studying humanities used more and a wider range of strategies than those studying science degrees in several studies (e.g., Lee, 1994; Park, 1999). Dreyer and Oxford (1996) and Oxford and Nyikos (1989) also showed significant influences of university subject area on students' strategy use. In McMullen's (2009) study, no statistically significant difference was found for the academic field of study. However, Saudi Computer Science students reported using LLSs more frequently than Management Information Systems students.

## **2.5. LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES INSTRUCTION**

### **2.5.1. Listening Comprehension Strategies Studies**

Several studies have sought to help language learners use strategies to increase their comprehension of oral texts. Ozeki (2000) identified strategies students already used as a basis for selecting strategies to be taught. However, the strategies to be taught were those less frequently used by the students. Carrier (2003) taught listening comprehension strategies which included both bottom-up and top-down approaches to a group of high school ESL students. The results showed significant improvement of students' listening comprehension. In another recent study of listening comprehension strategies, Vandergrift (2003) undertook the study of French as a second language university students, in which he sought to raise awareness of the listening process through tasks designed to develop effective listening strategies. After a third listening, students' written reflections revealed positive reactions to the strategies.

### **2.5.2. Oral Communication Strategies Studies**

According to Brown, “[w]hile learning strategies deal with the receptive domain of intake, memory, storage, and recall, communication strategies pertain to the employment of verbal and nonverbal mechanisms for the productive communication of information” (2000: 127). Presentational speaking, rather than interactive speaking, has been the focus of several studies (Cohen, 1998; Macaro, 2001). In interactive speaking, researchers have looked at communication strategies with some reservations because of doubts that using a communication strategy (such as using a gesture when the needed word or phrase is not known) actually can lead to learning.

A comparative study of speaking strategies (Cohen, 1998) investigated the impact of strategies-based instruction on foreign language college students and indicated that integrating strategies instruction into the language course was beneficial to students, although the relationship of the reported strategy use to performance was complex.

### **2.5.3. Reading Comprehension Strategies Studies**

A recent study (Oxford et al., 2004) explored the effects of task difficulty in reading comprehension and use of strategies of ESL college students. It showed that there was little difference in the strategy use between more and less proficient readers for easy reading. However, for more difficult reading, less proficient students actually used more strategies than their more proficient peers. The authors attributed this finding to the fact that the 'difficult' reading was actually not much of a challenge to the higher proficiency students and thus they did not need to use many learning strategies.

### **2.5.4. Vocabulary Strategies Studies**

Learning new vocabulary in a second language is a continuing process rather than a single event. Deep processing strategies such as association have been found more effective in vocabulary retention than rote repetition strategies (Schmitt, 2000; Fazali, 2005). A recent descriptive vocabulary study of Hong Kong university students learning English (Fan, 2003) identified important implications for strategy instruction such as the frequency of use of those strategies perceived as useful. This finding suggests that students might use more learning strategies if teachers were to first convince students of their usefulness.

### **2.5.5. Writing Strategies Studies**

Writing in a second language is debatably the most challenging of the modalities in which to achieve communicative competence (Chamot, 2005). Beginning level students struggle with finding the words they need and remembering grammatical conventions, whereas more advanced students find it difficult to link their ideas with coherence and to produce appropriate target language discourse. Given these difficulties, instruction in writing strategies could be beneficial for second language learners.

In the field of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), a debate has centred on the extent to which EAP writing teachers should socialise students into disciplinary discursive practices and address specific aspects of disciplinary discourse. Spack argues that (1988: 40-41):



English teachers cannot and should not be held responsible for teaching writing in the disciplines. The best we can accomplish is to create programmes in which students can learn general inquiry strategies, rhetorical principle, and tasks that can transfer to other course work.

This chapter provided a conceptual frame work of LLSs by introducing a number of definitions and a range of classifications based on several theoretical assumptions. It also presented the characteristics that have been found in the studies of 'the good language learner'. This chapter also focused on the factors which influence how effectively a learner learns a language. I also discussed the relationship between language learning strategy use and influencing variables such as gender and nationality. The chapter concluded by presenting research on language learning instruction.

The focus of the next chapter will be on academic writing in general and academic writing strategy use in particular.

## **CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW II ACADEMIC WRITING STRATEGIES**

### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

Early research into L2 composing acquiesced rich insights into the nature of L2 writing as a complex, non-linear, recursive process (Emig, 1971; Flower & Hays, 1981), the similarities and differences between L1 and L2 writing (Raimes, 1983; Arndt 1987), and the differences between skilled and unskilled L2 writers (Krapels, 1990; Silva, 1993). This interest in the process of L2 writing has continued to date and, in particular, research on the sub-processes of L2 writing, such as formulating, reviewing, and revising, has increased and become more sophisticated in recent years (Silva & Brice, 2004).

This chapter presents a review of literature that is relevant to understanding the nature of academic writing, writing process theories, writing strategy and classification of writing strategies. The chapter also focuses on L1 and L2 academic writing, the relationship between academic writing strategy use and other variables related to writer characteristics, particularly, nativeness, gender and nationality.

### **3.2. THE NATURE OF ACADEMIC WRITING**

Writing is a complex process (Archibald & Jeffry, 2000; Chamot, 2005). According to Emig, it is not linear in nature but recursive, “a loop rather than a straight line” (1971: 93), where the writer writes, plans or revises, and then writes again. Gerd states that “there is much more involved in writing than the final copy a student turns in” (2000: 11). Since the beginning of the 1980s, the tendency of research into writing focuses on the process rather than on the product of writing and on the recursive nature of writing rather than the linear nature of writing (Flower & Hays, 1981; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Torrance et al., 2000). Although planning, composing and revising overlap in the writing process, they can be investigated separately to facilitate description (Hartely, 1994).

Researchers such as Chafe (1982), Brown & Yule (1983) and Biber & Gray have argued that academic writing is “structurally more elaborate than speech,

shown by longer sentences, longer 't-units' (a main clause plus all associated dependent clauses), and a greater use of subordinate clauses" (2010: 2). In addition, researchers have claimed that academic writing is more explicit than speech. In Biber & Gray's words "while speech is dependent on a shared situational context, academic writing is claimed to be decontextualized, autonomous or explicit, with all assumptions and logical relations being overtly encoded in the text" (2010:2). This perception that academic writing is elaborated and explicit persists to the present time. For example, Hyland documents the widespread perceptions that academic writing is "structurally elaborate, complex, abstract and formal" with "more subordination" and "more explicit coding of logical relations" (2002: 50).

One of the most distinctive accounts in English according to Biber & Gray (2010) is the contemporary professional academic writing (for example, research articles and university textbooks). In its grammatical characteristics, it is noticeably different from all spoken registers and most other written registers. Although it sometimes employs spoken features such as first person pronouns, the basic grammatical structure of discourse is nominal/phrasal rather than clausal. "Academic writing is certainly complex, elaborated, and explicit, but it does not conform to the stereotypes about these characteristics" (ibid, 18: 2010).

### **3.2.1 The Academic Writing Process**

The composing process is made up of several stages. Researchers differ on the number and names of these stages. Emig (1971) defines seven stages of writing: pre-writing (from the awareness of stimuli in the environment to the first words put on paper); planning (a setting of parameters); starting; composing; reformulation (correcting, revising, or rewriting); stopping; and contemplating the product. However, a simpler model designed by Rohman (1965) is more commonly used: pre-writing; writing; and re-writing.

### **3.2.2 Cognitive Theory in the Academic Writing Process**

The challenges to linear stage conceptions of writing have led to progress in the knowledge of composing. Composing is viewed as a knowledge/thinking problem and is seen as a cognitive process. Research during 1970s and 1980s focused on the mental states of writers, their problem solving strategies, decisions about audience, language use and composing processes. In first language writing, one of the pioneering works was by Emig (1971) which shifted the emphasis from product to process and used think-aloud protocols of writers as data. She argues that the central concern of writing teachers should be composing processes rather than texts.

Another important work contributed in this area is of Flower and Hayes (1981) based on think-aloud protocol, examining college level writers in the act of writing. Flower and Hayes identify composing as a complex problem-solving activity, responding to a rhetorical situation in the form of a text. Their work, largely known as the cognitive process model, represents the internal process of the writer's mind and looks at composing as a complex problem-solving activity. According to Scarmadalia & Bereiter (1986), this model provides a frame for working out more detailed and possibly more contentious accounts of how the mind manages writing tasks.

According to Hayes (1996) and Hayes and Flower (1980), writing consists of three main cognitive processes/strategies: planning, translating and reviewing. Planning is divided into three sub-strategies: generating ideas, organizing, and goal-setting. The second part of the writing process, the act of composing referred to as translating, is when writers actually put their ideas into visible language, an activity through which the writer transforms the ideas from a linear or hierarchic plan into sentences. Finally, reading and editing are the sub-strategies of reviewing. According to Flower and Hayes, “[p]lanning, translating and reviewing are under the control of a Monitor” (1981: 367). As Flower and Hayes (1981), Hayes (1996) and Hayes and Flower (1980) explain, monitoring the writing process well requires the ability to think about thinking and to continuously coordinate and examine the mental manipulation in sustaining and shifting the focus of attention among sub-strategies in order to ensure the

writing's progress and quality. This process is referred to as executive control since "[a]s writers compose, they monitor their current process and progress. The monitor functions as a writing strategist which determines when the writer moves from one process to the next" (Flower and Hayes, 1981: 374).

### **3.2.3 Non-Linearity of the Writing Process**

Subsequent scholars of written composition have supported the argument of Flower and Hayes' cognitive process model of writing. Their research has demonstrated that writing, far from being a linear process, is a recursive process. This recursiveness makes writing a process which is continuously developing and rejecting ideas which may not be important, thereby making it a dynamic process of composition. Composing involves plans and processes which the writer brings to bear on the writing process.

Though the writing process may be segmented for discussion purposes, it is in fact reflexive or non-linear. That is, the stages overlap, and may occur and recur at any point. Both Perl (1979) and Pianko (1979) have documented these facts in their studies of writers at college level. Perl (1979) calls this reflexivity 'shuttling', where the writer works backward as well as forward, returning to sub-strands of the writing process in order to compose additional material. Sommers (1980) also stresses the non-linearity of the composing process in her studies of revision: rewriting can and does occur at any point in the writing process.

## **3.3. THE SUB-PROCESSES OF L2 WRITING**

In the 1990s, research on the L2 writing process became increasingly focused on the sub-processes of L2 writing: planning, formulating, revising described in the following sections.

### **3.3.1 Planning**

Writers use various strategies to understand the writing tasks they are set, and most frequently reread the task. During the pre-writing time, writers consider their position on the topic as well as plan and organize the content of their essays. According to Manchon and colleagues (2007: 150), "planning is a thinking process in which writers form a mental representation of the knowledge

that they are going to use in their composition and of how they are going to go about the business of composing”. Hayes and Flower explain that during planning, writers “set goals and establish a plan to guide the production of a text that will meet these goals” (1980: 12).

Some writers plan all the way through the composing process; others plan before they start writing. Hence, there are two main types of planning: global planning and on-line planning (Ellis, 2005). According to Manchon and colleagues (2007: 150), global planning “deals with ideational and/or textual issues and is frequent in the pre-writing stage”. Whereas on-line planning “involves taking decisions about paragraphs, sentences and words; it is apparent during the writing phase”.

According to Yu-wen, there are various pre-writing strategies such as “brainstorming, idea mapping, outlining, cubing, listing, free-writing, looping, track switching, classic invention and the reporter’s formula” (2007: 12). Nadell et al. sum up three advantages of pre-writing: “pre-writing can help learners relax and help them build confidence; pre-writing doesn’t allow writers to revise mechanically; and pre-writing requires learners to write down whatever comes to mind” (1997:17).

### **3.3.2 Formulating**

Manchon and colleagues consider the first phase is fairly linear as writers move “step-by-step through planning. After planning, writers begin a phase that combines writing, planning, rehearsing phrases, and rereading source texts” (2007: 150). During formulation, writers transform ideas into language. They also question linguistic aspects such as grammar, lexis, and academic conventions. During this phase, the writers reread and evaluate their writing. According to Plakans, the process is “circular and overlapping” (2008: 117).

### **3.3.3 Revising**

Twenty years ago revision was seen as a fairly simple task of reviewing which occurred at the end of the writing process. However, through the development and study of how cognitive models function, revision has proved to be a highly

complex operation and is now viewed as a starting point. Manchon et al view revision is an “essential activity that initiates discovery, builds skill levels, and as writers gain maturity through practice over time, creates writing expertise” (2007: 150). During revision, writers get a mental representation of their texts and also they attempt to solve the possible dissention between their own intentions and their linguistic expressions (Manchon et al, 2007).

Revising also enhances the quality of writing. According to Bereiter and Scardamalia (1986), it is a basic and important aspect of the writing process. Professional writers set apart considerable time for revising. As Bridwell (1980) explains, effective revising results in good writing. However, Scardemalia (1981) and Hull (1987) point out that many writers revise little. They tend to be proofreaders rather than reviewers whose role is to edit the document to suit a known audience (Witte, 1985).

Several researchers such as Hall (1990), Whalen and Menard (1995), Porte (1997), and Stevenson,et al (2006) report the main concern that guides their participants’ revision behaviour is vocabulary. In other words, they revise mainly at a language level. According to Ferris (2002), these findings concur with the research evidence on the most common errors marked by teachers when providing feedback on their students’ essays. Graham et al (1995) explain that in American public schools, many children do not revise competently and effectively; they focus on mechanicals and word-level changes (Witte, 1985; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1986; Graham et al, 1995) and their revising has little influence on the quality of writing (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1986; Graham et al, 1995). Their sense of audience is limited, resulting in less revision (MacArthur et al, 1991).

### **3.4 WRITING STRATEGIES**

Within the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research, there is a tendency to focus on LLSs generally and there has been an obvious lack of focus on writing strategies in particular. According to Silva, this is because of an implicit assumption in the past that "L1 and L2 writing are particularly identical or at least very similar" (1993: 657).

### 3.4.1. Definition of Writing Strategies

Writing strategies are defined as conscious decisions made by writers to solve a writing problem. For the purpose of this study, writing strategies are defined as specific techniques, approaches, behaviours and actions that students take in order to make their writing more efficient and effective (Petric & Czarl, 2003: 189; Cohen, 1998: 4; Oxford, 1990: 8; Wenden, 1987: 6).

### 3.4.2 Early Classifications of ESL Writing Strategies

ESL learners are often confused by the many different classifications of writing strategies. As Victori (1995) found, there is a myriad of classifications of writing strategies and processes with different labels. As Hsiao and Oxford writing about LLS in general observe, “exactly how many strategies are available to learners to assist them in L2 learning and how these strategies should be classified are open to debate” (2002: 368).

Arndt’s (1987) classification of ESL writing strategies is based on an investigation of six Chinese post-graduate EFL students’ writing strategies as they produced academic texts. Eight categories were adopted as shown in the following table:

**Table 3.1: Arndt’s Classifications of ESL Writing Strategies**

Category of strategy	Definition
Planning	Finding a focus, deciding what to write about
Global planning	Deciding how to organise the text as a whole
Rehearsing	Trying out ideas and the language in which to express them
Repeating	Of key words and phrases
Rereading	Of what had already been written down
Questioning	As a means of classifying ideas, or evaluating what had been written
Revising/Editing	Making changes to the written text in order to clarify meaning Making changes to the written text to correct syntax or spelling

Mu (2005)

Wenden’s (1991) classifications of the writing strategies of eight ESL learners is based on cognitive and metacognitive strategy use (see Sections 2.2.2.1 and 2.2.2.3 for more details). These are shown in Table 3.2.



**Table 3.2: Wenden’s Classifications of ESL Writing Strategies**

<b>Metacognitive strategies</b>	<b>Cognitive strategies</b>	
Planning	Clarification	Self-questioning Hypothesising Defining terms Comparing
Evaluating	Retrieval	Rereading aloud or silently what had been written Writing in a lead-in word or expression Rereading the assigned question Self-questioning Writing till the idea would come Summarising what had just been written Thinking in one’s native language
Monitoring	Resourcing  Deferral Avoidance Verification	Ask researcher Refer to dictionary

Mu (2005)

Riazi (1997) summarises his four Iranian doctoral students’ writing strategies following distinctions made in previous studies of second language learning in an academic setting Chamot & Kupper, 1989; O’Malley & Chamot, 1996). His classification is based on cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies (see Section: 2.2.3.3 for more details). In addition, he discerns another strategy: a search strategy, thus, finding four categories shown in the following table:

**Table 3.3: Riazi's Classifications of ESL Writing Strategies**

<b>Composing strategies</b>	<b>Constituents</b>	<b>Phase of composing process</b>
<b>Cognitive strategies</b> Interacting with the materials to be used by manipulating them mentally or physically	Note-taking Elaboration Use of L1 Knowledge and skill transfer from L1 Inferencing Drafting (revising & editing)	Reading and writing Reading and writing Reading and writing  Reading Writing
<b>Metacognitive strategies</b> Executive process used to plan, monitor and evaluate a writing task	Assigning goals Planning (making and changing outlines) Rationalising appropriate format Monitoring and evaluation	Task representation and reading Writing  Reading and writing Reading/writing/task representation
<b>Social strategies</b> Interacting with others to assist in performing the task or to gain affective control	Appealing for clarifications Getting feedback from professors and peers	Task representation writing
<b>Searching and using supporting sources</b>	Searching and using libraries Using guidelines Using others writing as model	Reading and writing

Mu (2005)

Sasaki (2000) investigated EFL Japanese learners' writing process and found differences between expert and novice writers. L2 proficiency seems to explain part of the difference in strategy use. See table 3.4 for more details.

**Table 3.4: Sasaki's Japanese ESL Students' Writing Strategies**

<b>Writing strategy</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Planning</b> 1) Global planning 2) Thematic planning 3) Local planning 4) Organising 5) Conclusion planning	Detailed planning of overall organisation Less detailed planning of overall organisation Planning what to write next Organising the generated ideas Planning of the conclusion
<b>Retrieving</b> 1) Plan retrieving 2) Information retrieving	Retrieving the already constructed plan Retrieving appropriate information from long-term memory
<b>Generating ideas</b> 1) Naturally generated 2) Description generated	Generating an idea without any stimulus Generating an idea related to the previous description
<b>Verbalising</b> 1) Verbalising a proposition 2) Rhetorical refining  3) Mechanical refining	Verbalising the content intended to be written Refining the rhetorical space(s) of an expression  Refining the mechanical or L1/ESL grammar aspects
<b>Sense of readers</b>	Adjusting expressions to the readers
<b>Translating</b>	Translating the general ideas into ESL
<b>Rereading</b>	Rereading the already produced sentence
<b>Evaluating</b> 1) ESL proficiency evaluation 2) Local text evaluation 3) General text evaluation	Evaluating one's own ESL proficiency Evaluating part of the generated text Evaluating the generated text in general
<b>Others</b> 1) Resting 2) Questioning 3) Impossible to categorise	Resting Asking the researcher questions Impossible to categorise

Mu (2005)

After reviewing the classifications of the writing strategies proposed by other researchers and drawing on Hsiao and Oxford's (2002) call for more research on the classification of writing strategies, I constructed a classification for both NSE and NNSE writing strategies to contribute to both the theoretical and the practical study of ESL writing. The questionnaire in this study is based on Flower and Hayes' (2002), Patric and Czarl's (2003) and Soames' (2006) cognitive model of the L1 writing process which emphasises the idea of

recursion in writing and segments the writing process into three main components: planning, translating ideas into text, and reviewing. This is reflected in the division of the questionnaire into three parts, roughly corresponding to the three components, with the addition of some items specifically addressing second language issues as shown in table 3.5.

**Table 3.5: Writing Strategy Classification Proposed for NSE and NNSE**

<b>Writing strategies</b>	<b>Sub-strategies</b>	<b>Assumption</b>
<b>Before writing</b>	Organisation strategies	Structure, guidance for readers
	Content strategies	Thinking, generating, analysing ideas in L1/L2
	Feedback strategies	Sentences, wording, voice
<b>When writing</b>	Content strategies	Thinking, generating, mastering ideas in L1/L2
	Language strategies	Sentences, wording, voice
	Organisation strategies	Structure, guidance for readers
	Feedback strategies	Questioning, getting support from others
	Mechanics strategies	Spelling, grammar, citations, typing, handwriting
<b>Revising and editing</b>	Content strategies	Thinking, generating, mastering ideas in L1/L2
	Mechanics strategies	Spelling, grammar, citations, typing, handwriting
	Language strategies	Sentences, wording, voice
	Feedback strategies	Questioning, getting support from others
	Organisation strategies	Structure, guidance for readers

By developing the above taxonomy, it is hoped to overcome some ambiguity used in previous taxonomies. It is also an attempt to make a taxonomy which is accessible to NNSE learners and researchers. I have simplified the terminology and reduced and clarified the options. I am aware that revising and editing are treated as similar and are placed in the same category; this is due to the fact that they are used interchangeably by many students, particularly those who are NNSE. Moreover, this again reflects the recursive nature of writing.

### 3.5 L2 WRITING

The process of L2 writing has been a main focus of L2 writing research since the early 1980s. Early studies of the L2 writing process were inspired by developments in L1 writing research (Cumming, 1990; Hedgcock, 2005; Silva, 1993). In her comprehensive survey of these studies, Krapels identifies a number of “recurrent motifs” (1990: 48). These include the findings that: 1) poor performance in L2 writing results more from a lack of composing competence than from a lack of linguistic competence; 2) the composing processes of L2 writers, skilled and unskilled, are similar to those of L1 writers; 3) learners’ L1 writing strategies transfer to their L2 writing process; 4) L1 use in L2 writing has a number of facilitative functions; and 5) culture-bound topics elicit more L1 use than other tasks do. It is worth noting that some of the early studies also came up with the same conclusion. For example, Zamel’s study indicates that L2 writers, both skilled and unskilled, compose like their L1 counterparts and the composing competence rather than the L2 language proficiency differentiated skilled and unskilled L2 writers. She also finds “composing is a non-linear, exploratory and generative process” (1983: 165), which is consistent with Flower and Hayes’ (1981) claim about the L1 writing process. However, Raimes (1985, 1987) and Arndt (1987) observe differences between L1 and L2 writing processes and among L2 writers. Raimes’ and Arndt’s findings underscore the need to examine the writing processes and strategies employed by individual L2 writers and warn against premature generalizations based on either L1 research or L2 research involving a homogenous sample of L2 writers.

Myles (2002) indicates that social dimensions are essential in writing. Writing should not be viewed as an individually-oriented, inner-directed cognitive process, but as an acquired response to discourse (Swales, 1990). Flower and Hayes (1981) claim that a writing process incorporates pre-writing activities such as brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing, multiple drafts, and peer group editing. L2 writers are in the process of acquiring these conventions and so they often need more instruction about language itself. Limited knowledge of vocabulary, language structure and content can inhibit L2 writers' performance (Myles, 2002). On the other hand, those students who have acquired the skill of

writing in their L1 can transfer that skill to L2 writing. Those who have difficulty writing in their native language may not have a repertoire of strategies to help them in their L2 writing development. Hence, L2 writers need more teacher involvement and guidance especially at the revision stage, because when they revise their work, they do so at a superficial level, focusing mainly on grammatical corrections (Silva, 1993).

Myles (2002) states that in order for students to improve their writing skills, they should read academic texts, attend academic lectures and, if possible, work with students who are native speakers in order to be more familiar with the discourse. According to Grabe and Kaplan (1996), coherence problems may be due to not knowing how to organise the text or how to store the relevant information. Revision is also an important and demanding task because it involves definition, evaluation, strategy selection and modification of text in the writing plan and the ability of students to analyse and evaluate the feedback they receive on their writing. Swales (1990) and Raimes (1991, 1998) state that students may be able to write well if they are exposed to a variety of genres of writing, which include flyers, magazines, articles and books. By examining a variety of written texts, students' awareness can be raised with regard to the words; structures and genre contribute to purposeful writing. They can also be aware of different types of textual organisation which can affect L2 students' composing process.

### **3.6. WRITING STRATEGIES IN L1 AND L2**

The process of second language writing cannot be assumed to be identical to that in the first language. Learners may or may not approach a writing task in the same way as they do in their mother tongue. Earlier L2 studies had been concerned with trying to grasp the nature of the L2 composing process. It was only later that L2 researches focused their attention on specific composing behaviours, types of L2 writers and significant features which patterned the behaviour of the writers.

A number of studies have suggested that the processes of L2 writing are different from those of L1 writing. Silva (1993) evaluated 72 studies comparing

L1 writing with L2 writing and found a number of differences in both the writing processes and the features of written texts. The writer's relative proficiency in the L2 is claimed to be a source of differences between L1 and L2 writing (Manchon et al, 2000; Zimmerman, 2000). According to Beare, adult L2 writing is less effective than L1 writing. Moreover, writers with low levels of proficiency tend to write “stylistically different and simpler in structure” (Beare, 2002: 2). Matsumoto (1995) studied four Japanese university professors on their writing a research paper in English as a foreign language and found that proficient bilingual writers tend to use the same strategies when writing in both L1 and L2. Beare (2002) conducted a study examining the writing strategies used by eight proficient writers in both English and Spanish to find out whether there are any differences in the context of content generating and planning using think-aloud protocols. The findings of Beare's study confirm Matsumoto's results that proficient bilingual writers use the same strategies in L2 as in L1 writing.

In another study that aimed to explore the effects of translation from L1 on the quality essays written in French by British university students of French, Cohen and Brooks-Carson (2001) found that students writing directly in French reported less thinking in English during the writing process and their essays were also rated higher than those who had gone through the translation process.

A more recent study examined writing strategies instruction conducted in England with randomly selected six classes of secondary students of French. By using questionnaires, writing tasks, and think-aloud interviews during a French writing task, Macaro (2003) found that the interaction of recombining, restructuring and generating strategies were at the centre of the cognitive formulation process. Similarly, using writing task and think-aloud protocols on four advanced L2 writers at the University of Hong Kong, Wong (2005) found common writing strategies including metacognitive, cognitive and affective strategies.

However, when Lee and Krashen (2001) administered questionnaires to undergraduate university students in Taiwan whose L1 was Mandarin Chinese,

they claimed that they found clear evidence for only one specific strategy: delaying editing. They suggest that additional research is needed to examine other strategies in order to confirm that writers in different languages deal with complicity and avoid blocking in similar ways. They also highlight the need to look at more advanced writers, which are the population target of the present study in the sense that they are all HE students. The present study also argues that many of the above findings are inconclusive (Krapels, 1990) as they were conducted with a small number of participants and their almost exclusive use of think-aloud protocols as the main data source.

Hirose (2003) compared L1 (Japanese) and L2 (English) organizational patterns in the argumentative writing of fifteen Japanese EFL student-writers majoring in British and American Studies in an American university. Using text analysis and interview, the results revealed that a majority of students employed deductive type organizational patterns in both L1 and L2; some students evidenced problems in organizing both L1 and L2 texts.

In a study that investigated the rhetorical organization of the introduction sections of 40 research articles—20 Chinese and 20 English—in educational psychology, Loi and Evans (2010) found that there are similarities and differences between English and Chinese in terms of the employment of moves and steps. They also suggested that the rhetorical differences reflect some of the distinctive characteristics of the two different cultures, English and Chinese.

### **3.6.1. Language-switching**

According to Krapels, the use of L1 is “a fairly common strategy among L2 writers” (1990: 49). Van Weijen et al (2009) examined writers’ use of their L1 while writing in their L2. Twenty students each wrote four short argumentative essays in their L1 (Dutch) and four in their L2 (English) under think-aloud conditions. Results indicate that all participants used their L1 while writing in their L2 to some extent, although this varied among conceptual activities. In addition, L2 proficiency was directly related to L2 text quality but was not related to the occurrence of conceptual activities either in L1 or L2. General writing proficiency, on the other hand, has a negative influence on L1 use during L2



writing and a positive effect on L2 use during L2 writing. L1 use during L2 writing is negatively related to L2 text quality, at least for metacomments. Finally, L2 use appears to be positively related to L2 text quality for goal setting, generating ideas, and structuring, but negatively related to L2 text quality for self-instructions and metacomments.

Using think-aloud protocol while writing two tasks, Wang and Wen (2002) studied how sixteen Chinese EFL university-level student writers use their L1 when composing in their L2 and how L1 use is affected by L2 proficiency and writing tasks. Their results revealed that these student writers had both their L1 and L2 at their disposal when composing in their L2. Moreover, they were more likely to rely on L1 when they were managing their writing processes, generating and organisation ideas, but more likely to rely on L2 when undertaking task-examining and text-generation activities. Additionally, more L1 use was found in the narrative writing task than in the argumentative writing. Concerning L2 proficiency, the higher-level writers tend to depend less often on the L1 than the lower-level writers. Their results “suggested that the development of ability for L2 text construction could be a continuum, beginning with L1-to-L2 translation pattern and ending with the direct L2 construction pattern” (Wang & Wen, 2002: 240).

Based on a protocol analysis of L2 writing from 28 adult participants (9 L2 Japanese, 11 L2 English, and 8 L2 Spanish), Woodall (2002) observed how language-switching was affected by L2 proficiency, task difficulty, and the L1/L2 relationship. Woodall’s results suggested that less proficient L2 learners switched to their L1s more frequently than more advanced learners, and that more difficult tasks increased the duration of L1 use in L2 writing. For students of a cognate language, longer periods of L1 use were related to higher quality L2 texts; for students of a non-cognate language, language-switching related to lower quality texts. Possible reasons for language-switching provided in the study were “the cognitive difficulty posed by writing in a non-cognate language [which] may have contributed to what Qi (1998) described as the reversion to the L1 as compensation for working memory limitations”; difficulty of writing task; and different L1 writing abilities (Ibid, 1998: 23).

According to Weijen et al, earlier L2 writing research such as Krapels (1990), Uzawa (1996) and Woodall (2002) has shown that writers use their L1 while writing in L2, “although the extent to which they do so clearly varies” (2009: 235). Recent research has come to the conclusion that adult writers use their L1 while writing in their L2 for a range of reasons. It can be used for planning (Beare, 2000; Krapels, 1990; Wang, 2003; Woodall, 2002), generating ideas or content (Beare, 2000; Beare & Bourdages, 2007; Knutson, 2006; Krapels, 1990; Roca de Larios, Murphy & Manchón, 1999; Wang, 2003; Woodall, 2002), or solving linguistic problems such as vocabulary issues (Beare, 2000; Centeno-Cortés & Jiménez Jiménez, 2004; Wang, 2003; Woodall, 2002). L1 use has also been reported for back-tracking (Manchón, Roca de Larios & Murphy, 2000), stylistic choices (Knutson, 2006), and as a means to prevent cognitive overload (Cohen & Brooks-Carson, 2001; Knutson, 2006; Qi, 1998; Woodall, 2002).

Wang & Wen’s study (2002) attempts to determine to what extent L1 is used during writing in L2 by reporting the overall percentage of L1 words in L2 think-aloud protocols. Studies conducted by Wang (2003) and Woodall (2002) try to determine the mean number of language switches per task and Woodall’s work (2002) endeavours to ascertain the length of time that L1 use occurs during L2 writing.

However, the above studies have come to different conclusions. While some studies such as Wang (2003) and Cumming (1989) report high correlation between high proficiency and writers’ use of their L1, other studies such as Sasaki and Hirose (1996) conclude that weak writers reported translating more from their L1 to their L2. Sasaki (2002, 2004) found that novice writers translated more often from their L1 to their L2 than expert writers, and that novices also continued to do so over time (Sasaki, 2004). Similarly, Wang and Wen (2002) concluded that the lower proficiency writers in their study used their L1 far more than the higher proficiency writers. Wolfersberger (2003), who only studied low proficiency L2 writers, also found that these writers frequently used their L1 during prewriting and made use of translating from their L1 to their L2 in order to compensate for their limited ability to write in their L2. In line with this,

Beare and Bourdages (2007) found that highly proficient bilingual writers hardly used their L1 at all during L2 writing.

According to Van Weijen et al (2009: 236):

Woodall (2002) complicated the discussion even further by including the difference between cognate and noncognate languages as an additional independent variable in his study. He found that overall, intermediate-proficiency writers switched more often from their L1 to their L2 than high proficiency writers, but this effect was influenced by whether they were writing in noncognate (Japanese/English) or cognate languages (Spanish/English). Therefore, Woodall concluded that there seem to be important differences in L1 use between writers.

For Woodall “some students appeared to control their L-S [language switching], using their L1 as a tool. For others, L-S seemed out of control, and the L1 seemed more like a crutch to obtain cognitive stability” (2002: 20).

Studies that explore the relationship between L1 use during L2 writing and text quality are difficult to find. Nevertheless, there are suggestions that both translation from the L1 to the L2 and L1 use during L2 writing can be advantageous for some writers (Cohen & Brooks-Carson, 2001; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 1992; Uzawa, 1996; Uzawa & Cumming, 1989). Moreover, some studies such as Knutson (2006) and Woodall (2002) found that L1 use does not always have a negative effect on text quality for high proficiency writers of cognate languages.

A number of studies such as Friedlander (1990), Akyel (1994) and Lally (2000) focused on the possible effect of task features on L1 use during L2 writing and text quality, but found no significant effect of planning during prewriting in the L1 or the L2 on text quality. Yet, Friedlander (1990) discovered that writers wrote their best texts on familiar topics related to their L1 cultural background, regardless of whether the plans for those texts were produced in their L1 or their L2. Krapels (1990) and Lay (1982) also found that tasks on L1-related topics created more L1 use during L2 writing than other tasks.

According to Cohen & Brooks-Carson (2001) and Van Weijen et al (2009: 236), “the general finding appears to be that the use of the L1 during L2 writing can

be beneficial, but not in all situations and not for all writers". It seems to depend on writers' L2 proficiency (Akyel, 1994; Beare & Bourdages, 2007; Wang, 2003; Wang & Wen, 2002; Wolfersberger, 2003; Woodall, 2002); the type of task (Wang & Wen, 2002); the topic-knowledge (Krapels, 1990; Qi, 1998); or on whether the L1 and the L2 are cognate or noncognate languages (Woodall, 2002). For Beare (2000), Woodall, (2002) and Wang (2003), The L1 can be used to solve linguistic or lower-order problems but it can be also used for higher-order activities such as planning or to avoid cognitive overload as Beare, 2000, Centeno-Cortés and Jiménez Jiménez (2004), Cohen and Brooks-Carson, (2001), Knutson (2006), Krapels, (1990), Wang (2003); and Woodall (2002) have concluded.

### **3.6.2. Use of Translation**

Translation is a common practice among learners who are not fluent in their non-native language (Biggs, 1989b). Gow, Kember and Chow (1991) explain that translation is required before information is processed for L2 users who are not confident in the target language. Such L2 learners compose their responses in their L1 and then translate them into the target language. Gow et al. (1991) consider this use of translation as a strategy employed by low proficiency ESL learners. Context is another possible reason for the popularity of translation among L2 learners such as in the case of Gow's study where most students in Hong Kong have very limited exposure to English in their daily life. According to Wu (2008), lack of such exposure as a result of the local socio-linguistic context might be behind the tendency to translate Chinese into English when they need to use English.

A number of studies have incorporated L1 use as an independent variable, for example by training participants to plan in their L1 or their L2 before writing their L2 texts (Akyel, 1994; Friedlander, 1990; Lally, 2000) or by instructing participants to write a text in their L1 and then translate it into their L2 (Cohen & Brooks-Carson, 2001; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 1992). However, comparisons between the translation and direct writing (L2 only) conditions were complicated by the fact that participants in the direct writing condition reported using their L1 very often while writing in their L2, even though they were not supposed to

(Cohen & Brooks-Carson, 2001; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 1992; Van Weijen et al, 2009).

### **3.6.3. Using Texts as Models**

Buckingham's (2008) respondents claimed to have studied the organization and layout of published papers in journals in their subject area. Comments varied with respect to the extent which models were used: some benefited from looking for overall organizational characteristics while others analyzed the discourse structure in detail.

### **3.6.4. Reading to Enhance Vocabulary**

Buckingham's (2008) participants also enriched their own stock of vocabulary and expressions by exposure to language through their discipline-specific reading. This usually meant noting down expressions or formulations to use later in their own writing. A key point consistently identified by the majority of the interviewees concerned the need to 'read to write' and for continual writing practice. In addition, reading widely was seen as making a key contribution to broadening vocabulary and the attainment of a greater fluidity of expression through obtaining a stock of functional expressions. Participants in Belcher and Connor's (2001) reflective study on L2 writing development also underscore the importance of broad exposure to a variety of text types.

### **3.6.5. Lexical Phrases**

Studies show both the important role of formulaic sequences in language use, and the problems L2 learners have with these sequences. According to Li and Schmitt, "knowledge of vocabulary is obviously a prerequisite for writing" (2009: 85). In order to understand the imperative roles of vocabulary choices and cohesion patterns in achieving literacy in a second language, Hyland (2007) recommends a genre approach to assist L2 learners. Furthermore, literature suggests that this vocabulary is often made up of formulaic multi-word sequences (Sinclair, 1991; Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Moon, 1997; Biber et al, 1999; Wray, 2002; Cortes, 2004; Li & Schmitt, 2009). According to Coxhead and Byrd (2007: 134-135), these formulaic sequences are crucial for L2 writers:

1) The [formulaic sequences] are often repeated and become a part of the structural material used by advanced writers, making the students' task easier because they work with ready-made sets of words rather than having to create each sentence word by word;

2) As a result of their frequent use, such [sequences] become defining markers of fluent writing and are important for the development of writing that fits the expectations of readers in academia;

3) These [sequences] often lie at the boundary between grammar and vocabulary; they are the lexicogrammatical underpinnings of a language so often revealed in corpus studies but much harder to see through analysis of individual texts or from a linguistic point of view that does not study language-in-use.

Formulaic sequences are important building blocks of the characteristic features of academic texts. The absence of such sequences may indicate the lack of mastery of a novice writer in a specific disciplinary community, given that to be a successful academic writer, an L2 learner is required to be competent at using these conventional sequences which characterise the learner's discipline (Haswell, 1991; Hyland, 2008).

Thus, learning to write well also entails learning to use formulaic sequences appropriately. However, a number of studies show that L2 learners' employment of formulaic sequences is often problematic. Although learners can produce a considerable number of native-like sequences (Nesselhauf, 2005), there is evidence that learners' restricted formulaic repertoires lead them to overuse those sequences they know well (Granger, 1998). Still, overall, non-native use of formulaic sequences is less pervasive and less diverse than native norms (De Cock et al, 1998; Foster, 2001). For instance, Howarth (1998) calculated that native speakers employed about 50% more restricted collocations and idioms than learners did in the corpora he studied. It is not surprising, therefore, that L2 learners' failure to use native-like formulaic sequences is one factor in making their writing feel non-native.

The reason behind the difficulty that Chinese learners encounter in employing formulaic sequences is the slight input and inadequate academic writing

instruction they typically receive. For example, Milton (1999) argues that list-based instruction of formulaic sequences and rote learning for exam preparation in Hong Kong high schools leads to an extensive use of such phrases by Chinese L2 writers in academic writing. According to Li and Schmitt's (2009: 86):

The short-term instruction and rote learning of uncontextualized formulaic sequences limit Chinese learners' exposure to written discourse and give learners no opportunity to understand the precise meanings, pragmatic functions, and structural qualities of such sequences within any particular discourse community. The inevitable result is oversimplified and inappropriate use of formulaic sequences.

Li and Schmitt's (2009) study also reinforces previous findings that learners tend to rely too heavily on a limited repertoire of phrases, which indicates that pedagogies need to be developed which can help learners to build up more diverse phrasal lexicons.

According to Kellogg (1994), lexical retrieval processes during formulation have also been reported to involve a certain degree of cognitive expenditure in L1 writing. However, in the case of L2 writing this is likely to be more due to the lack of availability and/or (automatic) accessibility to relevant linguistic knowledge. In this respect, Roca de Larios and colleagues (1996) argue that semantic processing in L2 writing may be subjected to more fragmentation processes than those in L1 writing, as the sets of alternatives at the writer's disposal in L2 may be narrower and less consolidated than those in L1.

### **3.6.6. Feedback Strategy**

Buckingham (2008) highlighted that peer review (whether with the help of NSE or NNSE) was generally viewed by some not only as a way to check the clarity and style of one's writing but as a productive way to heighten one's awareness of problematic language areas. However, giving feedback on language use might be inappropriate as it is not always seen as a channel for improving language use.

### **3.7. INDIVIDUAL FACTORS AFFECTING STRATEGY CHOICE**

Despite the existence of a wealth of research on L2 writing, much exploration still remains to be done. Although L2 writing processes and strategies have been investigated extensively in relation to a number of variables such as L2 proficiency, motivation, attitude, and writing goals, other variables have received relatively little attention. Among these latter variables are gender and nationality. The few studies that have specifically addressed how nationality and gender may influence strategies adopted by L2 writers will now be examined.

#### **3.7.1. Nationality**

According to Oxford, "Nationality ... influences strategy use" (1990: 13) and in Wharton's (2000) opinion, nationality is linked to use and choice of LLSs in general. However, it is not easy to find studies which investigate nationality as a factor in language learning strategy use, not to mention writing strategies in particular. Griffiths and Parr (2000) published findings that European students reported using LLSs significantly more frequently than students of other nationalities. Griffiths (2003) discovered statistically significant differences in his study according to nationality. In a study involving a questionnaire and group interviews in Taiwan, Yang (1999) reported that her students were aware of various LLSs but few of them actually used them. Using a journal writing method, Usuki (2000) discussed the psychological barriers to the adoption of effective LLSs by Japanese students. Politzer and McGroary (1985) discovered that Asian students exhibited fewer of the strategies expected of 'good language learners' than did Hispanic Students. Wharton (2000) found that bilingual Asian students learning a third language (English) favoured social strategies more than any other types. The findings of Altan's study (2003), however, indicate that very little differences in overall strategy use emerged among Chinese, Hungarian, and Turkish background English Language Teaching (ELT)-major learners. Griffiths's (2000) findings also indicate that nationality had no influence on the respondents' choice of the strategies used for success in International English Language Test System (IELTS).



Hong-Nam and Leavell state that “culturally-specific strategy use may be a by-product of instructional approaches favoured by specific cultural groups as opposed to inherent predispositions based on nationality ... of the individual” (2006: 3). For instance, students educated in the environments of lecture- and textbook-centred teaching approach may use different strategies compared to students trained in student-centred contexts.

Such different and various research findings underscore the difficulties of reaching consensus in the area of LLSs. Within the current literature, there is a distinct lack of research overtly addressing what part nationality might play in writing strategy use and it this gap the current study aims to fill.

### **3.7.2. Gender**

Studies which have examined the relationship between gender and writing strategy use are not common, whereas studies which examined the relationship between gender and language learning have come to mixed conclusions as indicated in Chapter Two, Section 2.4.1.

### **3.7.3. L2 Proficiency**

English language proficiency requires competence in the oral and written English used in academic discourse. Competence includes skill in the production of general oral and written English expressions. Proficiency is therefore viewed as contextually dependent upon variables such as the mode of language use including listening, speaking, reading and writing. Proficiency in academic English language use requires understanding of the dynamic relationship between text and context and internalisation of discipline-specific rules of discourse. According to Christie (2005), lack of proficiency affects students' writing skills adversely.

### **3.7.4. Level of Academic Writing Skill**

A major contribution of research on LLSs has been to identify the strategies used by good language learners and to determine how these strategies can be conveyed to others (see, for example, O'Malley et al, 1985a, 1985b; Naiman et al, 1978; Rubin, 1975).

Many studies in the writing process in English as an L1 deal with differences between the writing processes of skilled writers and unskilled writers (Hayes & Flower, 1980; Perl, 1980; Sommers, 1980; Flower & Hayes, 1981). These studies demonstrate that the writing process is a non-linear process and that there are clear differences between how skilled and unskilled writers compose.

Skilled NSE writers are characterized by being well-organized, using flexible planning, having a constant consideration of their readers and purpose of writing, and possessing a perception of the text as a whole rather than a small part such as sentences and vocabulary. In other words, skilled NSE writers consider writing as a recursive process to discover new ideas; generate ideas from different resources such as audience analysis and their background knowledge; and focus on the content and organization when they write and revise.

In contrast, unskilled NSE writers tend to be less concerned about who their readers are; are preoccupied with lexical or syntactic features rather than the discourse of the text; and edit words or sentences instead of revising the content or organization of the text.

Influenced by the studies in the writing process of native English speakers, researchers of ESL have studied the writing process of ESL learners. What follows below is an analysis of research studies conducted by ESL researchers focusing on the writing process of NNSE participants.

In an early study, Zamel (1982) investigated how eight proficient ESL students composed, employing a case-study approach supported by interviews. The results revealed that ESL writers use strategies similar to those used by NSE (Zamel, 1982: 203). The same results were found in Lay's (1982) study which deals with the writing processes of Chinese ESL students. In another study, Zamel (1983) observed six advanced ESL students when they wrote for academic purposes. The analysis of observations indicated that skilled ESL writers in this study followed recursive writing processes, understood and controlled their own writing processes, and focused on the meaning that their texts conveyed.

Consequently, in a study involving eight ESL students at college from different countries and at various proficiency levels in English, Raimes (1985) examined the writing processes of unskilled ESL writers. The participants were asked to verbalize their thoughts while they wrote about two topics, and those protocols were then analysed. The results of protocol analysis were congruent with Zamel's (1982, 1983) studies although Raimes' participants were low proficient ESL learners. In other words, regardless of the proficiency level of ESL writers, the writing processes of NNSE were recursive and retrospective like NSE. However, Raimes found that her participants showed a variety of different patterns of behaviour in their writing processes and could not be described as a definable group of unskilled ESL writers (1985: 249). Furthermore, Raimes suggests that a lack of linguistic knowledge in her participants might influence their writing performance.

To replicate her 1985 study, Raimes (1987) investigated the writing processes of eight ESL college students, employing protocol analysis as a main method of data collection. The ESL writers in this study were at different levels of English proficiency and were enrolled in different levels of composition classes. Nevertheless, as shown in Raimes' previous study, all ESL writers demonstrated similar composing strategies among them. Their composing strategies were also similar to those of NSE writers. However, those who were considered more skilled writers tended to be involved in each process of writing such as planning and revising. It was also found that the participants' language proficiency had little correspondence to different composing strategies. That is, lower proficient participants in this study were not necessarily less skilled writers than higher proficient participants. Moreover, the composing processes of all ESL writers in this study were not affected by the specific audience and purpose given with the topic.

In contrast with Zamel's and Raimes' studies in which students from various nationalities participated, Arndt (1987) conducted a protocol-based study of six Chinese college students who studied EFL in China. In this study, the participants composed in both Chinese and English, talking aloud their thinking processes while writing. Based on protocol analysis, Arndt found that each

writer employed the same strategies whether s/he composed in English or in Chinese; however, not all writers shared the same writing processes with other writers. In addition, the problems faced by the participants of this study in their composing processes in both languages appeared to relate to a lack of awareness of the nature of written language and the demands its production makes upon the writer and insufficient exploitation of the creative nature of the activity of writing itself (Arndt, 1987: 257).

Pennington and So (1993) also examined a group of ESL writers whose nationality was the same. They undertook research involving six Singaporeans and found that the Singaporeans ESL students directly transferred the skills used in their first language composing to second language composing. Pennington and So also pointed out that a lack of L2 linguistic knowledge may interfere to some degree with English as an L2 writing performance (1993: 44). Raimes (1985, 1987) and Arndt (1987) also consider English proficiency as a determinant of writing performance in English as a second language, while Zamel (1982, 1983) puts less emphasis on language proficiency in English.

In her comparison of inexperienced and experienced writers, Crowley (1977) accentuates that the composing process can be mastered by means of strategies. Experienced writers have a range of techniques, or strategies, to assist them in planning, writing and revising their rough drafts. Therefore, their composing processes are well-developed and effective. She argues that inexperienced writers do not pre-plan or reflect on their writing. They compose their products straight through and revise little beyond changes in mechanics. Experienced writers, on the other hand, have well-defined composing processes.

In terms of strategies used in the process of L2 composing, writers with higher L2 proficiency and more expertise and skill have often been found to use a wider range of strategies. Differences may be found in the number of strategies used in composing as well as in attention to language, content, and organization in writing. In Plakans' own words (2008: 114):

[S]tudies show that both skilled L1 and L2 writers plan more before beginning to write and plan more globally, while less skilled writers plan less initially and stop more often for local planning. Skilled/expert L2 writers have been found to spend more time on generating ideas, planning, and revising beyond the local level. On the other hand, less skilled writers spend less time planning and more time revising words and phrases rather than larger discourse revisions. In addition to these findings across writers' characteristics of L2 proficiency and writing skill/expertise, studies also emphasize that individual differences in process are evident, and other factors, such as culture, educational background, and task affect process.

In order to understand why expert writers were better than novice writers in constructing effective global-based review of their texts, Flower and Hayes modified their writing model with the hope of helping inexperienced writers learn how to revise more effectively. In their 1981 model, they restructured three main processes of writing namely; planning, translating and reviewing. Reviewing is divided into two sub-categories: 1) evaluation, which provides for specific appraisal of the written text; and 2) revision, which refers to the actual changes. Hayes stresses the importance of critical reading skills in his schema, focusing on three key areas: content comprehension, task definition, and text revision. Since expert writers have better reading strategies, have more consciousness about the audience, and have a better understanding of their writing topic, they tend to produce more successful texts as they draft/revise to meet their rhetorical goals. A possible reason for this is that they use their working memory capacities more effectively than novice writers.

Early work on novice and skilled L1 writers by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) provided a theoretical basis for similar L2 studies (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). Based on a wide range of investigations, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) proposed a theory to capture differences between skilled writers and unskilled writers. They argued that skilled and unskilled writers take different approaches to writing. While novice or unskilled writers follow a knowledge-telling approach, skilled writers take a knowledge-transforming approach.

Because of the different approaches taken by skilled and unskilled L2 writers, it can be expected that they employ different writing strategies. This expectation has been supported by a number of studies. Sasaki (2000) found that expert

writers spent a longer time planning overall organization in detail. Using think-aloud protocol to determine the relationship between Chinese EFL writers' strategies and their writing scores on an English proficiency test, Xiu and Xiao (2004) reported that the skilled writers and unskilled writers differed in the use of two writing strategies: organizing ideas and formulating. Yang (2002) also observed differences between skilled and unskilled L2 writers in planning globally, generating ideas, and revising. However, Raimes reported that "no clear profile of the unskilled ESL writer emerged from this study of behaviours during composing" (1985: 249). Arndt (1987) also observed that writing behaviours among members of a group diverse noticeably.

The reason behind the above mixed conclusions might be the use of different criteria to classify skilled or unskilled L2 writers. Zamel (1983), Raimes (1987), and Cumming (1989) designated their participants as skilled or unskilled on the basis of holistic assessment of compositions written by them on tests or in class. Sasaki (2000) used writing experience as a criterion in addition to holistic assessment of the participants' written products. Xiu and Xiao (2004) differentiated their students by their scores on a national English proficiency test. Yang's (2002) participants were judged to be good or poor writers on the basis of their scores on two previous writing tests and a questionnaire. In this regard, Raimes (1985) cautioned 25 years ago that the validity of the criteria which differentiate skilled writers from unskilled writers should be a main concern in research design.

### **3.7.5 Discipline**

There is a common assumption that greater emphasis is placed on writing in the humanities, as writing is the major expression of academic expertise (Buckingham, 2008). In addition, the nature of writing in the humanities appears more challenging than in the sciences. Casanave and Hubbard (1992) have reported that the humanities and social science faculties place greater weight on the development of ideas, organizational issues, and appropriateness of vocabulary and style than science and technology faculties. In the case of Buckingham's study, her respondents noted that "the work produced by social scientists and historians relies wholly on language and therefore issues of

complexity, richness of word choice, and tone of writing gain importance” (2008: 8).

### **3.7.6. Writing Task**

Writing tasks may influence the processes and strategies adopted by L2 writers. Although a large number of studies have been conducted to investigate the writing processes of skilled and unskilled L2 writers, few studies have focused on the influence of writing tasks on L2 writing strategies or the interaction between writing tasks and writing competence in relation to strategy use. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) provided evidence of the impact of different tasks and varying task complexity on L1 writing performance. Cumming’s (1989) study revealed that more cognitively demanding tasks such as argumentative writing assignments produced significantly different behaviours from those found in less cognitively demanding tasks such as letter writing. Grabe (2001) pointed out that different writing tasks make different processing demands. He argued that a consideration of the nature of writing tasks can open up ways to address writing development more directly. Wang and Wen (2002) found that more L1 was used in the narratives produced by their participants than in their argumentative essays. In spite of these promising findings, more research is needed before a better understanding of task effects in L2 writing can be developed.

### **3.7.7. Academic Procrastination**

Fritsch et al (2002) examined the relation between academic procrastination tendency and student writing success. They found that the tendency to procrastinate on writing tasks was associated with general anxiety, anxiety about writing the paper, writing the paper later than usual, less satisfaction with writing the paper, and lower grades. Procrastination may be an especially serious problem for student writing. In Solomon and Rothblum’s (1984) study, more than 40% of the participants reported that they always or nearly always procrastinated on writing a term paper. The high frequency of procrastination may hinder learning in writing-intensive classes because students typically need long periods of planning and revision for their writing to succeed. Writing is a

complex cognitive activity which often cannot be successfully managed in one hurried draft (Boice, 1997a, 1997b; Britton et al, 1975; Emig, 1971; Flower, 1988; Hayes & Flower, 1986). Furthermore, lack of revision can lead to writer's block, as the writer tries unsuccessfully to achieve perfection in the initial draft (Boice, 1997a; Rose, 1980).

The results of Fritzsche et al's (2002) study indicate that individual differences in academic procrastination tendency relate to a variety of negative personal and performance-related outcomes that can impact student writing and, ultimately, college success. Specifically, procrastination tendency was associated with increased anxiety, delayed writing behaviour, and lower grades. Moreover, receipt of feedback on writing was associated with better writing outcomes for high procrastinators. Thus, students may be able to mitigate some of the negative outcomes associated with their procrastination tendency by seeking feedback on their writing prior to turning it in for a grade.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the results of many studies imply that multi-faceted factors are involved in students' choices of L1/L2 writing patterns.

### **3.8. WRITING STRATEGY INSTRUCTION**

A range of material has been developed to train learners to use effective LLSs (for example, Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Oxford, 1990; Wenden, 1987b, 1991), but relatively few empirical studies have been conducted to investigate the effects of strategy training on learners' performance. Investigations have focused on speaking tasks (O'Malley et al., 1985b; Cohen, 1994; Dadour & Robins, 1996; Nunan, 1996); on reading tasks (Carrel et al. 1989); on listening tasks (Fujiwara, 1990; Thompson and Rubin, 1996); and in vocabulary acquisition (Bialystok, 1983; Cohen & Apeh, 1980; O'Malley et al., 1985b). Only two studies of writing strategies instruction were cited in Chamot (2005), both of which investigated learners of French at a secondary school and university level.

One study of writing strategy instruction was conducted in England with six classes of secondary students of French (Macaro, 2001). In this Oxford Writing Project, students in the experimental groups received about 5 months of



instruction on a variety of writing strategies that included the meta-cognitive strategies of advance preparation, monitoring, and evaluating. After the experiment at the post-test, experimental groups had made significant gains in the grammatical accuracy of their writing. In addition, they reported a change in their approach to writing, becoming less reliant on their teacher, more selective in their use of the dictionary, and more careful about their written work.

In China, Jin Zhang (2003) found by means of questionnaire that students had difficulty in generating ideas and finding words to express ideas. In Zhang's experiment, they tried one of the prewriting strategies to generate ideas through cubing: description, comparison, association, analysis, application and argumentation, and proved the feasibility of prewriting in theory. They claimed that the traditional product approach and the more recent process approach could be integrated into a new prose model approach to teaching English composition in China.

Another study in China was conducted by Chu-ming, Rui-ying and Zhang (2003) who reported a one semester long experiment on improving Chinese-speaking EFL learners' English by means of composition writing. 201 English majors were targeted as subjects at Guangdong Foreign Studies University. Their compositions were scored against four criteria: length, organization, ideas and language, with length receiving the heaviest weighting. Responses to a questionnaire showed that the subjects welcomed the new method and consequently felt more confident in their own writing ability and in their use of English.

To investigate the effects of pre-writing and revising strategy instruction on Chinese learners' writing performance, Yu-wen (2007) used pre-test and the post-test. The results suggested that pre-writing strategy instruction help learners generate richer ideas and organize information logically in a Chinese EFL university context.

### **3.9. LIMITATIONS OF WRITING STRATEGIES RESEARCH**

Regardless of the plethora of L2 writing research, however, many areas still remain open to further investigation. An example of such area is writing

strategies used by second language writers. As Leki points out, there is still a need for "the fullest range possible of strategies employed, that is, a catalogue" (1995: 240). The reasons for the lack of such a catalogue can be found in the different theoretical backgrounds of writing scholars, the different methodological approaches and, and the small numbers of participants in studies.

Analysis of widely available publication titles in second language writing as well as in the larger field of second language research, indicate that gender and nationality have not been given major or explicit attention. The lack of attention to gender and nationality in the general field of second language research is evident in some of the introductory books on second language acquisition. These books often categorize these issues under learner variables, but do not typically give them as much attention as the other variables. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), for instance, has a section on factors influencing differential success among second language learners, in which they mention age, aptitude, social-psychological factors including motivations and attitudes, personality, cognitive style, hemisphere specialization, and learning strategies. Of nationality and gender, only gender is mentioned as one of the "other factors". Another introductory book on second language acquisition by Gass and Selinker (2001) discusses the above as "non-language influences" but makes no mention of nationality and gender. Yet, second language researchers interested in sociocultural approaches to understanding second language acquisition and learning increasingly do pay attention to these issues. Mitchel and Myles state (2004: 25):

[I]nterest in the learner as a social being leads to concern with a range of socially constructed elements in the learner's identity, and their relationship with learning—so *class*, *ethnicity*, and *gender* make their appearance as potentially significant for L2 learning research.

Similarly, commenting on critical approaches to qualitative research, Pierce (1995) suggests that one of the assumptions underlying these approaches is that inequalities in terms of gender, race, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation produce and are produced by asymmetrical power relations in society. As second language researchers and practitioners become more attuned to

sociopolitical aspects of language learning, issues of nationality and gender inevitably become an integral focus of inquiry.

Among the two categories, gender seems to have been explored more extensively than nationality. Although the research remains limited, interest in gender has indeed been observed recently in the field of second language writing (Belcher, 1997; Belcher, 2001; Fazaeli, 2005) as well as in composition studies in general (Jarratt & Worsham, 1998; Micciche, 2001; Phelps & Emig, 1995).

As suggested by the literature, the relationship between language learning strategy and gender in general seems to be well-researched, while the relationship between writing strategies and gender in particular is still under-researched. Moreover, the scarcity of research into the relationship between learning strategies and nationality (Soams, 2006) proved to be a catalysing factor to fill this gap in the literature.

Although the above mentioned studies have made significant contributions to the field, they are also limited in several ways. First, they investigate mainly ESL learners whose educational backgrounds were typically heterogeneous and whose L2 proficiency was high enough so that they could receive their education in L2. Even when EFL learners were examined, their L2 proficiency tended to be high. Another limitation of the previous studies of L2 writing processes is their almost exclusive use of think-aloud protocols as the main data source. Due to restrictions and variability in people's capacity to report on their thinking while writing and distortions of natural context for writing as well as failing to explain how specific writing strategies led to particular qualities of written products and involved relatively small numbers and select groups of learners, this inquiry studies learners in their naturally-occurring context in their home and community settings, that is, a university in the North East of England. It is an attempt to understand not only what academic writing strategies NSE and NNSE use but also how and why they employ them.

To sum up, the literature review discussed above reveals a number of significant points:

- In contrast to skilled NSE writers, unskilled NSE writers do not experience writing as a cyclical process of generating ideas and revising text (Pennington & So, 1993: 42);
- The writing processes of ESL writers are recursive like NSE writers, in spite of limited language proficiency;
- There is likely to be common patterns of behaviours in unskilled NNSE writers and unskilled NSE writers. However, Raimes (1987) suggests a potential difference in comparison between one of her NNSE subjects and one of the unskilled NSE writers in Perl's study (1979);
- NNSE writers may follow the same writing processes both in their first language and in English.

So far, many research studies have attempted to explore how NSE and NNSE students write. Yet, no study compares NSE and NNSE strategy use when they write academically. In the case of NNSE, many of the above mentioned studies involve either those who study English remedially before they start attending college courses or those who study at undergraduate level. It appears that little research has been conducted to investigate how NNSE students enrolled in post-graduate courses in English-speaking countries are involved in academic writing. It is necessary to replicate writing process research on ESL students at a higher level of education to obtain the whole picture of the writing process in ESL. The present study is thus motivated by the limitations of the previous studies. It examines writing strategies employed by native and non-native learners with particular interest in the influence of gender and nationality on writing strategies using multiple data collecting devices.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

The research questions and objectives are outlined in Chapter One, while the literature related to language learning strategies in general is reviewed in Chapter Two and reviewed the literature on writing strategies in particular is discussed in Chapter Three. The purpose of this chapter is to: discuss the research philosophy in relation to other research philosophies; explain the research strategy, including the research methodology adopted; discuss how to integrate qualitative and quantitative insights; and introduce the research instruments developed and used in the pursuit of the goals of the research. In addition to the method of sampling, this chapter also presents a detailed account of the pilot study and how it helped in refining the research instruments. It also describes the data collection and analysis procedures for both stages and concludes by summarising the whole research strategy process. This study is grounded primarily in a mixed methods' approach, in particular utilising a synthesis of quantitative and qualitative research.

### **4.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study was designed to discover whether native speaker of English (NSE) and non-native speaker of English (NNSE) students use similar and/or different writing strategies and to ascertain any relationship between strategy preferences and certain variables, in particular, nationality and gender. The research questions of the study are:

1. Do native and non-native students use similar or different academic writing strategies? If so, what are these strategies?
2. What is the relationship, if any, between nationality and the academic writing strategies used?
3. What is the relationship, if any, between gender and the academic writing strategies used?

### **4.3. RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY**

There has been considerable interest in recent years in the role of philosophical assumptions and paradigms in relation to undertaking research. A research philosophy is a belief about the way in which data about a phenomenon should be gathered and analysed. Two key paradigms have been identified, namely positivist and interpretivist (Gratton & Jones, 2004: 14). These two traditions are considered to be the most prevailing paradigms or views of the world which are shape social and educational research. At present they are somewhat distinct but not greatly distant from one another.

#### **4.3.1. Positivism**

According to Bryman, positivism “is an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond” (2008: 13). Positivists believe that reality is stable and can be observed and described from an objective viewpoint (Crabtree & Miller, 1999: 223), i.e. without interfering with the phenomena being studied. They argue that phenomena should be isolated and the observations should be repeatable (Cohen, 2007: 17). Positivism often starts with a theory; it is deductive as “knowledge is arrived at through the gathering of facts that provide the basis for laws (Bryman, 2008:13).

#### **4.3.2. Interpretivism**

Interpretivism “respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action” (Bryman, 2008: 13). Positivistic concerns to uncover truths and facts using experimental or survey methods have been challenged by inerpretivists who assert that these methods impose a view of the world on subjects rather than capturing, describing and understanding these world views (Cohen, 2007: 18). Consequently, “the study of the social world ... requires a different logic of research procedure” (Bryman, 2008: 15). Interpretivism often does not start with a theory; it is inductive. Table 4.1 summarizes these two key paradigms and their features.

**Table 4.1: The Main Features of Positivist and Interpretivist Paradigms**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Positivism</b>	<b>Interpretivism</b>
Human interests	Should be irrelevant	Are the main drivers of knowledge
Explanations	Must demonstrate causality	Aim to increase general understanding of the situation
Research progresses through	Hypothesis and deductions	Gathering rich data from which ideas are induced
Concepts	Need to be operationalised so that they can be measured	Should incorporate stakeholder perspectives
Units of analysis	Should be reduced to simplest terms	May include the 'complexity' of whole situations
Generalisation through	Statistical probability	Theoretical abstraction
Sampling requires	Large numbers selected randomly	Small number of cases chosen for specific reasons

### **4.3.3 Epistemology**

Epistemology refers to the claims or assumptions made about the ways in which it is possible to gain knowledge, however it is understood; claims about how what exists may be known (Gratton and Jones, 2004: 14). An epistemology is a theory of knowledge; it presents a view and a justification for what can be regarded as knowledge—what can be known and what criteria such knowledge must satisfy in order to be called knowledge rather than beliefs (Cohen, 2007: 7; Crabtree, 1999: 8). Although both qualitative interviews and quantitative questionnaires are used to collect data for this research, I am an interpretivist who believes that there are multiple realities and that truth is ever-changing, dependent on context and the individual. My position as a Libyan female, a teacher of language and writing – also influenced by previous research – must have a bearing on my beliefs. I was personally involved in all aspects of interviews, distribution of and analysing questionnaires.

### **4.4. MIXED METHODS RESEARCH**

For the purpose of this study, a mixed methods research design was used. By creating a design using diverse methodologies, I am not claiming to prove the truth of a first method, by the second one nor am I claiming that agreement

between the results of the two methods proves the validity of both methods. Moreover, I am not assuming that propositions and answers derived from different methods can agree or disagree with each other. Rather, I am trying to achieve greater insights than if I followed the most frequent method encountered in the literature which is SILL and think-aloud protocol or suggested by a disciplinary bias.

#### **4.4.1. Definition of the Mixed Methods Research**

According to Creswell et al, “A *mixed methods study* involves the collection or analysis of both quantitative and/or qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research” (2003: 212).

#### **4.4.2. Rationale for the Choice of Mixed Methods Approach**

The choice of multi-method approach was influenced by several considerations:

- In this research, what may be characterised as methodological monism—the insistence of using a single research method—is avoided. This is not due to an inability to decide between the various merits and demerits of the various alternatives. Instead, I believe that all methods are valuable, if used appropriately, and that research can include elements of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches, if managed carefully.
- It has often been observed that no single research methodology is intrinsically better than any other methodology, and that many authors such as Cohen (2007) calls for a combination of research methods in order to improve the quality of research.
- A multi-method approach is chosen as it is the one which may best answer the research questions considering the richness and complexity of the study. Overall a quantitative approach is required to test whether natives and non-natives use similar/different academic writing strategies. On the other hand, a qualitative approach is needed to address how and why these patterns and/or variations occur.



- A multiple approach has special relevance where a complex phenomenon requires elucidation such as comparing three different groups of learners.
- Uncovering the same information from more than one vantage point helps to describe how the findings occur under different circumstances and assist them to confirm the validity of the findings.
- Certain principled mixes can combine different methods in a way that their strengths are added, thereby making the sum greater than the parts. This 'additive mixing' is at the heart of mixed methods research (Dornyei, 2007).
- Finally, a multiple-approach is considered suitable when a more holistic view of phenomena is sought as this allows for obtaining a richer and more complete picture concerning the patterns and variations of writing strategies use.

Hence, a specific multi-method approach, namely triangulation, was chosen to collect data not just because the use of this type of methodology is becoming more popular but mainly because it is considered suitable for studies which require an understanding of not only the 'what' that is being observed but also the 'why' and the 'how' of the observed behaviour. Cohen argues that methodological triangulation refers to "the use of more than one approach to investigate some aspects of human behaviour (Cohen, 2007). A sequential implementation of a quantitative method followed by a qualitative method was designed.

#### **4.4.3. Limitations of a Mixed Methods Approach**

Regardless of the importance of a mixed methods approach, Creswell warns that "conducting mixed methods research is not easy" (2007: 10) as it is time and resources consuming. "It complicates the procedures of research and requires clear presentation if the reader is going to be able to sort out the different procedures" (2007: 10). "Creswell further argues that researchers are "often trained in only one form of inquiry, and mixed methods research requires that they know both forms of data" (2007: 10).

#### **4.4.4. Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Insights**

Much research on language learning strategies is carried out focusing only on quantitative data collection. However, qualitative techniques could be a very productive approach in this field of research, since they produce primary data much richer in meaning and—potentially—insight. However, where a combination of methods is applied, rationale and practice are not always in line. This is either because the rationale is often not being reflected in how a mixed methods strategy research is actually used or because the practice not matching the rationales given (Bryman, 2008). However, despite concerns about the integration of different paradigms, Greene and Caracelli (1997) and Creswell (2007) support the idea of pragmatism which provides philosophical foundation for mixed methods research. They also call for utilising different paradigms in mixed methods research as long as the researcher honours each and is explicit about when each is employed.

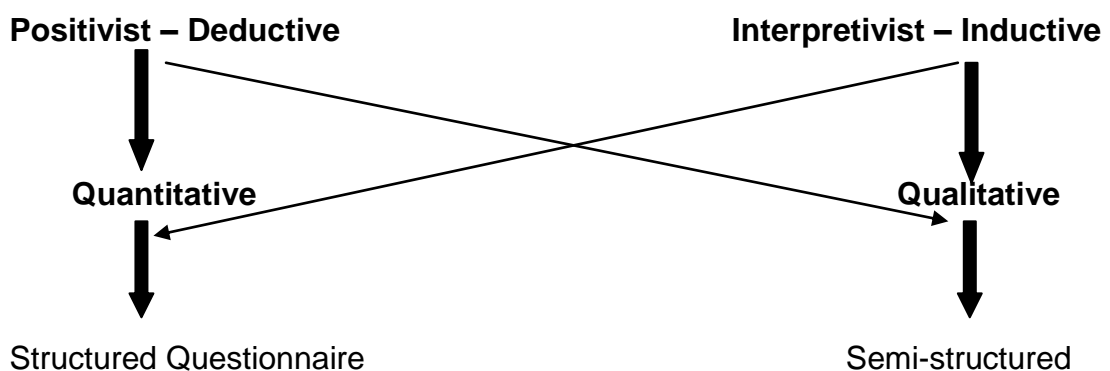
This research uses a mixed methods sequential explanatory design, which consists of three distinct phases. The first phase was the collection and analysis of the quantitative data, while the second was the collection and analysis of the qualitative data. Both datasets were brought together in the interpretation stage as the datasets “need to be mixed in some way so that together they form a more complete picture of the problem than they do when standing alone” (Creswell, 2007: 7).

Qualitative is distinguished from quantitative research by the former’s concern with interpreting meaning in textual data and the spoken word, rather than in the latter’s numerical data through the use of statistical methods. The mixed method approach aims to capture the multiplicity of perspectives of social phenomena. However, it is clear that in trying to understand in any depth the ‘why’ and ‘how’, because certain writing strategies are associated with a certain nationality or gender, then the research needs to be flexible to incorporate subjectivist points of view. The necessity of subjectivity (in understanding nativeness, nationality and gender issues) is due to the recognition that there might be several different alternative perspectives of reality, all of which may be

valid and should be explored. It can be argued that facilitating exploration of different perspectives is a common objective of subjectivist research, and in particular, social and educational research.

It is important to be aware of this subjectivity throughout the research and remain critical. Subjectivity can also introduce bias in research such as the tendency to focus on certain points of view more than others. One potential problem is that the values of the researcher, such as the ideological perspective, may influence the enquiry. These prejudices not only may influence the direction in which the research leads, but also open up the possibility of errors.

The main drawbacks of subjective approaches are: firstly, the validity of conclusions that identify emergent themes of the research is harder to establish; and secondly, generalisation of conclusions is more difficult to achieve. Both of these protocols of research enquiry are more commonly associated with the positivist tradition. However, in recent times there has been a move towards combining methods, including quantitative and qualitative methods (see Figure 4.1), though it is possible to maintain one epistemology.



**Figure 4.1: The Research Epistemology and Data Collection Tools**

Qualitative and quantitative approaches in this study are aimed at understanding the academic writing strategies employed by Higher Education (HE) students on very different levels of investigation. The target of this

research is to develop a model that captures the subjective views/interpretations of the relationship between nationality/gender and the writing strategies used by those participating in the study. The research also investigates the frequency and type of those strategies among the three groups according to the tradition of quantitative study. Thus, I believe I am epistemologically interpretivist who applies both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools.

Further reflection must go into how different methodological approaches can be combined, and what problems this might create on the paradigm level. Even though criticism does not take place in the area of methodologies, it is worth noting that every method necessarily imports some kind of theoretical or philosophical assumptions into the research (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). While the two approaches are often presented as if they were in binary opposition to one another, they can also be used to complement one another (Cohen, 2007). From the quantitative approach, there are patterns and variations on academic writing strategy use according to nativeness, nationality and gender, while the qualitative approach analysed the reasons for those patterns and variations.

The interpretive approach was important during the qualitative data collection, during the analysis of the data, in theorising from the data, and in identifying the findings of the study. As an interpretivist, I must accept responsibility for my role and acknowledge my own influence on the research outcomes. Thus, the research is based on the philosophical perspective of interpretative enquiry which allows multiple perspectives of reality, whilst it uses quantitative data collection in order to facilitate the measurement and explanation of reality.

It is worth noting that, in this study the blending of qualitative and quantitative approaches did not occur during either data generation or analysis. Rather, I blended these approaches at the level of interpretation, merging findings from each technique to derive a conclusion.

#### **4.4.5. Methodological Triangulation**

Methodological triangulation refers to the combination of several research methodologies, such as the use of different data collection techniques, in one

study (Cohen, 2007: 142). The quantitative methodology in this study highlights trends and causal relationships while the qualitative one provides context and meaning. Triangulation also helps to cancel out the method effect and to increase confidence in findings.

#### **4.5. RESEARCH DESIGN**

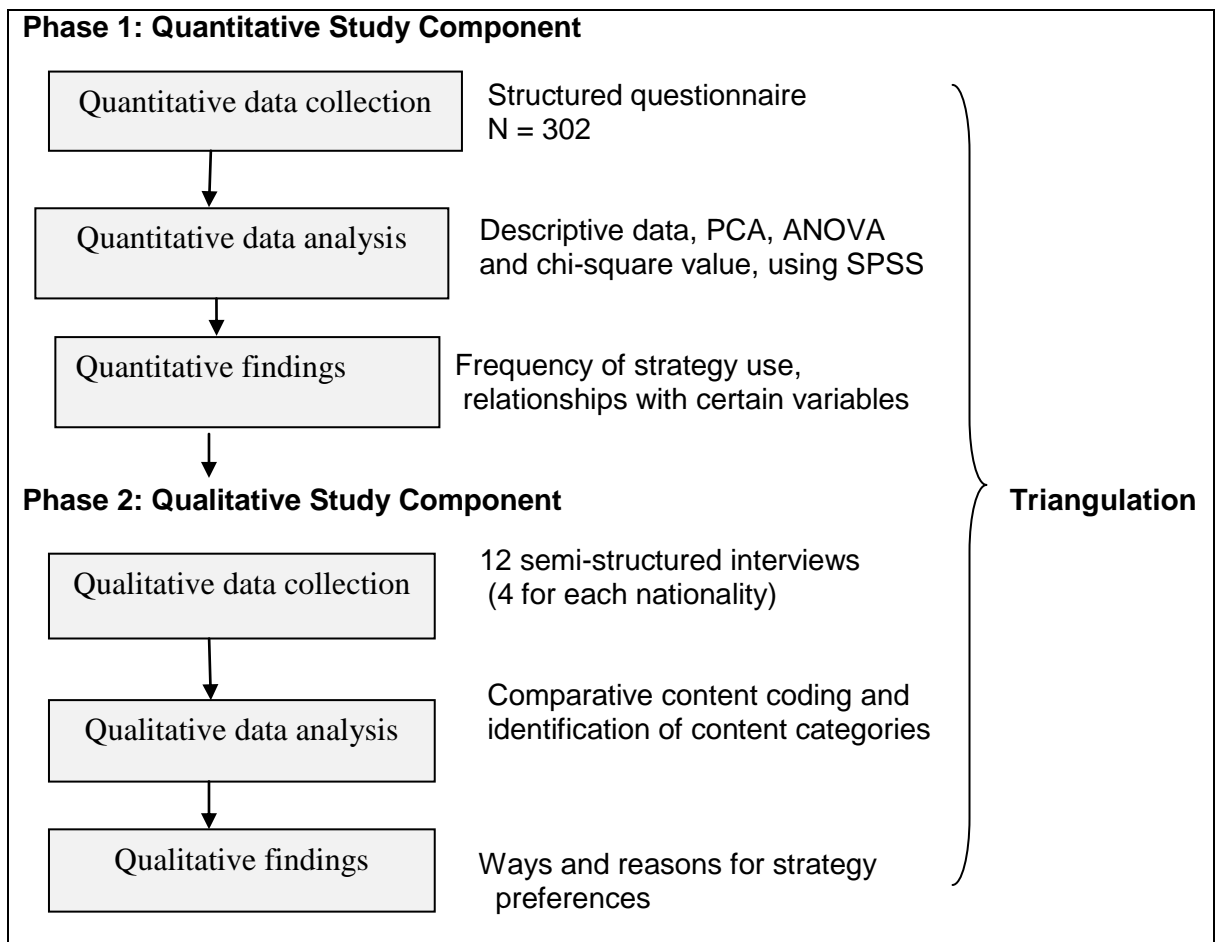
Bell advises that “decisions have to be made about which methods are best for particular purposes and then data collecting instruments must be designed to do the job” (2005: 115). The research design was developed by consulting a range of texts on research methods (Atkinson, 2004; Gorard, 2004; Bridget, 2005; Wiersma, 2005; Cohen, 2007; Creswell, 2007), questionnaires (Dornyei, 2003; Munn, 2004), interview techniques (Derver, 1995; Barbour, 2005) and the analysis and reporting of quantitative and qualitative data (Gonick, 1993; Robson, 2002; Crawley, 2005; Charmaz, 2006; Bryman, 2008). However, the research design was also influenced by literature on the philosophy of research, in particular the interpretivist approaches. Overall, the aim was to implement research strategies that would address the research questions and yield findings in valid and reliable ways.

The purpose of this study is to compare HE learners’ academic writing strategies use according to the participants’ nativeness, nationality and gender. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the study made use of a combination of quantitative (structured questionnaire) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) methods to identify writing strategies use and to determine any relationships between gender, nationality and the choice of strategies employed by HE students. The study is divided into two phases. Phase I, mainly quantitative in nature, was designed to look broadly at three areas:

- patterns and variations of strategies employed by NSE and NNSE;
- any relationship between nationality and writing strategy use; and
- any relationship between gender and the choice of writing strategies.

Using qualitative methods, Phase II was designed to explain the critical issues identified from Phase I. Detailed, targeted recommendations are developed from these two phases.

Consequently, the quantitative data was first collected and analysed; then the qualitative data was collected and analysed. The quantitative and the qualitative data were integrated in the interpretation stage. Figure 4.2 highlights the summary of the research design and strategy. According to Creswell, the motive towards adopting such approach is that: “The quantitative data and their subsequent analysis provide a general understanding of the research problem. The qualitative data and their analysis refine and explain those statistical results by exploring participants’ views in more depth” (2007: 87).



**Figure 4.2: Summary of the Research Design and Strategy**

#### **4.5.1. The Process of Quantitative and Qualitative Research**

According to De Vos (2002: 85), there is no difference between qualitative and quantitative research at the beginning. Both designs start with selecting a research topic, deciding on an approach, the problem formulation and drawing up of a proposal. In the rest of the process, De Vos distinguishes between the two designs. The research process followed during this study is as follow:

- Selecting the research design, namely methodological triangulation;
- Deciding on methods which were used to collect data and analyse it. Structured questionnaire (principal component analysis (PCA), one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Mann Whitney test), semi-structured interviews (tape recordings, transcriptions and Grounded Theory) were used for these purposes;
- The third step was to select a sample. The intention was to use stratified random sampling for the quantitative questionnaire and purposeful sampling for the semi-structured interviews; however, this was not possible because of data protection and confidentiality reasons. Instead, a convenience sample for the quantitative data and snowball sample for the qualitative data were used;
- Collecting data;
- Analysing the data; and
- Writing up the study.

In the following sections, the choice of research instruments is justified and an explanation of how they operate in the research is given. In order to collect and analyse data the following were used:

- a) a 72-item English Academic Writing Strategy Questionnaire (EAWSQ)
- b) semi-structured interviews.

#### **4.5.2. Questionnaire**

In order to explore similarities and/or differences of the academic writing strategies employed by HE students an instrument to measure the frequency and type of writing strategies used by each nationality was developed. It is the

key data collection device. In comparison to the semi-structured interview, it was found that the questionnaire required more developmental effort. Students' reported use of writing strategies were assessed using a 72-item EAWSQ focusing on the writing strategies employed by both native and non-native HE students. It is a structured questionnaire that takes about 20 minutes to complete. Using plain English, this instrument was specially created for both native and non-native students. The 72-item inventory is divided into the following 3 sections: before writing (21 statements); during writing (25 statements); and when revising (26 statements). The pre-writing scale items focus on planning and organisation. The writing process section contains items which describe the process of transforming the ideas into text. The post-writing section addresses to what extent students monitor or check their own writing (see Appendix A). The questionnaire was designed in such a way that different strategies and techniques of writing employed in pre-writing, writing and post-writing stages can easily be discerned in the analysis.

For each of the 72 items of the EAWSQ, students were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert type scale of how well the statement describes them (never true; rarely true; sometimes true; usually true; always true). Each response category was assigned a numeric value. The greatest negative response (never true) was scored as 1 and the highest positive response (always true) was scored as 5. In developing the EAWSQ version, a number of the original formulations which were in the first draft were altered to ensure that all the items were easy to understand by non-native students. Previous questionnaires such as Soames' (2006) Writing Processes and Strategies Questionnaire and Patric and Czarl's (2003) Validating Writing Strategy Questionnaire on writing strategies were used as guides in formulating the statements. Examples were provided along with the statements to facilitate understanding of these statements such as in Q.63 "I check whether I have used academic English conventions, e.g., formality and referencing".

Respondents were asked to give their nationalities and gender in order to help explore any likely influences on the choice, type and degree of the use of writing strategies. Data on the respondents' age, and year of study, as well as



language background information regarding the students' dominant language of literacy (13 statements) were elicited with the help of a Background Questionnaire (see Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire).

#### **4.5.2.1. Advantages of questionnaires**

In general, questionnaires have a number of advantages. Firstly, they are effective mechanisms for efficient collection of certain kinds of information, particularly language learning strategies (Dornyei, 2003). Secondly, questionnaires are a useful method to investigate patterns and frequency. Thirdly, they permit anonymity which is arguably increases the rate of response and may increase the reliability of the responses given. Questionnaires can be distributed to large numbers of people simultaneously and thus save time and effort.

#### **4.5.2.2. Limitations of questionnaires**

As mentioned earlier, questionnaires are considered to be the most common and efficient method for identifying students' writing strategies (Oxford, 1996); however, they have their limitations (Dornyei, 2003; Cohen et al., 2007). These include: students may not remember the strategies they have used previously; they may claim to use strategies that in fact they do not use; and they may not understand the strategy descriptions in the questionnaire items. Moreover, respondents are often uninterested in or bored with completing such a questionnaire. If respondents merely tick answers in order to quickly complete a survey instrument, they are not reflecting upon the questions or indicating their true preferences (see Brown, 2001 and Dornyei, 2003) for a detailed discussion). Nevertheless, questionnaires can provide important insights into writing strategies use. For these reasons, the EAWSQ was supplemented by a follow-up semi-structured interview which was developed to obtain information not gathered in the questionnaire and to triangulate the data as well as to help to moderate such factors.

#### **4.5.3. Interviews**

The decision to use interviews as a data gathering method is in line with Ely et al who maintain that "qualitative researchers want those who are studied to

speak for themselves, to provide their perspectives in words and other actions” (1991: 4). In the interview the interviewer asks questions from an interview guide and records the participants’ responses. The interview is also useful in providing a general overview of people’s thoughts and experiences.

A variety of interview methods exist. According to (Bryman, 2008: 196), these include structured, standardized, semi-structured, unstructured, intensive, qualitative, in-depth, focused, group and life history interviews. For the purpose of this study the semi-structured interview method was chosen (see Section 2.5.3.1 below). A semi-structured interview is defined as an interview method in which some questions are structured (closed) and some are open-ended. Open questions allow respondents to reply without having to select one of several provided responses (Cohen, 2007; Wiersma, 2005).

#### **4.5.3.1. Advantages of semi-structured interviews**

Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions have several advantages in this type of descriptive study. Open-ended questions allow the researcher to focus on a particular topic or topics while allowing for flexibility in providing opportunities for two-way communication. The semi-structured interview permits the researcher to ask more complex and involved questions, allows the interviewee to expand and elaborate upon their answers, and allows the researcher and the interviewees to ask for clarification or explanation when they are unsure or require more detail.

#### **4.5.3.2. Limitations of interviews**

However, interviewing the participants has its limitations, including the difficulty with and the time commitment of conducting such research. Another drawback is that oral interviews do not guarantee honest answers; participants may choose to provide what they think the researcher wants to hear, or they may be intimidated by the interview process and offer more positive responses than they actually believe (Johnson, 1992; Nunan, 1992). Another problem with interviews is that of failing to elicit an expansive answer. At times the participants will provide only a short, uninformative answer and the researcher

must consider how to best elicit a more informative response without leading the participant.

A disadvantage of the semi-structured interview is that the responses tend to produce results that are difficult to analyse. Derver (1995) and Cohen (2007) stress that the interviewer must be well-prepared before the beginning of the questioning process. The interviewer should not just know the questions to be asked, but also the sequence of the questions and the method of recording the data.

Interviews, however, are useful when investigating participants' experiences in depth while questionnaires are appropriate when researchers opt for breadth or responses from a larger number of participants. Both techniques involve asking questions to gather data; however, using the strengths of each technique will ensure more comprehensive data-collection.

#### **4.6. PILOT STUDY**

In order to test the feasibility and to refine and modify the research methodology, a pilot study was conducted before the actual research was initiated. The pilot study proved to be a valuable procedure as:

- The data-gathering phase of the research process actually began with pilot testing.
- It was conducted to detect weaknesses in design and instrumentation and to provide data for selection of a probability sample.
- It was used to refine questions, instruments and procedures.

##### **4.6.1. Piloting the Questionnaire**

The importance of piloting a questionnaire is highlighted in the literature (Munn & Drever 2004: 33; Cohen 2007: 341). In order to test the acceptability, validity and reliability of the measure Williams (2003) stresses the significance of conducting the pilot study. Sudman and Bradburn, cited in Dornyei (2003), advise not to do the actual study if the "resources to pilot-test the questionnaire" (1983: 283) are not available. Therefore, a pilot study which looked into the feasibility of obtaining information on writing strategies employed by native and

non-native students at NE universities in the UK was conducted. The pilot study in line with Dornyei (2003) and Cohen et al (2007) also aimed to test how long would take to complete and to check that the items were not ambiguous and the instructions were clear.

#### **4.6.1.1. Theoretical framework for the pilot study**

Dornyei states that “successful item designers rely heavily on their own verbal creativity ... qualitative, exploratory data gathered from informants [and] borrowing questions from established questionnaires with acknowledgment” (2003: 52). Thus, the EAWSQ was based on an examination of previous writing and learning strategy scales that a review of literature indicated could be important. To develop the questionnaire, consideration was given to several instruments on writing strategies as well as questionnaires on similar issues, including Oxford’s (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), Patric and Czarl’s (2003) Validating Writing Strategy Questionnaire, and Soames’s (2006) Writing Processes and Strategies Questionnaire. Although, these instruments were used as a tool for measuring non-native students, the EAWSQ was developed to measure both native and non-native HE students. Therefore, additional items were added according to the researcher’s own experience as a second language teacher and learner in order to make the instrument suitable for both native and non-native students. In addition to reviewing existing questionnaires, informal interviews with students were conducted. In order to identify any ambiguities in my questions and to identify the range of possible responses for each question, an informal group interview with five participants, who were also my student peers, was conducted. In these interviews, the questions were discussed and a number of problems identified such as the clustering of the items and dividing the questionnaire into four sections instead of three in order that the use of writing tools was given a separate section. The possibility of adding “I do not know” to the scale was also discussed. After two sessions of discussion and amendments the questionnaire was given to nine English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teachers at the University of Sunderland to test the layout, structure and content and to get their comments and feedback. (For more information see Appendix D) As the

participant's nationality as well as their gender is explored in relation to the choice, type and degree of the use of academic writing strategies, data on the participants' nationalities, gender, age and linguistic background were elicited with the help of the Background Questionnaire (Appendix A).

#### 4.6.1.2. Participants and data collection

A pilot study involving academic writing strategy use in English was conducted with 15 students at north east of England universities, at the beginning of August 2007. Of the 15, four were native speakers of English (three female and one male); 11 were non-native: five were Mainland Chinese (three male and two female), and six were Libyan (five male and one female). In total there were six females and nine males aged from 18 and above. The non-native students had all studied English in their home countries, as well as after arriving in England; all of them use the language of wider communication, i.e. English. Table 4.2 illustrates the respondents' demographic information.

**Table 4.2: Demographic Information of Respondents**

Background information	British (4)	Chinese (5)	Libyan (6)
Gender	3 F   1 M	2 F   3 M	1 F   5 M
Age	26 and above	18 – 30	26 – 50
Native language	English	Chinese	Arabic
Level of study	PhD Students	BA/MA Students	MA/PhD Students
Subject area	Psychology Literature Biochemistry Education	Illustration & Design Business Administration Business	TESOL Law Education Biology Dentistry
Year of study	1 <sup>st</sup> / 2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> / 2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> / 3 <sup>rd</sup>
English is my .....	1 <sup>st</sup> language	2 <sup>nd</sup> language	2 <sup>nd</sup> / 3 <sup>rd</sup> language
Language of education	English	Chinese Chinese & English	Arabic Arabic & English
Years of studying English	N.A.	5 / 7 / 11 / many years	4 / 8 / 10 / 11
IELTS / TOEFL / Other	N.A.	5 / 5.5 IELTS	6.5 IELTS 550 TOEFL 68 Other
Length of residence in the UK	N.A.	18 months / 1 year / 2 years	18 months / 1 year / 3 / 4 years

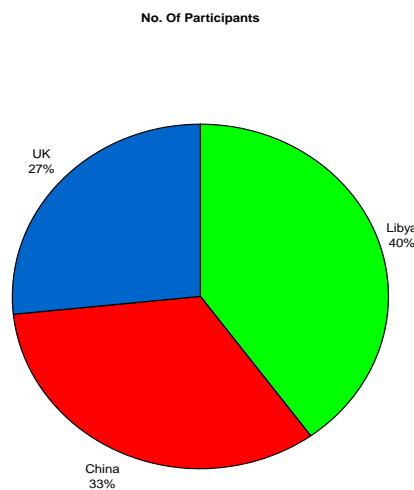
#### 4.6.1.3. Distribution of questionnaires

In determining the size of the sample of the pilot study the literature confirmed that the sample should be overestimated (Cohen 2007, Wiersma 2005). 20 questionnaires were sent out in August by the researcher in order to obtain the 15 responses. The sample group was contacted by email by the researcher who explained the purpose of the study. The sample group was asked if they were willing to participate in the study and to receive the questionnaire. 18 responses were received within two weeks of distribution but three questionnaires were not included because the respondents did not complete the background information section. The response rate for the EAWSQ is presented in Table 4.5 below:

**Table 4.3: Response Rate for the Pilot study**

Questionnaire sent	Questionnaire returned	Percentage of returns
20	18	90%

As “nonresponse cannot be ignored” (Cohen et al., 2007; Wiersma, 2005; Dornyei, 2003), the non-respondents were contacted in order to ascertain the reasons for the non-response. The main reason was that the questionnaire was distributed in August when they were on holiday. Thus, I considered this issue when distributing the actual questionnaire. The percentage of respondents by each nationality is presented in Figure 4.4 below.



**Figure 4.3: Percentage of Respondents**

#### **4.6.2. Piloting the Interview**

Since interviews are considered to be an important data collection instrument, they were conducted in order to supplement the data collected by the questionnaire. The pilot interviews are a small scale study carried out before the main study for the purpose of testing the questions and the responses, as well as to train myself as an interviewer. Thus, any problems arising could be identified before conducting the actual study. It also helps to improve clarity by removing ambiguous questions.

A semi-structured interview strategy was adopted to ask the participants about their English academic writing strategies in order to add depth and validity to the quantitative research data. Typical of this type of interview, the questions were in a set order but the opportunity to invite the participants to elaborate on their answers was possible.

The ability to gain valid answers to questions requires that the interviewees are aware of the purpose of the investigation and that the subject matter is of relevance to the interviewees. As a result an introduction was written, in which the aim of the interview was explained and assurances of confidentiality were given. The time required to complete the interview was also determined. All the pilot study interviews took place at my workplace at the University of Sunderland which could be considered a natural and relaxed environment for the interviewees as they are BA, MA and PhD students. Moreover, the interviewees were all either third year undergraduate or postgraduate students and unquestionably involved in the academic writing regularly, so the subject matter was of significance to them.

##### **4.6.2.1. Participants in interviews**

A stratified sample was chosen; the participants were chosen in order to provide the researcher with important information. Stratified means that the sample was chosen from various sub-groups. In order to obtain a sample that is reflective of the group being studied (Seidman, 1998), six participants were chosen on the basis of their nationalities and gender. They were two Britons (male and female), two Libyans (male and female), and two Mainland Chinese (male and

female). Permission to conduct and record the interviews with the respondents was obtained. Although it was a small scale study, as it was the pilot, still it could generate interesting insights for the research.

**Table 4.4: Demographic Data of the Pilot Study**

Nationality	Gender	Age	Discipline	Length of residence in the UK	IELTS
British	Female	55	Education	N.A.	N.A.
British	Male	45	PhD Literature	N.A.	N.A.
Libyan	Female	31	MA TESOL	18 months	6.3
Libyan	Male	43	PhD Education	6 months	7.0
Chinese	Female	34	MA TESOL	12 months	7.0
Chinese	Male	22	Tourism	6 months	6.0

#### **4.6.2.2. Interview guide**

For semi-structured interviews, the term interview guide instead of interview schedule is preferred. This in line with Welman who describes an interview guide as “a list of topics and aspects of these topics that have a bearing on the given theme and that the interviewer should raise during the course of the interview” (2001: 161). Although the participants were all asked the same questions the formulation of the questions was adapted according to level of study and subject area. For example, questions were asked about writing assignments with undergraduates and MA students, whereas with PhD students the questions were about writing chapters in their theses.

The interview questions consisted of both closed and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were important to allow students to express their views and experiences as freely as possible on the issues of patterns and variations in writing strategies use. Probing questions were also introduced to draw more information from the respondents, especially when it was felt that further explanation was necessary. The interview questions were thus pre-tested on six female and male HE students from three nationalities (Britons, Libyans and Chinese). According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1993: 352), a pre-test of a guide can reveal ambiguous, poorly worded questions and unclear choices. Minor changes were made to the questions using the suggestions made by the respondents involved in the pre-test. The questions were divided into four broad



categories: general; when planning; when writing; and when revising (see Appendix C for a full version of the Interview Guide).

#### **4.6.2.2.1. *General***

Under General the students were asked for their age, the university at which they study, their level of study, their IELTS score in relation to writing, and their subject area. They were also invited to talk about when and how they learned to write academically.

#### **4.6.2.2.2. *When planning***

In this section of the interview, participants were asked if they use any strategies when planning. They were also asked if they work with others at this early stage.

#### **4.6.2.2.3. *When writing***

In this section participants were asked questions about if they use their L1 when writing in L2 (for those non-natives). They were also asked about the use of writing tools such as dictionaries, etc. Finally, they were asked if they are aware of any problems in writing and what they do to overcome them.

#### **4.6.2.2.4. *When revising***

In this section participants were asked questions about the strategies they use when revising and editing. They were also requested to talk about deadlines and the strategies used to meet them. Finally, they were invited to suggest any other issues related to academic writing not covered in the interview.

#### **4.6.2.3. *Conducting interviews***

When conducting the interviews the advice in the literature is to be non-directive i.e., not to lead the respondent (Cohen, 2007: 363). Before the interviewee arrived I prepared myself by reviewing the purpose of the interview, and by practising the introduction and the questions. I also arranged the room and checked the two tape recorders and the copy of the interview guide. To establish a rapport, I tried to speak as clearly as I could and maintain eye contact to show interest (Cohen, 2007: 362).

The interviews for this study were taped so that any information not noted during the interview could be captured and analysed. The use of two tape recorders guaranteed saving the data in case of a technical fault. The use of the interview guide guaranteed that all relevant topics were covered and as the interviews progressed and more issues arose, relevant questions were raised into the flow of the interview.

The main purpose of the one-on-one, semi structured interviews was that of finding answers to the main research questions of this study: if native and non-native students use similar and/or different writing strategies and if there is any relation to nationality and gender concerning the similarities and differences, as well as how and why certain strategies were adopted.

#### **4.6.3. Analysis of the Pilot Study**

The quantitative data obtained from the pilot study was analysed using descriptive statistical procedures to ascertain whether or not significant differences existed between the two groups of respondents (native and non-native students) with respect to their writing strategies use. Descriptive statistics (means and frequencies) were used to compile information about the demographic trends of the respondents and to calculate overall writing strategy use. In order to determine any variation in strategy use relative to nationality (British vs. Mainland Chinese vs. Libyan) and gender (male vs. female), an ANOVA was undertaken under the guidance of a statistical expert.

The ANOVA of the questionnaire revealed no statistically significant differences in the overall use of strategies by respondents except in Q1 (see Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire). When the data were further examined for differences in reported frequency of writing strategy use according to gender, only one statistically significant difference was found. This was in Q1 with females reporting a higher use of making a timetable for the writing process than their male counterparts.

However, statistically significant differences were found according to nationality. ANOVA results revealed a statistically significant difference in the use of planning strategies for British and Mainland Chinese in comparison to Libyans

in Q1 and Q8. Libyan students reported a high frequency of use of the strategy referred to in Q13 compared with British and Mainland Chinese, while Mainland Chinese students reported using more social strategies (Q18) than their British and Libyan counterparts. Libyan and Mainland Chinese students also reported using feedback strategies (Q20) significantly more frequently than the British students.

The analysis of the qualitative data revealed that all participants engaged in the active use of writing strategies regardless of their nationality or gender. A few differences that were highlighted in the quantitative data were confirmed by the qualitative analysis. As the aim of the qualitative interview was to dig more deeply into how and why certain strategies were employed, the analysis of the interviews revealed that both NSE and NNSE participants had problems in writing what they wanted to say but the strategies they used to overcome those problems were different.

#### **4.6.4. Reflections on Piloting the Questionnaire**

In order to test the acceptability of the questionnaire, the participants were asked to write their comments about the questionnaire on a separate sheet. They were asked how they found answering the questionnaire and how long it took them to complete it. This information was then included in the cover letter that accompanied the questionnaire in the actual study (see Appendix A for a copy of the cover letter).

The pilot study highlighted problems with the distribution of the questionnaire and the wording of two of the questions (Q13: *I think of the suitability of expressions I know*, and Q26: *I use some familiar expressions in order not to make mistakes*). One of the native respondents was unsure about the phrase “some familiar expressions” for the reason given i.e. to avoid making mistakes. So it did not suggest a reason - simply “*I use some familiar expressions*”. The other question was checked by some colleagues and some of the targeted population and found to be clear so I decided to keep it. Two NSE respondents were puzzled by the term revising strategies—I meant strategies used at the revising stage of academic writing while for them revising meant preparation for

exams. Therefore, “When revising” in Section C was reworded to “When editing, proof-reading and revising”.

The questionnaire worked successfully in relation to two main criteria. First, the average time needed to answer the questionnaire was estimated at 20 minutes. Although the actual length varied depending on nativeness: it took 15-20 minutes for native speakers to complete the questionnaire, whereas non-native speakers required 20-25 minutes. The average length of 20 minutes represents the maximum that would keep a respondent interested. I also decided to keep the number of items as they currently stand and the new items which were recommended by respondents replaced some of the old ones. Second, feedback from interviewees, colleagues and EAP teachers was very encouraging in this regard (See Appendix B). There appeared to be no significant areas of misunderstanding or difficulties with completion of the questionnaire. As a number of respondents (native speakers) were unsure of three items (Q13, Q26 and Section C), I decided to reformulate two of them. Otherwise, all questions appeared to be comprehensible and answerable to the participants. Moreover, many respondents asked for a copy of the questionnaire as they thought it was useful to review the list of writing strategies occasionally in order to remind themselves of the strategies available when writing academically. It is also worth mentioning, that the questionnaire inspired two respondents to investigate academic writing strategy use in a different context, their own countries. They approached me asking for consent to use the same questionnaire. This emphasised that the topic is of interest to the respondents and therefore gives the indication that their answers reflected their true preferences.

#### **4.6.5. Reflections on Piloting the Interview**

I encountered a few problems related to the interviews, namely:

- Interviewees were constrained for time, usually due to some unforeseen interruption;

- The language proficiency of the interviewees, particularly NNSE, meant that there were some ambiguous statements or unfinished thoughts that need to be followed up specially in relation to Mainland Chinese participants;
- Some interviewees were trying to express their ideas on what they thought I was interested in. This specifically happened with Libyan participants as they may be engaging in face saving with a Libyan researcher.
- One of the Chinese participants did not understand the word 'draft' so I explained it as a version or a scratch.
- The local accent of the NE participants was rather challenging for me to follow.

I sought to overcome these challenges through a combination of experience, reflection, reference to relevant literature and by asking the participants to speak as clearly as they were able. Moreover, as an insider being a PhD student and a second language learner myself, I do not have any concerns that the participants in the study might have given me the answers they believed an outsider researcher would want to hear or that they would hold information from.

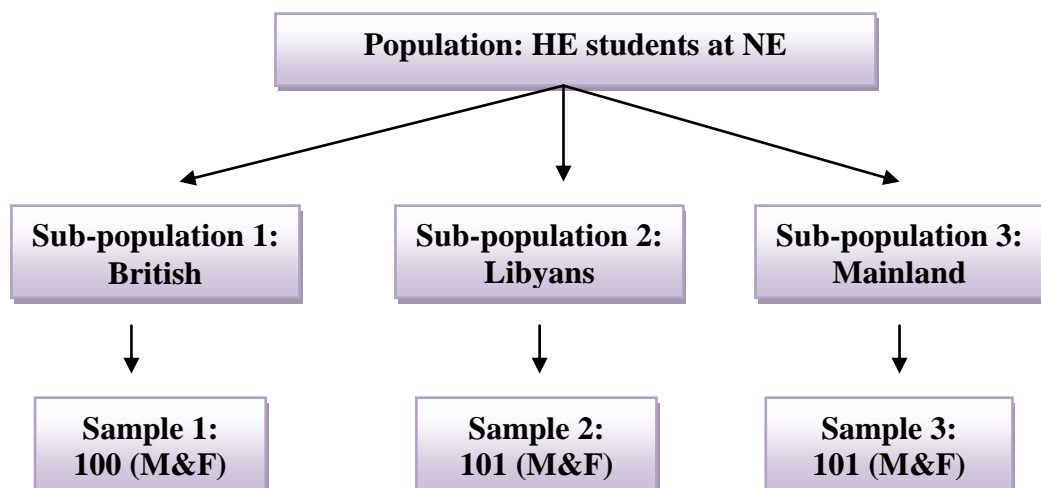
#### **4.7. THE MAIN STUDY**

As stated in Chapter One the research took place in the north east of England with aim of comparing native and non-native learners' academic writing strategies in higher education, where natives are learners who were born and educated in Britain, and non-native participants are nationals of Mainland China and Libya. This comparison is made in order to determine similarities/differences in strategies employed by both groups as well as to provide possible explanations for the findings. The study also aims to explore another variable, namely gender.

##### **4.7.1. The Population and Sample of Quantitative Data Used in the Main Study**

The population is an entire set or universe of people, objects or events of concern to a research study, from which a sample is drawn (Cohen, 2007; Dorneyei 2003). The population of this study was "stratified on more than one variable" (Dorneyei, 2003: 73) then samples intended to be "selected at random

from the groups defined by the intersections of the various strata” (Dorneyei, 2003: 73). In this case, the strata are: Britons, Libyans and Mainland Chinese male and female HE students who are 3<sup>rd</sup> year BA and BSc, MA, MSc, MED, MPhil, PhD students in the five north east of England universities. A sample is a part of the target population, carefully selected to represent that population. The intention in the quantitative research phase was to give every person within the target population a known non-zero chance of selection as I intended to use probability sampling. However, due to data protection issues, it proved impossible to access the list of HE students’ names in the universities. As an alternative, students who entered the universities’ libraries and cafeterias were asked to take a copy of the questionnaire and complete it. Such a sampling strategy resulted in having a convenience sample as opposed to a random sample. According to Bryman, “the problem with such a sampling strategy is that it is impossible to generalise the findings” (2008:183) because only students who are present at the time can be included. Nevertheless, the typical use of university students in much educational research is primarily a matter of convenience. Moreover, in many research contexts, researchers sample simply by asking for volunteers. The process of selecting the sample of this study can be illustrated as follows:



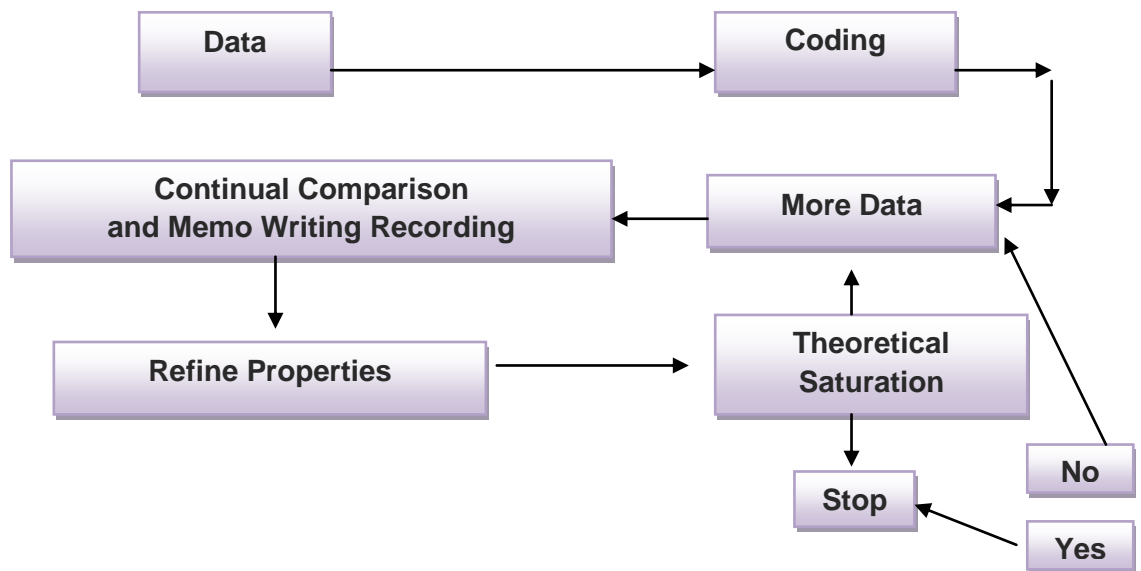
**Figure 4.4: Population, Sub-population and Samples Used in the Study**

#### **4.7.2. The Population and Sample Size of Interviews**

According to Lynn (2002), the concept of population to be surveyed is essential to research and refers to the group of persons from which the research plans to draw inferences. In this study the population interviewed is referred to as the participants and is defined as natives (learners who were born and educated in the UK), and non-native participants (nationals of Mainland China and Libya) who are HE students in the north east of England. However, in qualitative approaches where grounded theory is adopted, theoretical sample is recommended. As illustrated in Figure 4.5 below, researchers cannot make a judgment regarding sample size until they are involved in the data collection and analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The sample size is determined by theoretical saturation. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998: 212), theoretical saturation occurs when:

- No new or relevant data seems to emerge regarding a category,
- The category is well developed in terms of its properties and dimensions demonstrating variation, and
- The relationships among categories are well established and validated.

As the study involved subgroups—nationalities (British, Libyans, Mainland Chinese) and gender (Males, Females)—18 interviews (six for each nationality) were planned in order to facilitate pattern, category, and dimension growth and saturation (Craptree & Miller, 1999: 42). However, after 12 interviews, no new data were revealed. Therefore, I decided not to continue expanding the sample size as the level of saturation was achieved (Douglas, 2003; Goulding, 2002). Figure 4.3 illustrates when theoretical saturation occurs.



**Figure 4.5: Theoretical Saturation**

In total, 12 students were interviewed using the semi-structured interview guide. These were selected by using a snowball sample. It was intended to use a purposeful sample by choosing participants whose responses to the questionnaire were found to be interesting to and who could provide important information. However, a number of respondents did not provide their emails or contact numbers for follow up interviews and the questionnaire was anonymous. As a result, the participants who provided their names in the questionnaire were selected as the starting point for the sample for the interviews. Participants were chosen to take part on the basis of their particular demographic characteristics (Cohen, 2007: 114) and because of my interpretivist stance. To maximise the possibility that the sample was representative of different points of views, the interviewees' nationalities, gender, and level of study as well the subject area were considered. The interviews were set up when the participants contacted indicated they were willing to be interviewed.

However, the problem with this type of sampling is that it is not representative of the population. Nevertheless, according to Bryman "concerns about external validity and the ability to generalise do not loom as large within a qualitative



research strategy as they do in a quantitative research one” (2008:185). Thus, it is important to appreciate that data collected in this way, although interesting, is not representative of the whole study population.

Consequently, three groups of students (4 Britons, 4 mainland Chinese and 4 Libyans), male and female, were interviewed in a semi-structured way in order to obtain their perspective on the issues raised in the questionnaire, as well as to help understand nationality and gender differences in using writing strategies. Using the qualitative and quantitative approaches triangulated the data collection (Cohen, 2007), and also provided valuable information about the factors which affected the participants’ writing strategy use.

As stated previously, the interviews were semi-structured, with a pre-prepared list of questions (see Appendix C for a copy of the interview guide), but with flexibility to allow respondents to discuss the issues in their own way. The interviews required significant amounts of preparation. Various authors point out it is only possible to conduct fruitful interviews with participants if the interviewer has substantial knowledge of their world (Barbour, 2005; Derver, 1995). This is where my previous experience as a researcher, a teacher, and a HE student involved in academic writing, as well as the amount of literature I reviewed become important.

Interviewing is a skill, and undoubtedly my technique improved over time. The transcription of the six pilot study interviews provided an opportunity to start to analyse the common and conflicting perspectives, and also gave a chance for critical reflection on, and revision of, my interview technique.

### **4.7.3. Data Analysis**

Two different approaches were used to analyse data collected from both questionnaires and interviews. The advantages and weaknesses of each method are assessed in the light of the needs of the research.

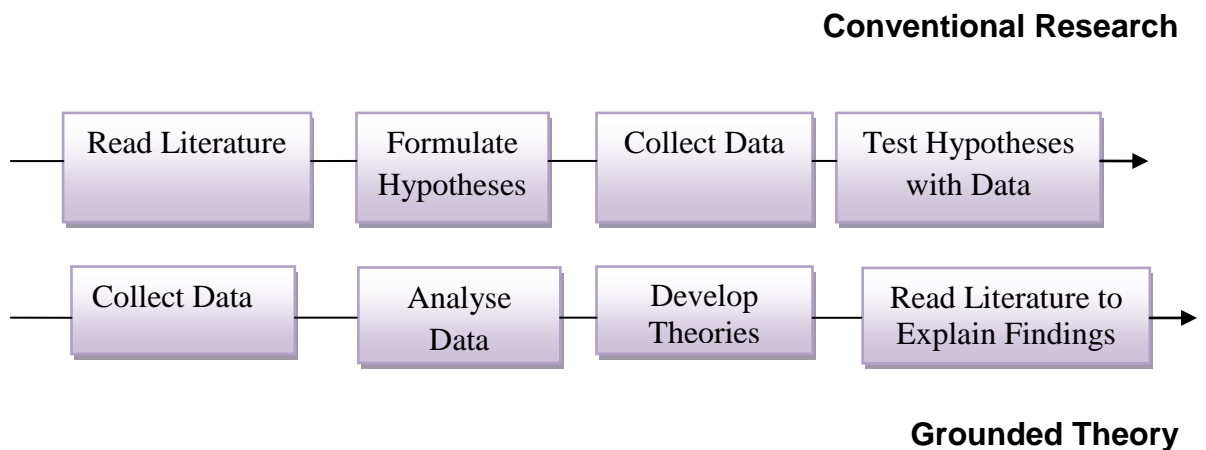
#### **4.7.3.1. Analysis of the questionnaires**

The first phase of the research—quantitative data gathering—was analysed using descriptive statistical procedures to order to ascertain if significant

differences existed between the two groups of respondents (native and non-native students) with respect to their writing strategies use. The quantitative data analysis was analysed with the help of the professional software programme, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Along with other references, such as textbooks, an expert in statistics was consulted to make sure that the data were accurately entered and precise tests were used. Descriptive statistics (means and frequencies) was used to compile information about the demographic trends of the respondents and to calculate overall writing strategy use. Principal-components analysis and factor analysis were performed to discern the underlying factors for the strategy items. In order to determine any variation in strategy use relative to nationality (British vs. Mainland Chinese vs. Libyans), an ANOVA was undertaken.

#### **4.7.3.2. Analysis of interviews**

A grounded theory approach was conducted on students' responses to the 12 interviews which assessed the methods and justifications of their strategy use. The results of the qualitative analysis were mainly used to explain and amplify the statistical results in order to provide a deeper understanding. Unlike when analysing the quantitative data, the process of grounded theory is not bounded by the development of the research problems, theoretical understanding or literature review. Rather, the researcher is granted the freedom to enter the field and explore meaning and experience of the phenomenon being studied. It is a powerful way to collect and analyse data and draw meaningful conclusions (Allan, 2003). It takes a research approach, which is contrary to most of the conventional research models (see Figure 4.6). Grounded Theory is an iterative process as researchers keep collecting data until the data is saturated then they tries to build up a theory.



**Figure 4.6: Comparison of Conventional Research Methods to Grounded Theory**

According to Neuman, the data analysis involves “examining, sorting, categorising, evaluating, comparing, synthesising and contemplating coded data as well as reviewing the raw and recorded data” (1997: 427). The process used to analyse the qualitative data can be described in the following steps

- Data collection;
- Managing and organising data into categories with regards to patterns;
- Reading and summarising data;
- Describing and classifying data and the interpretation thereof;
- Reading and relating to literature; and
- Presenting data in the form of a research report.

**4.7.3.2.1. Rationale for adopting grounded theory**

Grounded theory is used because it enables an understanding of an area which requires no preformed concepts of knowledge or reality. Although, I was working bottom up, starting with the data to see what was there, and gradually developed concepts, I did not start with a blank mind. I do have assumptions and general view of the LLS literature but not in regard to this population in this context and that is how it becomes a grounded study. Moreover, my epistemology as an interpretivist accepts that knowledge is not static, but is always emerging and transforming, and is interpreted by both observer and

participant. From this perspective, grounded theory provides a method which enables meaning and understanding to be derived from the data.

#### ***4.7.3.2.2. Taping and transcribing the interviews***

All the interviews were tape recorded with permission of the interviewees. The decision to record the interviews was taken because:

- being a postgraduate student, trust was not a problem with the interviewees, thus dispelling one of the most serious objections often raised against recording—that their use inhibits respondents;
- it is important for the researcher to focus on the interview rather than making full written notes; and
- using the option of making notes from memory after the interviews would risk losing material, as well as preclude the use of direct quotations.

The interviews were transcribed by the researcher, which although time consuming, was done for several reasons. First, the process of transcription was another chance to build familiarity with the data: aspects of the interviews were remembered, and differences in meaning or expression missed during the interview were highlighted. Second, transcribing the interviews also helped to sharpen any awareness of issues for future interviews. Third, the process of transcription was a useful part of the analysis by condensing material, summarising less relevant passages, and noting direct quotations that provided special insights and useful summaries of common opinions.

#### **4.7.4. Questionnaires: Length, Ethics and Organisation**

One of the main reasons for upholding confidentiality in the questionnaire was an ethical one; thus, the questionnaire was anonymous. However, a short note at the end of the questionnaire was included to give the respondents an opportunity to provide their names and contact details if they were willing to participate in a follow-up interview. Otherwise, the questionnaires were entered and coded in way which would not be possible for anyone to identify the respondents' identity.

Despite containing 72 items, every attempt was made to make the questionnaire easy to complete. First, the questions that are similar were clustered in order to make the respondents more comfortable when completing the questionnaire. Second, the same response formats (five-Likert scale) was used throughout the questionnaire. Third, the content of the questionnaire was considered to be of interest to the respondents as they were HE students to whom academic writing should be an important subject matter. Finally, the time required to complete the questionnaire was tested in the pilot study and according to the respondents' comments, the average time needed to answer the questionnaire was 20 minutes.

#### **4.7.5. Interview: Length, Ethics and Organisation**

The need to be realistic about how much time an interviewee could offer especially in the case of full-time HE students was taken into account. Thus, based on the pilot study interviews were set for a maximum of 40 minutes but if the interviewee felt that he or she was benefiting from the interview then more time could be added. Several days before each interview, an email message confirming the arrangements, giving a brief outline of the topic and what would be done with the information was sent. Moreover, commitments on confidentiality and anonymity were given to the interviewees in writing before the interview and in person at the start of the interview (See Appendix C).

#### **4.7.6. Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire**

In order to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, a formal pilot study was conducted. The data collection process and covering letters to participants was also piloted. Participants in the pilot study were students at HE universities in north east of England and represented three nationalities (British, Mainland Chinese and Libyan) similar to the population to be examined in the actual study.

##### **4.7.6.1. The validity of the questionnaire**

A questionnaire can be said to be valid if it examines the full scope of the research question in a balanced way, i.e. it measures what it set out to measure. According to Cohen, "quantitative data validity might be improved

through careful sampling, appropriate instrumentation and appropriate statistical treatments of the data” (2007: 133). As in Patric and Czarl’s (2003) study, the most relevant types of validity to this type of study are considered to be content, construct and response validity, whereas predictive and concurrent validity are not discussed since they are beyond the study’s scope. Criterion validity which is assessed by comparing a new measure with an existing gold standard scale is also not sought in this research. If a perfect scale existed, one would have to question the need to develop a new questionnaire.

Establishing content validity was an important step during the construction of the questionnaire. The draft was given to nine EAP university teachers to obtain expert opinions on the relevance of the question to the purpose of the questionnaire, possible wording and interpretation problems, and the instructions. Their suggestions were noted and changes made as appropriate. According to their recommendations, the sentence “If English is your first language please go straight to the questions on the next page” was added to the instructions of the background section after question eight. Another suggestion was that the word “revising” in the third section of the questionnaire applies more to preparing for an exam rather than editing/going over what has been written, therefore the phrase changed to “When editing, proof-reading and revising”. At the same time, the questionnaire was also piloted with a representative sample (15 members) of the target population, who were asked to write their comments on how they found answering the questionnaire and to check that the items were not ambiguous and the instructions were clear. Wording and conceptual problems were discussed, and additional ideas were invited in order to ensure that all strategies relevant to the target population were covered. As a result of the content validity check, a number of major changes were implemented, of which the most important ones were eliminating irrelevant items such as “I use a variety of pre-writing techniques”, clustering related statements, and addressing a number of wording problems such as using the word “topic” instead of “piece” in Q5, “I consider the purpose of the topic”.

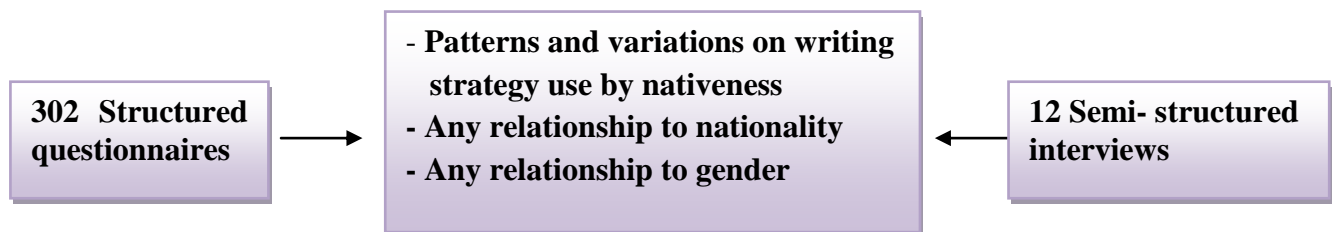
In relation to construct validity, the construction of the EAWSQ was comparable to other questionnaires concerned with similar issue (Cohen et al., 2007). The construction of the questionnaire was informed by the theories of language learning strategies and literature on second language writing. The questionnaire in this study is based on Soames' (2006), Patric and Czarl's (2003) and Flower and Hayes' (2002) cognitive model of the L1 writing process which emphasises the idea of recursion in writing and segments the writing process into three main components: planning; translating ideas into text; and reviewing. This is reflected in the division of the questionnaire into three parts, roughly corresponding to the three components, with the addition of items specifically addressing second language issues. See Table 3 3.5 for more details about the classification of the writing strategies.

The questionnaire was tested for response and face validity by interviewing the respondents informally after they had completed the questionnaire in order to ascertain if the responses they have given in the questionnaire agreed with their real opinions. The questions in the interview were worded differently from those in the questionnaire in order to test the face validity, as well as the reliability of the questions.

Quantitative research or statistical findings alone are insufficient to ascertain the effectiveness and usefulness of a writing strategies data collection instrument, particularly in the case of non-native speakers. Another factor taken into consideration was that respondents are sometimes uninterested in completing such a questionnaire. If respondents answer merely to complete the questionnaire, they may not be reflecting upon the questions or indicating their true preferences (Brown 2001; Dornyei 2003). For these reasons, I developed a questionnaire based on the academic writing strategies that HE students use on a daily basis, reasoning that students will be more likely to remember and report accurately if little time has elapsed (Fan 2003; Oxford et al. 2004; Ozeki 2000) since the last use.

The questionnaire was validated using a qualitative method and a quantitative method, which means using careful sampling and appropriate instrument

development as well as appropriate data treatment (Cohen et al., 2007) for the two groups of participants from the target population—NSE and NNSE. Using qualitative and quantitative data provided valuable information about the factors which affect the participants' writing strategy use. Cohen (2007) explains that triangulation enables the researcher to view the object of the study from different viewpoints. De Vos (2002: 341) argues that by using triangulation as a validation method enables the researcher to observe all aspects of the research topic. The use of triangulation is illustrated in Figure 4.7:



**Figure 4.7: Triangulation of This Study's Data Collection**

Therefore, the validation using triangulation of different data sources provides not only information on the validity of the instrument but also valuable insights into writing strategies use (Czarl, 2003; Oxford & Crookall, 1988; Patton, 1990). It is for this reason that a number of the participants were interviewed.

#### **4.7.6.2. Research reliability**

Reliability is defined as an assessment of the reproducibility and consistency of an instrument. Two aspects of the questionnaire were examined to test for reliability. In order to assess test-retest reliability, three participants were asked to complete the questionnaire on a second occasion two weeks after the initial session. The two sets of questionnaire then were compared statistically for categorical data. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was determined by asking some questions in different ways during the questionnaire. Furthermore, questions in the interview were asked that were similar to those in the questionnaire as a further test of reliability.



#### 4.7.7. Validity and reliability of the interview

According to Cohen, qualitative validity has recently taken many forms which “might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of data achieved, the participants approached, [and] the extent of triangulation” (2007: 133). Moreover, Bryman argues that, “since measurement is not a major preoccupation among qualitative researchers, the issue of validity would seem to have little bearing on such studies” (2008: 376).

The validity and reliability of the second phase of the research was addressed by transferability in which to the researcher provided a rich account of the participants’ academic writing strategies use. Second, I tried to reflect on all the phases of the research process, such as selecting participants, fieldwork notes, interview transcripts and data analysis decisions in an explicit manner so as other researchers can benefit from my experience. Finally, I did my utmost to represent the different viewpoints of the participants.

#### 4.8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter provides an outline of the research methodology, philosophy, and strategies used in the study. It also describes how the data collected was bound to be summarised, presented and analysed. Although interpretivist, I utilise a mixture of quantitative and qualitative approaches.

**Table 4.5: Summary of the Research Methods Adopted in the Study**

Approach	Method	Data Type	Sample
Interpretive (emergent findings)	Structured Questionnaire	Quantitative	Convenience Sample 302 participants
	Semi-structured Interviews	Qualitative	Snowball Sample 12 participants

The next chapter summarises and presents the results of the quantitative questionnaires.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

#### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

According to De Vos et al., data analysis is “the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data” (2002:339). The methodological process of data analysis was discussed in the previous chapter, and the results of this analysis are presented in two chapters. The data obtained through the quantitative data analysis process is reported in Chapter 5, while the qualitative results are presented in Chapter 6.

There are two main parts in this chapter. The first part (5.2) presents initial descriptions of the overall mean scores with specific mention of various independent variables including the demographics. The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the results derived from the total sample. The second part (5.3) deals with the analysis procedure used for quantitative data, categorising the data and presents the results.

As this was a major component of the study, a large amount of data was collected and so it was necessary to use the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to analyse the data. Before looking at the research questions, the demographic characteristics of the research participants are explored.

#### 5.2. DESCRIPTIVE DATA: PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The demographic characteristics of nationality, gender, age, educational qualifications, native language, university, International English Language Test System (IELTS) score, subject area, and length of stay in the UK provide a descriptive profile of the respondents. These variables are assessed to establish if they have any relationship to the academic writing strategies used by higher education (HE) students in the north east of England.

##### 5.2.1. Gender Distribution

A total of 302 students took part in the survey. Of these, 150 (49.7%) were male and 152 (50.3%) were female.

### 5.2.2. Age Distribution

The age distribution of the respondents is shown in Figure 1 below. The largest group 144 (47.7%) were between the 18-25 years. Seven (2.3%) were over 51 years old.

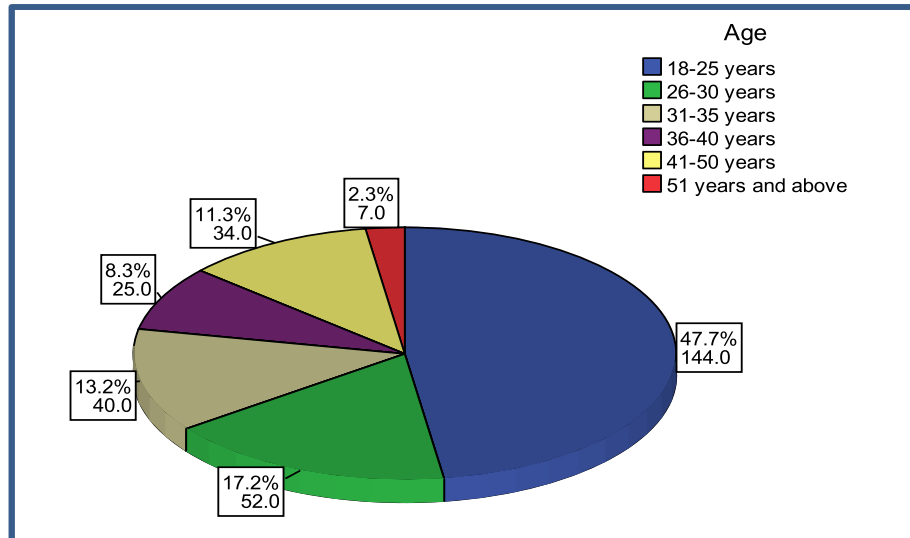


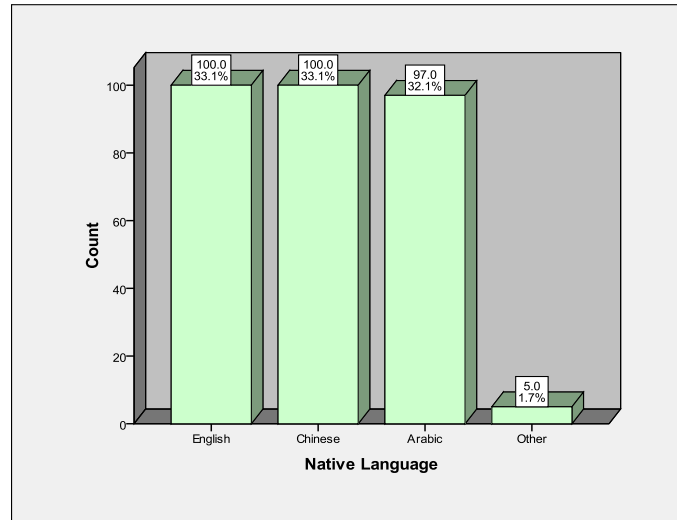
Figure 5.1: Distribution of Respondents according to Age Group

### 5.2.3. Distribution by Nationality

Three nationalities, British, Mainland Chinese and Libyan were the focus of this research. 101 (33.4%) were Libyans, 101 (33.4%) were Chinese and 100 (33.1%) were British.

### 5.2.4. Distribution by Native Language

100 respondents (33.1%) speak English as their native language, while a further 100 (33.1%) speak Chinese as their first language and 97 (32.1%) speak Arabic. Five respondents (1.7%) speak languages other than English, Chinese or Arabic as their native language (see Figure 5.2).



**Figure 5.2: Distribution of Respondents according to Native Language**

### 5.2.5. Distribution by Qualification

Table 5.1 shows the distribution of the qualifications of the respondents. The largest group (79) was MA students making up 26.2% of the sample, next were PhD students (64) making 21.2% of the sample. Only one student was studying for an MEd and two for an MPhil. There were 18 (6.0%) students studying for other qualifications.

**Table 5.1: Distribution of Respondents by Qualification**

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
BA	52	17.2
BSc	42	13.9
MA	79	26.2
MSc	44	14.6
Med	1	0.3
Mphil	2	0.7
PhD	64	21.2
Other	18	6.0
Total	302	100.0

### 5.2.6. Distribution by University

Of the 302 students, the majority (186 or 61.6%) were from the University of Sunderland. The minority (11 or 3.6%) were from Teesside University. See Figure 5.3 for more details.

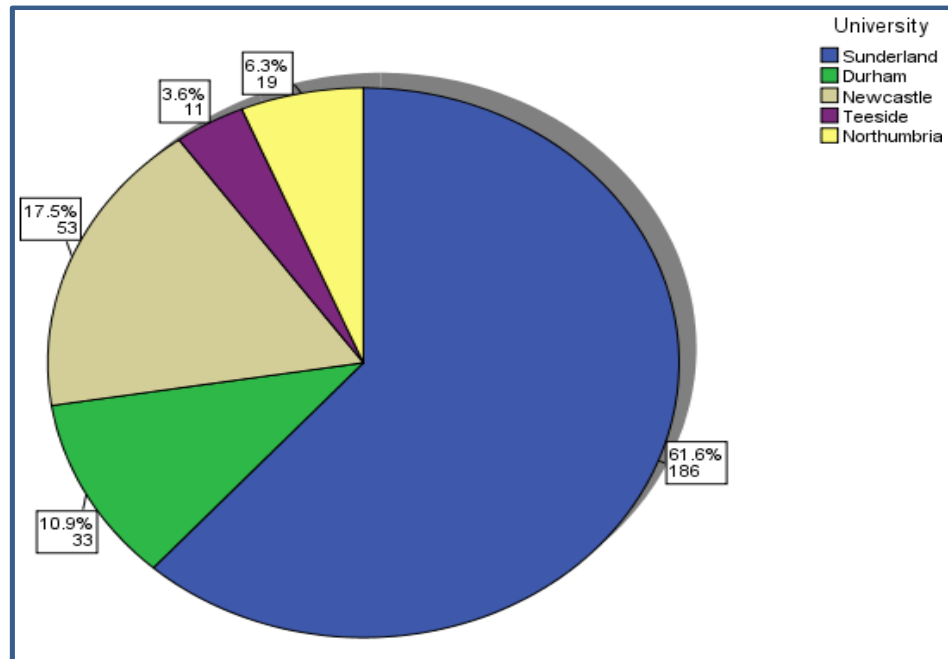


Figure 5.3: Distribution of Respondents according to University

### 5.2.7. Distribution by Subject Area

The largest group of the respondents in this research were studying English (Applied linguistics, TESOL and Translation), they make up 77 (25.5%) of the sample size. This was followed by Business Studies with 61 respondents, making over one fifth of the sample size. Very few students were studying Design, Sport or Tourism making up 1.7%, 1.7% and 2.0% respectively (see Table 5.2).

**Table 5.2: Distribution of Respondents by Subject area**

Subject area	Frequency	Percentage
Business	61	20.2
Medicine	49	16.2
Engineering	29	9.6
Computing	11	3.6
Tourism	6	2.0
Design	5	1.7
Applied linguistics	77	25.5
Science	27	8.9
Sport	5	1.7
Media and Culture	11	3.6
Others	21	7.0
Total	302	100.0

**5.2.8. Distribution by Year of Study**

The largest numbers of students were in their first year of study; 137 making up 45.4% of the sample. Five students had been studying for 5 years or more. See Table 5.3 for more details.

**Table 5.3: Distribution of Respondents by Year of Study**

Year of study	Frequency	Percentage
1	137	45.4
2	40	13.2
3	99	32.8
4	21	7.0
5	3	1.0
6	1	0.3
7	1	0.3
Total	302	100.0

### 5.2.9. Distribution of English as 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> or Additional Language

For the majority of the students, English was their second language. See Table 5.4 for more details.

**Table 5.4: English as 1st, 2nd, 3rd or Additional Language for Respondents**

English 1st, 2nd, 3rd or additional	Frequency	Percent
1 <sup>st</sup>	100	33.1
2 <sup>nd</sup>	168	55.6
3 <sup>rd</sup>	15	4.9
Additional	19	6.3
Total	302	100.0

### 5.2.10. Language of Education before Coming to a UK University

Before coming to the UK universities, those whose native language was not English were educated in either Arabic (93, 46.0%), or Chinese (86, 42.6%). Nine students (4.5%) were educated in Arabic and English while 14 students (6.9%) were educated in Chinese and English.

**Table 5.5: Language of Education before Coming to the UK**

Language of Education before UK Universities	Count	Percent
Arabic	93	46.0
Chinese	86	42.6
Arabic and English	9	4.5
Chinese and English	14	6.9
Total	202	100.0

### 5.2.11. Studying English as a Second/Foreign Language

For 202 students, English was not their first language. The statistics for how long these students had been studying English as a second/foreign language in a formal setting (school and university) is shown in Table 5.6. The years of

studying ranged from just 1 year to 24 years. On average the students had been studying English for nearly 9 years.

**Table 5.6: English as a Second /Foreign Language**

N Valid	202
Mean	8.98
Median	9.00
Mode	10
Std. Deviation	4.220
Range	23
Minimum	1
Maximum	24

All the students who had studied English for less than five years were put into one category, from five and to under ten years into another category, and for 10 or more years in the final category. The number of students falling in each category is shown in Table 5.7.

**Table 5.7: Categories of Years of Studying English**

Years	Count	Percent
< 5 years	28	13.9
≥ 5 and < 10 years	74	36.6
≥ 10 years	100	49.5
Total	202	100.0

#### **5.2.12. Distribution by IELTS Score**

Of the 202 NNSE, 122 had taken IELTS, three had taken Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and five had taken other language tests. Thus, 72 students whose first language was not English either had not taken any formal English test or did not provide their scores in the questionnaire. Some descriptive statistics for those students who took IELTS are shown in Table 5.8.



The minimum score was 4.5 and the maximum 9.0. The average score was 6.13. Table 5.8 shows the important statistics for the IELTS score.

**Table 5.8: Descriptive Statistics of IELTS Score**

N Valid	122
Mean	6.129
Median	6.000
Mode	6.0
Std. Deviation	0.6831
Range	4.5
Minimum	4.5
Maximum	9.0

6.5 is a score level considered by many universities to be indicative of a proficiency level in English sufficient to pursue university-level course work without language-related restrictions. Thus, students were divided into two groups based on an IELTS score of 6.5 in order compare the use of strategies between the two groups, see Table 5.9.

**Table 5.9: Number of Students with IELTS < 6.5 and ≥ 6.5**

Category	Count	Percent
IELTS score < 6.5	81	66.4
IELTS score ≥ 6.5	41	33.6
Total	122	100.0

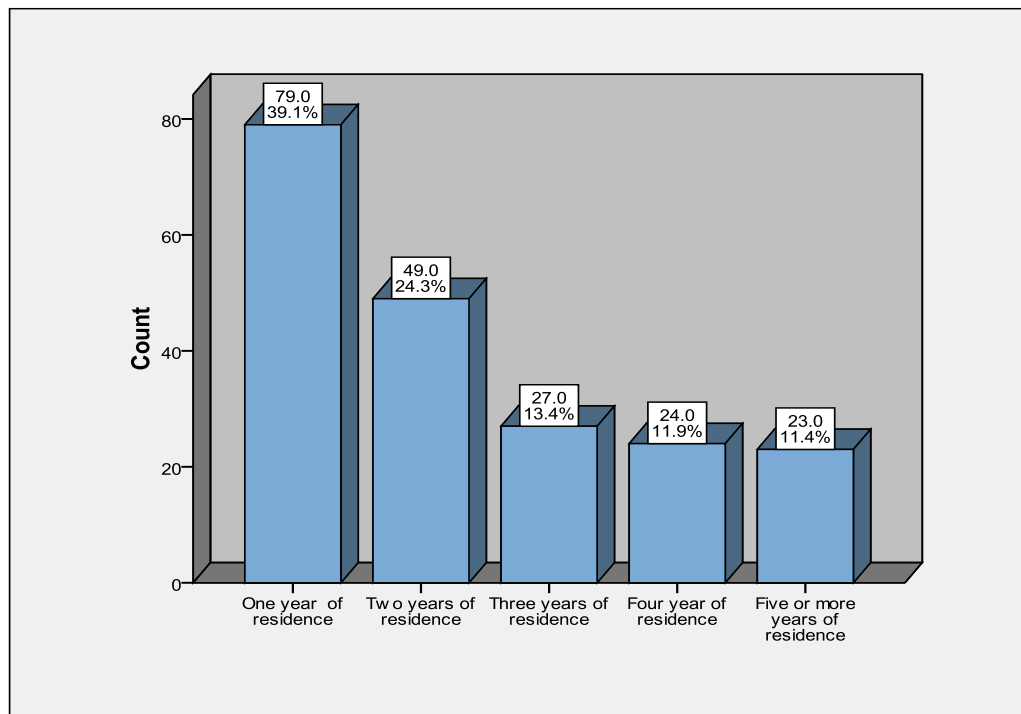
### 5.2.13. Distribution by Length of Stay in the UK

The relevant descriptive statistics of the length of stay of the respondents in the UK are shown in Table 5.10. The maximum length of stay is ten years, while the minimum is one and the average is 2.42 years.

**Table 5.10: Length of Residence in Years in the UK**

N Valid	202
Mean	2.42
Median	2.00
Mode	1
Std. Deviation	1.680
Range	9
Minimum	1
Maximum	10

NNSE were then categorised based on their length of residence in the UK in order to assist further analysis. The largest number of NNSE (79, 39.1%) have been in the UK for just one year while 23 (11.4%) have been in the UK for five or more years; see Figure 5.4 for details.



**Figure 5.4: 21Length of Residence in Categories**

### 5.3. ACADEMIC WRITING STRATEGY USE: PATTERNS AND VARIATIONS

The section of the questionnaire that assessed academic writing was divided into three parts namely:

- the Planning and Preparation Process;

- the actual Writing Process; and
- the Revision and Editing Process.

Each part had several items that attempts to establish the writing strategies used by HE students. The Planning and Preparation part had 21 items, the Writing Process part had 25 items and the Revision part had 26 items. Each student was asked to tick the appropriate response on each item on a 5-point Likert type scale; 1 indicating never true and 5 always true. See the questionnaire in Appendix A for more details.

The construct validity for each of the parts was measured using Cronbach's Alpha. According to Bryman, "Cronbach's Alpha is a commonly used test of internal reliability. It essentially calculates the average of all possible split-half reliability coefficients" (2008: 151). For Planning and Preparation Cronbach's Alpha was 0.55; Cronbach's Alpha for the Writing Process was 0.65; and that for the Revision Process was 0.88. For this type of survey Cronbach's Alpha of these magnitudes are adequate and the variables appear reliable in establishing writing strategies (Cronbach, 1951; SPSS Base 10, 1999).

### **5.3.1. Academic Writing: Planning and Preparation Strategies**

#### **5.3.1.1. Principal component analysis of planning and preparation items**

Principal component analysis (PCA) involves a mathematical procedure that transforms a number of possibly correlated variables into a smaller number of uncorrelated variables called principal components. The first principal component accounts for as much of the variability in the data as possible, and each succeeding component accounts for as much of the remaining variability as possible. Planning and Preparation was made up of 21 items (variables). The correlation matrix derived from these items had a determinant of 0.019 greater than the minimum of 0.00001 required; the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.69 (the minimum required is 0.5), and the Bartlett test of sphericity was significant. These are important tests to check if the data is suitable for PCA. All the results indicate that the data is suitable for PCA as all the tests met the minimum values required.

From the PCA, three strategies for the Planning and Preparation Phase of the writing activity were extracted. An examination of each strategy and the items that make up the strategy is shown in Table 5.11. Together the three strategies extracted account for nearly 54% of the variance of the 21 items.

**5.3.1.1.1. Planning and preparation: organisation strategy**

An examination of the items under this strategy indicates that the items are related to organisational elements that student will think about before embarking on a writing project. These include aspects such as timescale, writing environment, and requirement of writing activity. See Table 5.11 for details of the nine variables under this strategy.

**5.3.1.1.2. Planning and preparation: content strategy**

An examination of the variables under this strategy indicates that they are related to the issues of content such as brainstorming for ideas, relevance of ideas, and dependence on known facts. See Table 5.11 for details of the eight variables under this strategy.

**5.3.1.1.3. Planning and preparation: feedback strategy**

An examination of the items under this strategy indicates that they are related to feedback. These include discussion with tutor, classmates and friends. See Table 5.11 for the four variables under this strategy.

**Table 5.11: Extracted Strategies from Items under Planning and Preparation**

	Extracted Writing Strategies (components)		
	Organisation	Content	Feedback
Percent of variance	19.88	17.56	16.22
Cumulative Percent	19.88	37.44	53.66
<b>Items</b>			
I make a timetable for the writing process.	0.37		
I read the requirements of the writing activity.	0.64		
I look at a model written by a proficient writer.	0.53		
I write without a written plan.	-0.45		
I plan out the organisation in advance.	0.73		
I plan out the organisation as I go.	-0.59		
I make an outline in my native language. (if you are a non-native speaker of English)	0.73		
I make an outline in English.	-0.57		
I choose a relaxing environment when writing.	0.63		
I analyse the topic of the writing activity.		0.55	
I consider the purpose of the topic.		0.69	
I brainstorm to generate ideas.		0.71	
I depend on what I already know to find things to write.		0.66	
I consult references for more information about my topic.		0.66	
I think of the relevance of the ideas.		0.35	
I think of the ideas in my native language. (if you are a non-native speaker of English)		0.76	
I think of the suitability of expressions I know.		0.72	
I read my tutors' feedback on my previous writing and try to learn from my mistakes.			0.56
I discuss my topic with my friends.			0.52
I discuss my topic with my tutors.			0.73
I ask my classmates about the strategies they use in their writing activity that may help me.			0.55

After the three writing strategies, organisation, content and feedback, were identified under Planning and Preparation, it is important to look at the research questions.

- Do native and non-native students use similar or different academic writing strategies, and if so, what are they?
- Is there a significant impact due to nationality?
- Is there a significant impact due to gender?

The following questions are about the variables emerged from the factual questionnaire:

- Is there a significant impact due to length of stay in the UK?
- Is there a significant impact due to IELTS score?
- Is there any significant impact due to the interaction between gender and nationality?

#### **5.3.1.2. Comparison of planning and preparation strategies between NSE and NNSE**

As data was collected on an ordinal scale, a non-parametric test is appropriate to use; in particular, the Mann Whitney test is used when there are two groups and Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA when there are more than two groups.

It has been established through PCA that students used three main strategies when they are planning and preparing a writing project. The three strategies are:

- Planning and Preparation: Organisation Strategy
- Planning and Preparation: Content Strategy
- Planning and Preparation: Feedback Strategy

An analysis of each strategy comparing NSE and NNSE is detailed in the following sections.

##### ***5.3.1.2.1. Planning and preparation: organisation strategy***

For the organisation strategy, the mean rank for NSE was 165.97 and for NNSE was 144.34. This result is statistically significant with a p-value of 0.04

(<0.05) and z-value of -2.03 (see Table 5.12). The results indicate that NSE used this strategy significantly more than NNSE.

**5.3.1.2.2. Planning and preparation: content strategy**

For content strategy, the mean rank for NSE was 150.17 and that for NNSE was 152.16. Even though NNSE use this strategy more than NSE, the difference in usage is not statistically significant with a p-value of 0.85 (>0.05) and a z-value of -0.19 (See Table 5.12).

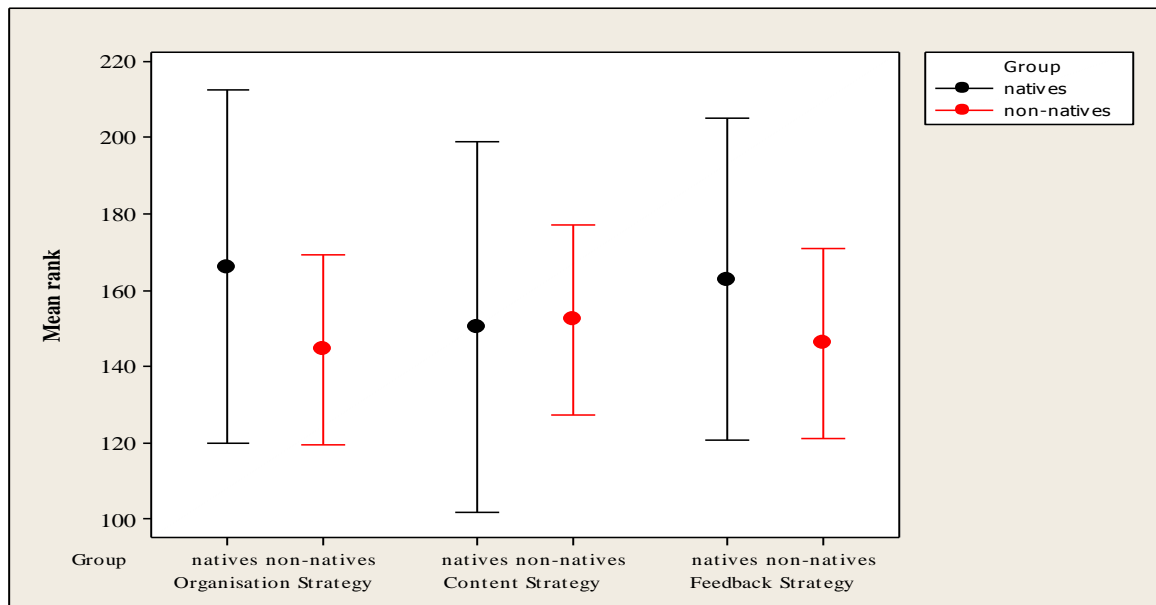
**5.3.1.2.3. Planning and preparation: feedback strategy**

For the feedback strategy, the mean rank for NSE was 162.57 while that for NNSE was 146.02. The results indicate that NSE took the opportunity to discuss their academic writing with their tutors or classmates more than NNSE did. However, the result is not significantly different with a p-value of 0.12 (>0.05) and a z-value of -1.56 (See Table 5.12).

**Table 5.12: Comparison of Planning and Preparation Strategies for NSE and NNSE**

Strategy	Natives and Non-natives	N	Mean Rank	Z-value	p-value
Planning and Preparation: Organisation Strategy	Natives	100	165.97	-2.03	0.04
	Non-natives	202	144.34		
Planning and Preparation: Content Strategy	Natives	100	150.17	-.19	0.85
	Non-natives	202	152.16		
Planning and Preparation: Feedback Strategy	Natives	100	162.57	-1.56	0.12
	Non-natives	202	146.02		

Out of the three strategies extracted from the 21 items under Planning and Preparation, significant differences were seen in one: organisation strategy. This was used more by NSE than NNSE. See Figure 5.5 for more detail.



**Figure 5.5: Comparison of NSE and NNSE on Planning and Preparation Strategy**

### 5.3.1.3. Comparison of planning and preparation strategies by gender

#### 5.3.1.3.1. Planning and preparation: organisation strategy

For this strategy, the mean rank for female students was 163.69 and that for male students was 139.14. This result is statistically significant with a p-value of 0.01 ( $<0.05$ ) and z-value of -2.45 (see Table 5.13). The results indicate that female students used this strategy more than male students. This gives an indication that female students tend to be more organised than male students.

#### 5.3.1.3.2. Planning and preparation: content strategy

For content strategy, the mean rank for female students was 159.32 and that for male students was 143.58. Even though female students use this strategy more than male students, the difference in usage is not statistically significant with a p-value of 0.12 ( $>0.05$ ) and a z-value of -1.57 (See Table 5.13).

#### 5.3.1.3.3. Planning and preparation: feedback strategy

For the feedback strategy, the mean rank for female students was 153.56 while that for male students was 149.42. The results indicate that female students took advantage of the opportunity to discuss their writing with their tutors or classmates/friends more than male students. However, the result is

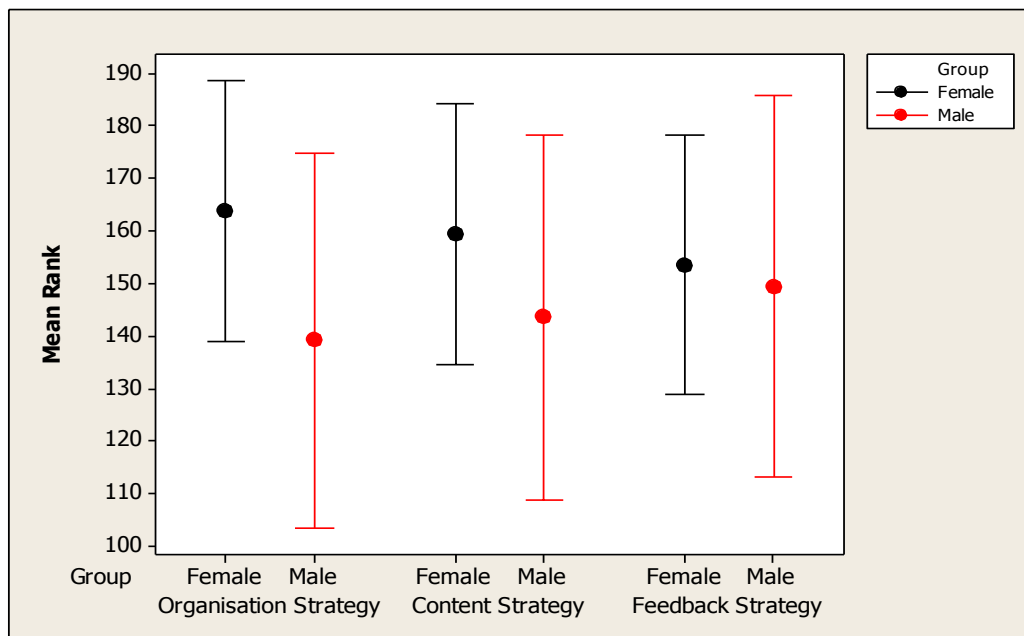


not significantly different with a p-value of 0.68 ( $>0.05$ ) and a z-value of -0.41 (See Table 5.13).

**Table 5.13: Comparison of Planning and Preparation Strategies by Gender**

Strategy	Gender	N	Mean Rank	z-value	p-value
Planning and Preparation: Organisation Strategy	Male	150	139.14	-2.45	<b>0.01</b>
	Female	152	163.69		
Planning and Preparation: Content Strategy	Male	150	143.58	-1.57	0.12
	Female	152	159.32		
Planning and Preparation: Feedback Strategy	Male	150	149.42	-0.41	0.68
	Female	152	153.56		

Table 5.13 shows that for the three strategies, female students use them more than male students as the mean ranks for female students were higher than the mean rank from male students. However, only in the case of organisation strategy was there a significant difference (See Figure 5.6).



**Figure 5.6: Comparison of Planning and Preparation Strategies by Gender**

#### **5.3.1.4. Comparison of planning and preparation strategies by nationalities**

Are there any differences in strategies used by different nationalities of British, Libyan and Mainland Chinese? The distributions of students according to nationality are 100 British (33.1% of the sample), 101 Libyans (33.4%), and 101 Mainland Chinese (33.4%).

##### ***5.3.1.4.1. Planning and preparation: organisation strategy***

The mean rank given to this strategy by British, Libyan, and Chinese students were 165.97, 138.80 and 149.87 respectively. This shows that the British students used this strategy the most, followed by Chinese students, then Libyan students. However, the difference in usage is not significant with a chi-square value of 4.94 and a p-value of 0.09 ( $>0.05$ ). See details in Table 5.14.

##### ***5.3.1.4.2. Planning and preparation: content strategy***

For content strategy, the mean rank by the British, Libyan, and Chinese students were 150.17, 157.08 and 147.24 respectively. Thus, Libyan students used this strategy most, followed by the British students, then Chinese students. Again, the difference in usage is not significant with a chi-square value of 0.68 and a p-value of 0.71 ( $>0.05$ ) (See Table 5.14).

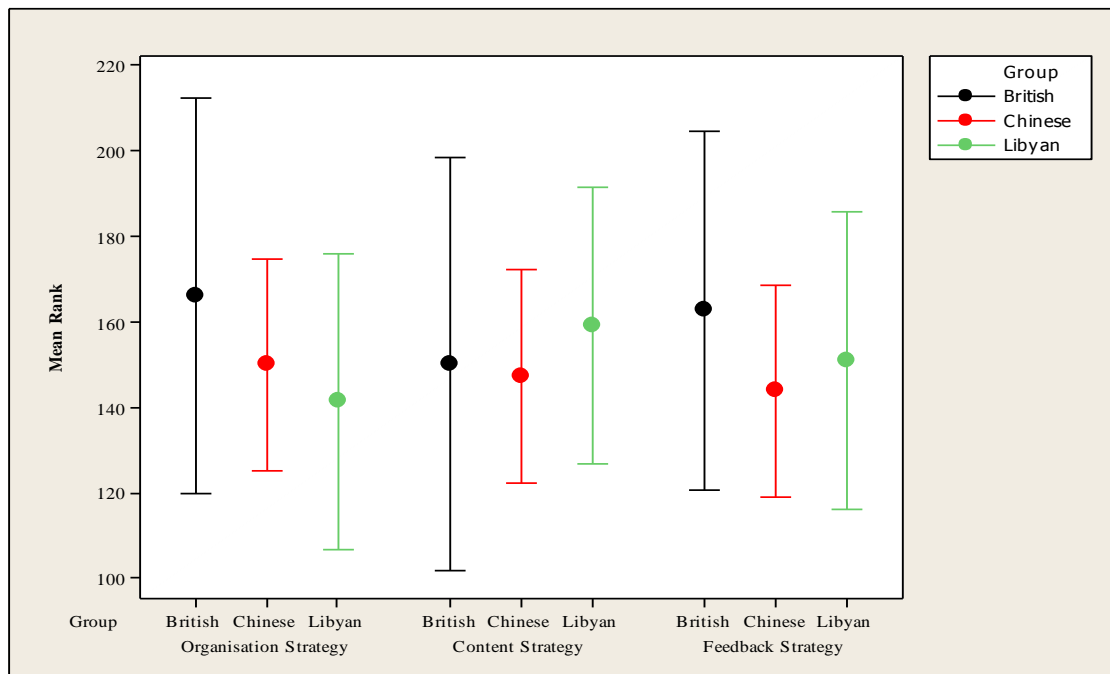
##### ***5.3.1.4.3. Planning and preparation: feedback strategy***

For the feedback strategy, the mean rank by British, Libyan, and Chinese students were 162.57, 148.22 and 143.83 respectively. Thus, the British students used this strategy more, followed by Libyan students, then Chinese students. However, the difference in usage is not significant with a chi-square value of 2.56 and a p-value of 0.28 ( $>0.05$ ) (See Table 5.14).

**Table 5.14: Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA Analysis of Planning and Preparation Strategies across Nationalities**

Strategy	Nationality	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	p-value
Planning and Preparation: Organisation Strategy	British	100	165.97	4.94	0.09
	Libyan	101	138.80		
	Mainland Chinese	101	149.87		
Planning and Preparation: Content Strategy	British	100	150.17	0.68	0.71
	Libyan	101	157.08		
	Mainland Chinese	101	147.24		
Planning and Preparation: Feedback Strategy	British	100	162.57	2.56	0.28
	Libyan	101	148.22		
	Mainland Chinese	101	143.83		

However, for all three strategies there is no significant difference in their use according to nationality. Students from Britain, Libya, and China use the strategies in a similar way (See Figure 5.7).



**Figure 5.7: Comparison of Nationality on Planning and Preparation Strategy**

### 5.3.1.5. Comparison of planning and preparation strategies according to length of residence

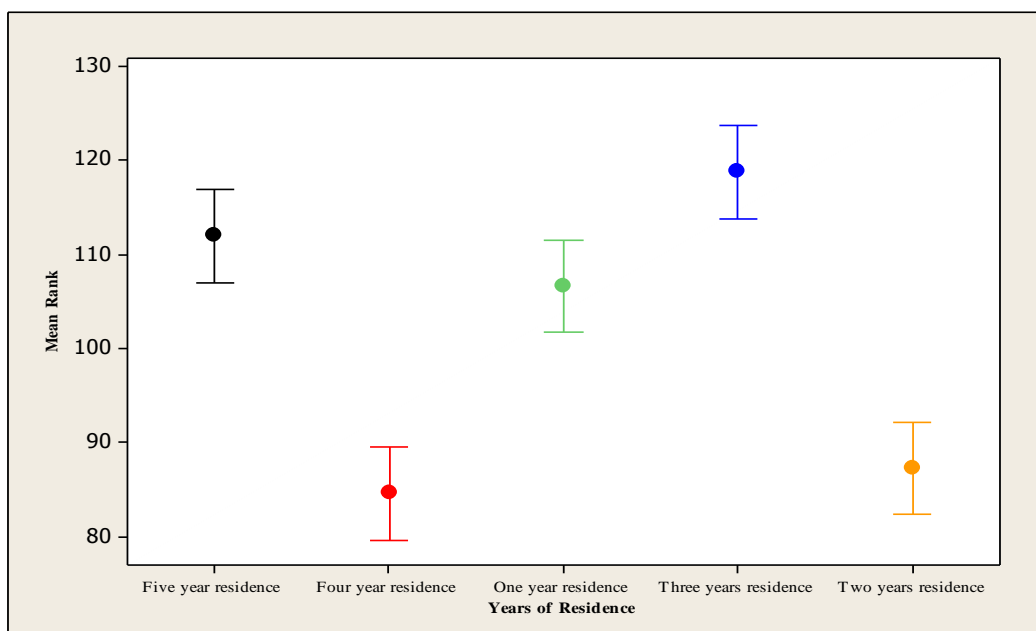
The Chinese and Libyan students were categorised based on their length of residence in the UK (see Figure 5.4). This section assesses if length of residence is an important factor influencing the use of the writing strategies.

#### 5.3.1.5.1. Planning and preparation: organisation strategy

The mean rank given to this strategy by students with one year, two years, three years, four years and five or more years of residence were 106.58, 87.20, 118.76, 84.50 and 111.98 respectively. Thus, students with three years of residence used this strategy most, followed by those with five or more years of residence. It was used the least by students with four years of residence. However, there is no evidence to suggest that year of residence is an important factor in using this strategy with a chi-square value of 8.74 and p-value of 0.07 (>0.05). The chi-square value and its associated p-value are used to assess if there are differences between groups. See details in Table 5.15 and Figure 5.8.

**Table 5.15: Comparison of Organisation Strategy across Year of Residence**

Strategy	Length of Residence	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	p-value
Planning and Preparation: Organisation Strategy	One year	79	106.58	8.74	0.07
	Two years	49	87.20		
	Three years	27	118.76		
	Four years	24	84.50		
	Five or more years	23	111.98		



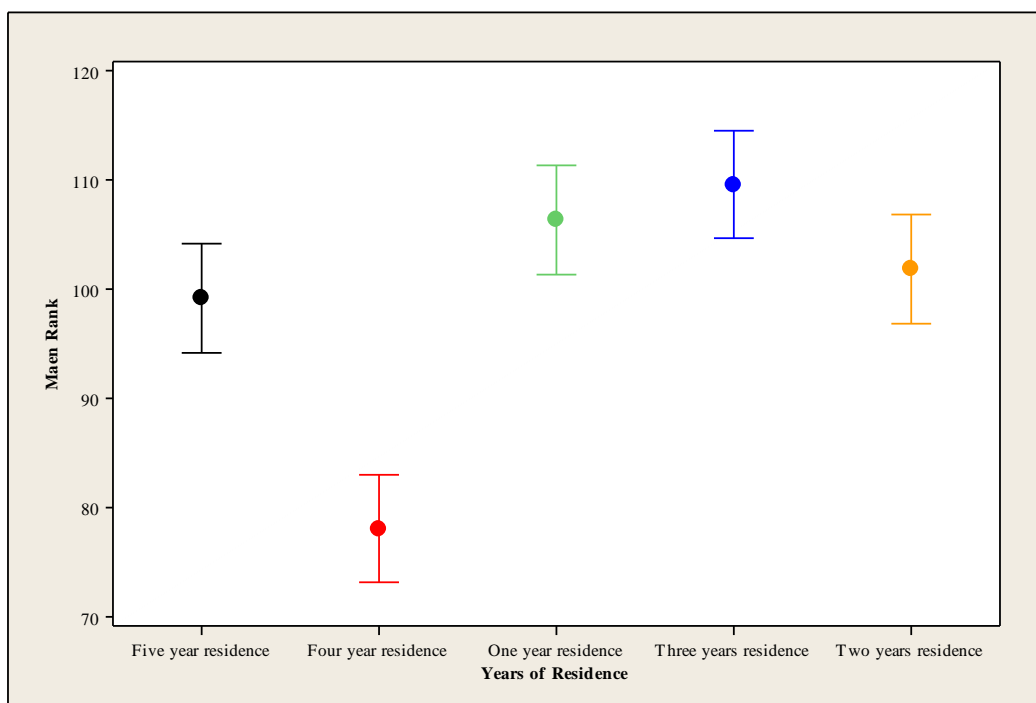
**Figure 5.8: Comparison of Organisation Strategy across Year of Residence**

**5.3.1.5.2. Planning and preparation: content strategy**

The mean rank given to this strategy by students with one year, two years, three years, four years and five years of residence were 106.58, 101.78, 109.57, 78.06 and 99.20 respectively. Students with three years of residence used this strategy most, followed by those with one year of residence. It was used the least by students with four years of residence, similar to the previous strategy. However, there is no evidence to suggest that year of residence is an important factor in using this strategy with a chi-square of 5.00 and p-value of 0.29 (>0.05). See details on Table 5.16 and Figure 5.9.

**Table 5.16: Comparison of Content Strategy across Year of Residence**

Strategy	Length of Residence	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	p-value
Planning and Preparation: Content Strategy	One year	79	106.36	5.00	0.29
	Two years	49	101.78		
	Three years	27	109.57		
	Four years	24	78.06		
	Five or more years	23	99.20		



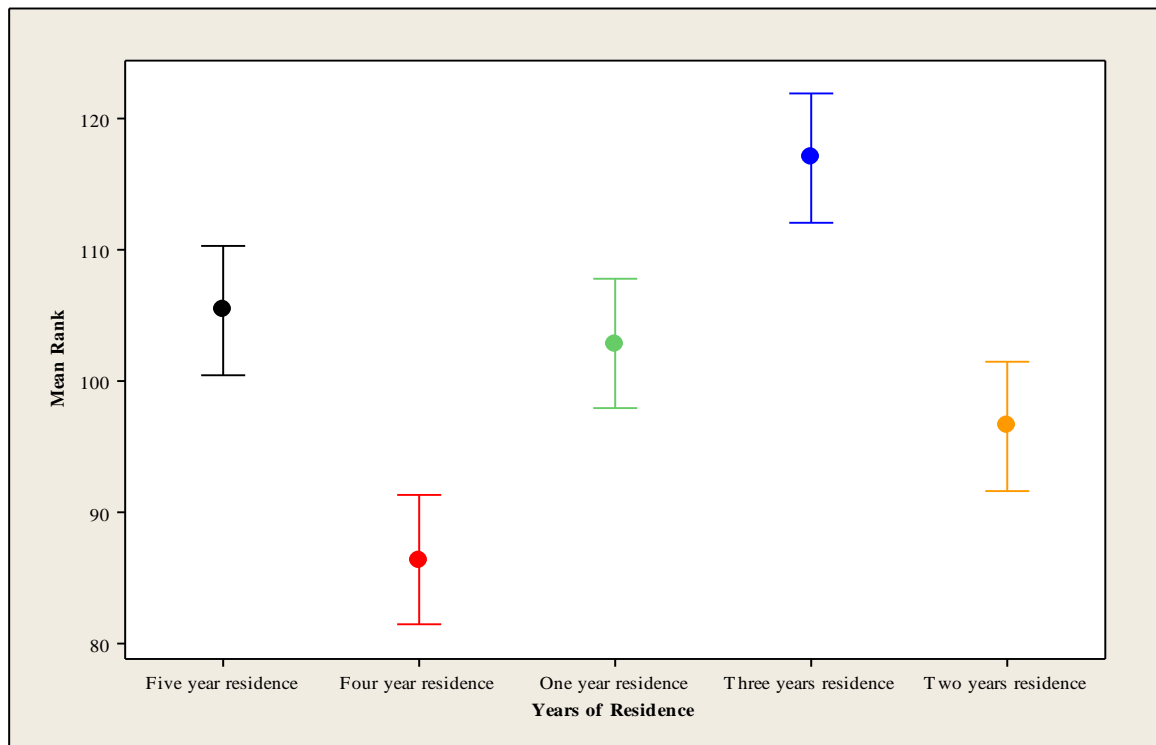
**Figure 5.9: Comparison of Content Strategy across Years of Residence**

**5.3.1.5.3. Planning and preparation: feedback strategy**

The mean rank given to this strategy by students with one year, two years, three years, four years and five or more years of residence were 102.81, 96.49, 117.02, 86.27 and 105.35 respectively. As with the previous two strategies, students with three years of residence used this strategy most, followed by those with five or more years of residence. It was used the least by students with four years of residence, similar to the last two strategies. However, there is no evidence to suggest that year of residence is an important factor in using this strategy with a chi-square of 4.08 and p-value of 0.40 (>0.05). See details in Table 5.17 and Figure 5.10.

**Table 5.17: Comparison of Feedback Strategy across Year of Residence**

Strategy	Length of Residence	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	p-value
Planning and Preparation: Feedback Strategy	One year	79	102.81	4.08	0.40
	Two years	49	96.49		
	Three years	27	117.02		
	Four years	24	86.27		
	Five or more	23	105.35		



**Figure 5.10: Comparison of Feedback Strategy across Years of Residence**

### 5.3.1.6. Comparison of planning and preparation strategies by IELTS score

122 students who took the IELTS test were categorised on their IELTS scores. As explained previously, students who scored less than 6.5 were put in one category and students who scored 6.5 or more were put in a second category. Are there any differences in the usage of these strategies for these two groups of students?

For all three strategies under Planning and Preparation—organisation, content and feedback—no significant evidence in usage was found between students who scored  $< 6.5$  and those who scored  $\geq 6.5$  on IELTS test. The p-values are all greater than 0.05 (See Table 5.18).

**Table 5.18: Comparison of Planning and Preparation Strategies by IELTS Scores**

Strategy	IELTS Score	N	Mean Rank	z-value	p-value
Planning and Preparation: Organisation Strategy	IELTS < 6.5	81	59.15	-1.04	0.30
	IELTS ≥6.5	41	66.13		
Planning and Preparation: Content Strategy	IELTS < 6.5	81	59.91	-0.70	0.48
	IELTS ≥6.5	41	64.63		
Planning and Preparation: Feedback Strategy	IELTS < 6.5	81	64.73	-1.43	0.15
	IELTS ≥6.5	41	55.12		

**5.3.1.7. Comparison of planning and preparation strategies by subject areas**

All the students who took part in this survey were classified into two subject areas: science or arts. The distribution of the students into these groups is shown in Table 5.19. 127 students (58.6% of the sample) were studying for a science degree while 125 (41.4%) were studying for an arts degree. It is interesting to ascertain if the usage of the three strategies identified under planning and preparation differs according to subject area.

**Table 5.19: Distribution of Students according to Subject Area**

Subject area	Count	Percent
Science	177	58.6
Arts	125	41.4
Total	302	100.0

Arts students used the strategies more than science students indicated by their higher mean rank for all three strategies. However, no significant difference in usage was found between students studying for arts degree and those studying for science degree. See Table 5.20 for details.



**Table 5.20: Comparison of Planning and Preparation Strategies by Subject Area**

Strategy	Subject area	N	Mean Rank	z-value	p-value
Planning and Preparation: Organisation Strategy	Science	177	147.92	-0.85	0.40
	Arts	125	156.57		
Planning and Preparation: Content Strategy	Science	177	148.71	-0.66	0.51
	Arts	125	155.45		
Planning and Preparation: Feedback Strategy	Science	177	147.20	-1.02	0.31
	Arts	125	157.59		

### 5.3.1.8. Comparison of planning and preparation strategies by age group

All the students who took part in this survey were classified into two age groups: those  $\leq 25$  years old and those  $> 25$  years old. This was for two main reasons: it puts the students into roughly equal groups; and 25 can be considered to be age when a student moves into the mature category. The distribution of the students into these groups is shown in Table 5.21. 144 students (47.7% of the sample) were  $\leq 25$  years old while 158 (52.3%) were  $> 25$  years old. The categories were used to ascertain if the usage of the three strategies identified under planning and preparation differs according to age.

**Table 5.21: Distribution of Students according to Age Group**

Age Group	Count	Percent
$\leq 25$ years old	144	47.7
$> 25$ years old	158	52.3
Total	302	100.0

Students  $\leq 25$  years old with a mean rank of 153.66 used the organisation strategy more than students  $> 25$  years old with a mean rank of 149.53. However, the usage is not significantly different with a z-value of -0.41 and p value of 0.68 ( $>0.05$ ). For the content strategy, students  $> 25$  years old with a mean rank of 160.06 used this strategy more than students  $\leq 25$  years old with a mean rank of 142.11. Again the usage is not significantly different with a z-value of -1.79 and p value of 0.07 ( $>0.05$ ). As with the organisation strategy, students  $\leq 25$  years old with a mean rank of 163.32 used the

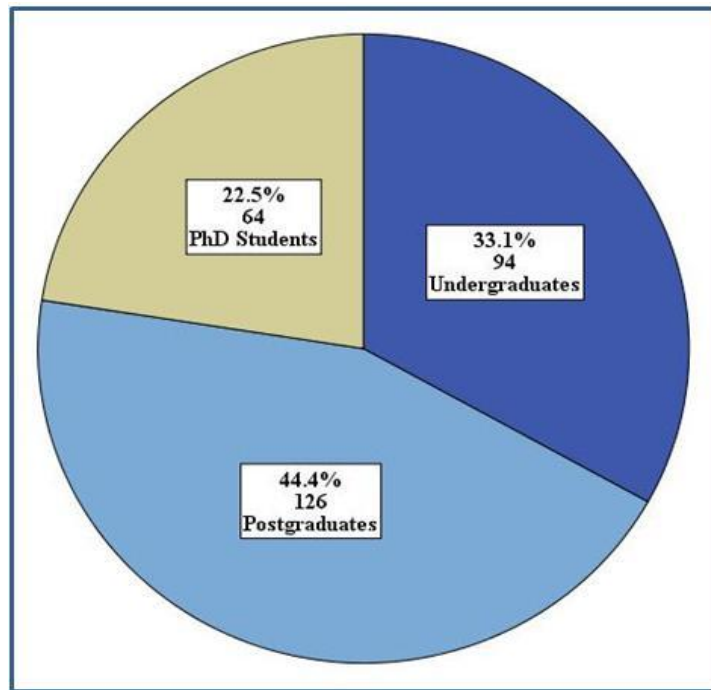
feedback strategy more than students > 25 years old with a mean rank of 140.73. Students ≤ 25 years old used the feedback strategy significantly more than students > 25 years old with a z-value of -2.26 and a p-value of 0.024 (<0.05). See Table 5.22 for more details.

**Table 5.22: Comparison of Planning and Preparation Strategies by Age Group**

Strategy	Age Group	N	Mean Rank	z-value	p-value
Planning and Preparation: Organisation Strategy	≤25 years old	144	153.66	-0.41	0.68
	> 25 years old	158	149.53		
Planning and Preparation: Content Strategy	≤25 years old	144	142.11	-1.79	0.074
	> 25 years old	158	160.06		
Planning and Preparation: Feedback Strategy	≤25 years old	144	163.32	-2.26	<b>0.024</b>
	> 25 years old	158	140.73		

### 5.3.1.9. Comparison of planning and preparation strategies by qualification

The students who took part in this survey were classified into three main qualification groups. Those studying for a BA or BSc degree made up group one (undergraduates); those studying for MA, MSc, MED or MPhil made up group two (postgraduates); and those studying for PhD made up group three (PhD students). There were 18 students who were studying for other qualifications and did not fit into the three main groups. These 18 students were not included in the analysis. The distribution of students according to qualification groupings are shown on Figure 5.11, which highlights there were 94 undergraduate students, 126 postgraduate students and 64 PhD students making up 33.1%, 44.4% and 22.5% of the sample respectively. Do students studying for different qualifications use the strategies differently?



**Figure 5.11: Distributions of Students by Qualification**

For the organisation strategy, PhD students used it most with a mean rank of 149.24, followed by undergraduate students with a mean rank of 147.90 and then by postgraduate students with a mean rank of 135.05. Even though PhD students used the organisation strategy most, there is no evidence to suggest that the usage is significantly different from the other students with a chi-square of 1.88 and p-value of 0.39 ( $>0.05$ ). See Table 5.23 for details.

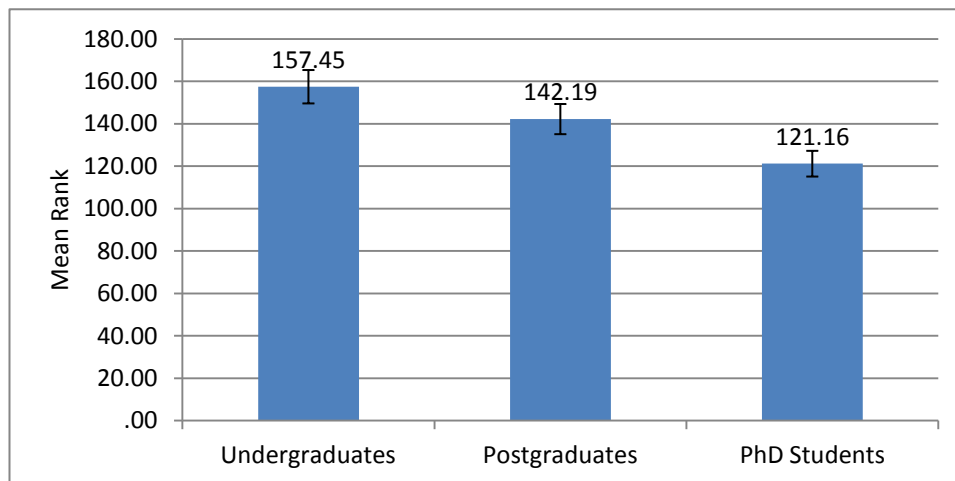
For the content strategy, PhD students used it most with a mean rank of 157.39, followed by postgraduate students with a mean rank of 141.39 and then by undergraduate students with a mean rank of 133.85. Even though PhD students used the organisation strategy most, again there is no evidence to suggest that the usage is significantly different from the other students with a chi-square of 3.19 and p-value of 0.20 ( $>0.05$ ). See Table 5.23 for details.

For the feedback strategy, undergraduate students used it most with a mean rank of 157.45, followed by postgraduate students with a mean rank of 142.19 and then by PhD students with a mean rank of 121.16. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that the usage of this strategy is significantly different across students with different qualifications with a chi-square value of 7.53 and p-value of 0.02 ( $<0.05$ ). Although the p-value of 0.02 tells us that there is

difference in usage across qualification, further analysis was necessary to pinpoint where the difference lies. See Table 5.23 and Figure 5.12 for details.

**Table 5.23: Comparison of Planning and Preparation Strategies by Qualification**

Strategy	Qualification	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	p-value
Planning and Preparation: Organisation Strategy	Undergraduates	94	147.90	1.88	0.39
	Postgraduates	126	135.05		
	PhD Students	64	149.24		
Planning and Preparation: Content Strategy	Undergraduates	94	133.85	3.19	0.20
	Postgraduates	126	141.39		
	PhD Students	64	157.39		
Planning and Preparation: Feedback Strategy	Undergraduates	94	157.45	7.53	<b>0.02</b>
	Postgraduates	126	142.19		
	PhD Students	64	121.16		



**Figure 5.12: Comparison of Feedback Strategy across Qualification**

### 5.3.1.10. Interaction effects on three strategies under planning and preparation

#### 5.3.1.10.1. Planning and preparation: organisation strategy

To find out if there is any interaction effect (when one factor does not have the same effect at all levels of another factor, the two factors said to interact), a univariate general linear model (GLM) analysis was performed. GLM can assess the main effect and the interaction effect between (or among) factors. Table 5.24 displays descriptive statistics for each combination of factors in the

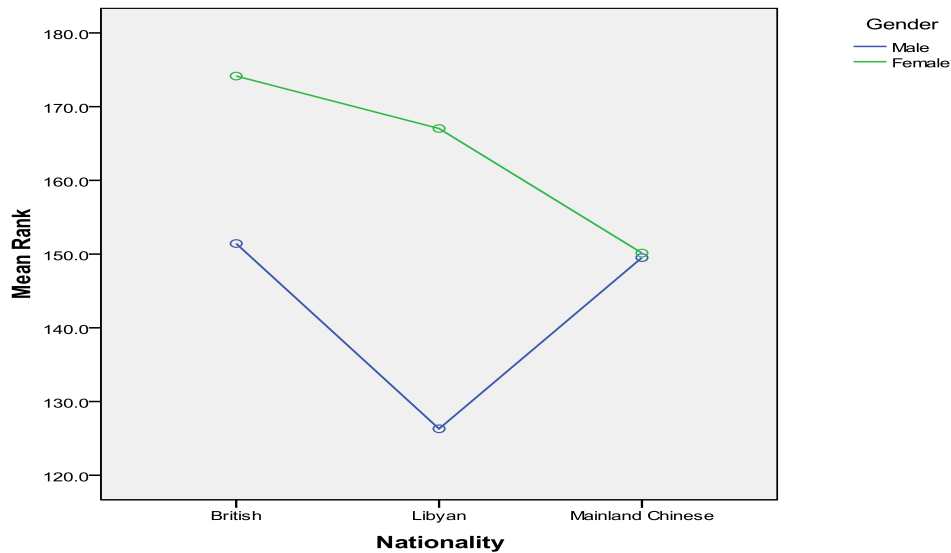
model; that is, for nationality and gender for the organisation strategy. The previous analysis has already established that there is no nationality effect (the mean ranks for British, Libyan and Chinese students were 165.97, 138.80 and 149.87 respectively), but there is a gender effect (the mean rank for male students in the sample was 139.14 compared to 163.69 for female students).

There may be an interaction effect between gender and nationality because differences in mean rank by nationality vary between genders. For example, British female students tend to have a higher mean rank (174.15) than Chinese female students (150.14), while this trend is the same for British and Chinese male students with mean rank of 151.43 and 149.52 respectively. Furthermore, Table 5.24 shows that Chinese male students have a higher mean rank (149.52) than Libyan male students (126.30); while Chinese female students have a lower mean rank (150.14) than Libyan female students (167.03). These results indicate that there may be an interaction effect between gender and nationality.

**Table 5.24: Descriptive Statistics of Planning and Preparation: Organisation Strategy**

Gender	Nationality	Mean Rank	Std. Deviation	N
Male	British	151.43	100.89	36
	Libyan	126.30	84.64	70
	Mainland Chinese	149.52	81.48	44
	Total	139.14	88.15	150
Female	British	174.15	88.55	64
	Libyan	167.03	89.81	31
	Mainland Chinese	150.14	76.63	57
	Total	163.69	84.67	152
Total	British	165.97	93.32	100
	Libyan	138.80	87.86	101
	Mainland Chinese	149.87	78.38	101
	Total	151.50	87.15	302

Figure 5.13, called the profile plot, is a visual representation of the mean rank table. If there were no interaction effect, the lines in the graph would be parallel. Instead, the difference in mean rank between Libyan and Chinese students is greater for male students as the line for male students slopes upward and that for female students slopes downward. However, although there is an interaction effect, it is not significant with a p-value of 0.29 ( $>0.05$ ).



**Figure 5.13: Profile Plot of the Interaction between Gender and Nationality for Organisation Strategy**

**5.3.1.10.2. Planning and preparation: content strategy**

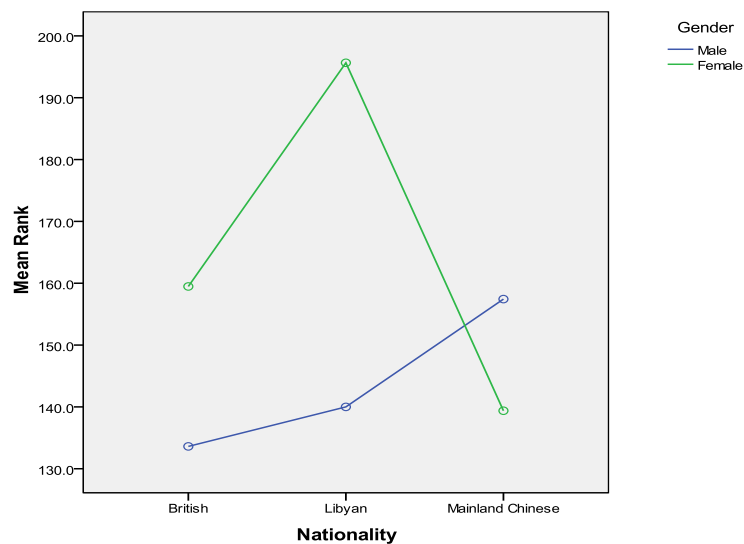
Results from the GLM analysis are shown in Table 5.25. Analysis carried out earlier indicated that there were no nationality or gender effects in relation to this strategy. The mean ranks from male and female students were 143.58 and 159.32 respectively, while the mean ranks for British, Libyan and Chinese students were 150.17, 157.08 and 147.24 respectively.

There may be an interaction effect between gender and nationality. Libyan female students tend to have a higher mean rank (195.65) than Libyan male students (140.00), but this trend is reversed for Chinese students where the males have a higher score than females with mean rank of 157.43 and 139.38 respectively.

**Table 5.25: Descriptive Statistics of Planning and Preparation: Content Strategy**

Gender	Nationality	Mean Rank	Std. Deviation	N
Male	British	133.61	98.82	36
	Libyan	140.00	77.89	70
	Mainland Chinese	157.43	86.74	44
	Total	143.58	85.80	150
Female	British	159.48	96.26	64
	Libyan	195.65	71.61	31
	Mainland Chinese	139.38	81.15	57
	Total	159.32	88.02	152
Total	British	150.17	97.49	100
	Libyan	157.08	79.93	101
	Mainland Chinese	147.24	83.69	101
	Total	151.50	87.13	302

The profile plot is shown in Figure 5.14. There is a significant interaction effect with a p-value of 0.02 ( $<0.05$ ).



**Figure 5.14: Profile Plot of the Interaction between Gender and Nationality for Content Strategy**

### 5.3.1.10.3. Planning and preparation: feedback strategy

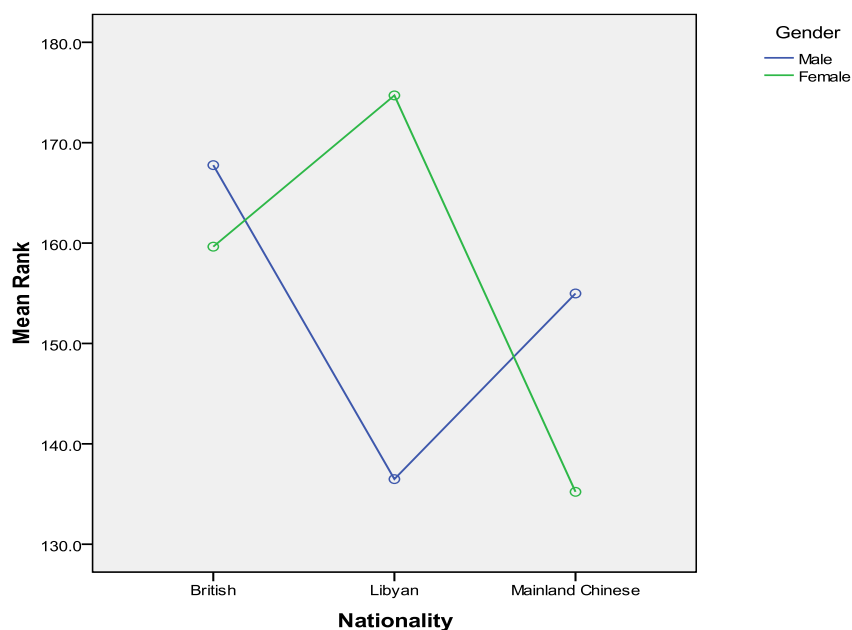
Results from the GLM analysis are shown in Table 5.26. Analysis carried out earlier indicated that there were no nationality or gender effects on this strategy. The mean ranks from male and female students were 149.42 and 153.56 respectively. The mean ranks for British, Libyan and Chinese students were 162.56, 148.22 and 143.83 respectively. However, there may be an interaction effect between gender and nationality. Again, Libyan female students tend to have a higher mean rank (174.71) than Libyan male students (136.49), but again, this trend is reversed for Chinese students where the males have a higher score than females with mean rank of 154.98 and 135.22 respectively.

**Table 5.26: Descriptive Statistics of Planning and Preparation: Feedback Strategy**

Gender	Nationality	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	British	167.76	93.35	36
	Libyan	136.49	88.98	70
	Mainland Chinese	154.98	86.70	44
	Total	149.42	89.73	150
Female	British	159.64	80.35	64
	Libyan	174.71	86.60	31
	Mainland Chinese	135.22	84.62	57
	Total	153.56	84.10	152
Total	British	162.56	84.88	100
	Libyan	148.22	89.59	101
	Mainland Chinese	143.83	85.67	101
	Total	151.50	86.83	302

The profile plot is shown on Figure 5.15. There is an interaction effect, but it is not significant with a p-value of 0.06 ( $>0.05$ ). There is no evidence to suggest the interaction effect is significant.





**Figure 5.15: Profile Plot of the Interaction between Gender and Nationality for Feedback Strategy**

### 5.3.2. Academic Writing: Writing Process

#### 5.3.2.1. Principal component analysis of writing process items

The Writing Process part of the questionnaire was made up of 25 variables. The correlation matrix derived from these items had a determinant of 0.004; the KMO measure of sampling adequacy was 0.60 (minimum required is 0.5); and the Bartlett test of sphericity was significant. These three results indicate that the data is suitable for PCA. From the PCA, five strategies for the writing process were extracted, which account for nearly 66% of the variance of the 25 items. An examination of each strategy and the items that make up the strategy is shown in Table 5.27.

##### 5.3.2.1.1. *The writing process: content strategy*

Careful examination of the variables under this strategy indicates that the items are related to the content. These include items such as clarity of meaning, logical content, use of examples, and staying with the main idea. See Table 5.27 for all six items included in this strategy.

#### **5.3.2.1.2. *The writing process: language strategy***

An examination of the items included in this strategy indicates that they are related to the issue of the use of language such as use of familiar expressions and checking sentences. See Table 5.27 for each of the three variables.

#### **5.3.2.1.3. *The writing process: organisation strategy***

An examination of the items included in this strategy indicates that they are related to organisation. These include items such as checking periodically to ensure that the writing process is going well and re-organising things if necessary. See Table 5.27 for each of the four variables.

#### **5.3.2.1.4. *The writing process: feedback strategy***

An examination of the items included in this strategy indicates that they are related to feedback. These include items such as checking with tutors when a problem arises and talking with classmates. See Table 5.27 for the two variables.

#### **5.3.2.1.5. *The writing process: mechanics strategy***

An examination of the items included in this strategy indicates that they are related to mechanics of the writing process. These include items such as writing a draft copy by hand or using a computing, the use of a dictionary, and the use of spell and grammar checkers, etc. See Table 5.27 for each of the ten variables.

**Table 5.27: Extracted Strategies from Items under the Writing Process**

	Extracted Strategies (Components)				
	Content	Language	Otganisation	Feedback	Mechanics
Percent of Variance	13.84	13.43	13.15	13.08	12.3
Cumulative Percent	13.84	27.27	40.42	53.5	65.8
Items					
I write the introduction first.	.56				
I leave the introduction to the end.	-.59				
I think only in English. (if you are a non-native speaker of English)	-.67				
I use some examples to explain the meaning when I cannot find the exact expressions.	-.61				
I discuss various points of view in my writing.	.54				
I produce subsequent drafts.	.73				
I think of a sentence in my native language first and then translate it into English. (if you are a non-native speaker of English)		.72			
I use some familiar expressions.		.78			
I highlight sentences that I want to check later.		.58			
I periodically check whether I am keeping to my topic.			.78		
I periodically check whether my writing is making sense to me.			.80		
I stick to the organisation I chose initially.			-.82		
I change the organisation I chose initially.			.72		
I confer with my classmates.				.39	
I confer with my tutors when I have writing problems.				.68	
I use spell-checkers.					.85
I use grammar checkers.					.80
I use a bilingual dictionary. (if you are a non-native speaker of English)					.43
I consult a thesaurus to assist me with vocabulary.					.55
I produce a first, rough draft by computer.					.75
I handwrite a draft copy first.					.68
I use electronic/online dictionaries.					.56
I stop writing when I do not know what to write.					.79
I use a dictionary to make sure of my wording and usage.					.61
I use a monolingual dictionary.					.84

As the five strategies during the Writing Process—content, language, organisation, feedback and mechanics—have been identified, it is time to review the research questions.

- Do native and non-native students use similar or different academic writing strategies, and if so, what are they?
- Is there a significant impact due to nationality?
- Is there a significant impact due to gender?

The following questions are about the variables that emerged from the factual questionnaire:

- Is there a significant impact due to length of stay in the UK?
- Is there a significant impact due to IELTS score?
- Is there any significant impact due to the interaction between gender and nationality?

#### **5.3.2.2. Comparison of the writing process strategies by nativeness**

As with the planning and preparation strategies, for each of the five strategies extracted for the Writing Process, the average was calculated using the constituent items. The average scores were used to answer the research questions.

The five main strategies in the actual process of writing were established through the PCA. An examination of each strategy comparing their use between NSE and NNSE is detailed in the following sections.

##### ***5.3.2.2.1. The writing process: content strategy***

For content strategy under the Writing Process, the mean rank from NSE was 154.64 and that from NNSE was 149.95. Even though NSE used this strategy more than NNSE the usage is not significantly different with a p-value of 0.66 ( $>0.05$ ) and z-value of -0.44 (see Table 5.28).

##### ***5.3.2.2.2. The writing process: language strategy***

For language strategy during the Writing Process, the mean rank for NSE was 149.79 and that for NNSE was 152.35. Even though NNSE used this strategy slightly more than NSE, the difference in usage is not statistically significant with a p-value of 0.81 ( $>0.05$ ) and a z-value of -0.24 (see Table 5.28).

### **5.3.2.2.3. The writing process: organisation strategy**

For the organisation strategy, the mean rank for NSE was 154.06 while that for NNSE was 150.24. Thus, NSE seem more organised than NNSE. However, the result is not significantly different with a p-value of 0.72 ( $>0.05$ ) and a z-value of -0.36 (See Table 5.28).

### **5.3.2.2.4. The writing process: feedback strategy**

For the feedback strategy, the mean rank for NSE was 162.49 while that for NNSE was 146.06. Thus, NSE seem to depend more on feedback than NNSE. Consequently, NSE used this strategy more than NNSE. However, the usage is not significantly different with a p-value of 0.12 ( $>0.05$ ) and a z-value of -1.57 (see Table 5.28).

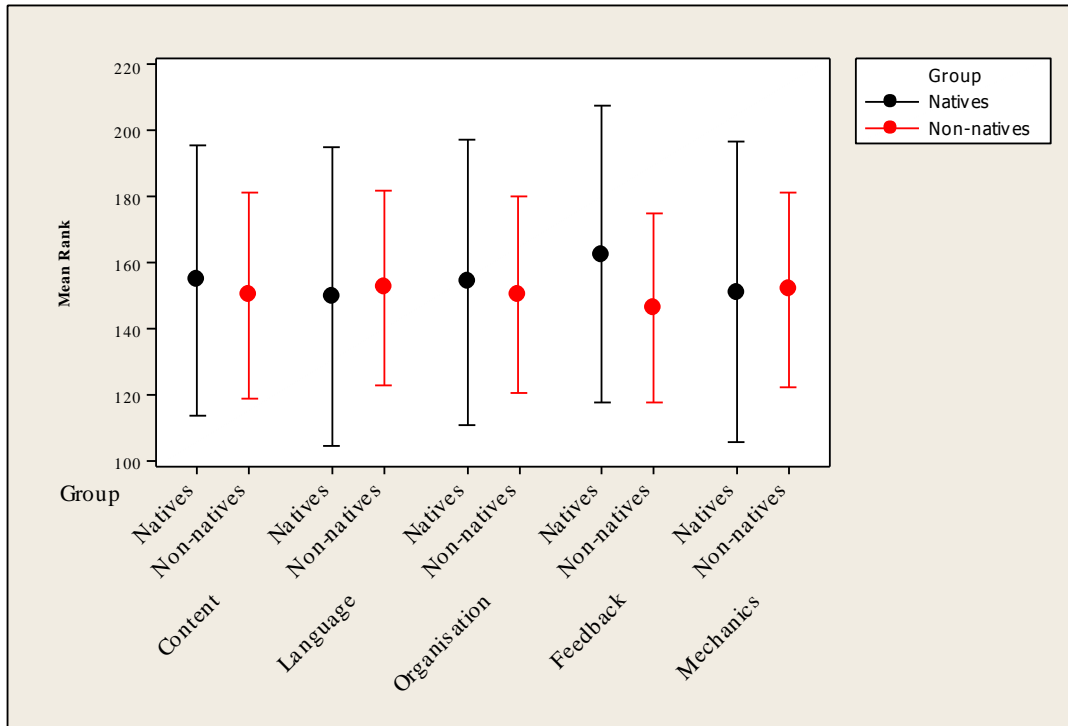
### **5.3.2.2.5. The writing process: mechanics strategy**

For the mechanics strategy, the mean rank from NSE was 150.94 while that from NNSE was 151.78. There is no difference in the use of this strategy with a p-value of 0.94 ( $>0.05$ ) and a z-value of -0.78 (see Table 5.28).

**Table 5.28: Comparison of Writing Process Strategies for NSE and NNSE**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>NSE and NNSE</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>z-value</b>	<b>p-value</b>
The Writing Process: Content Strategy	NSE	100	154.64	-0.44	0.66
	NNSE	202	149.95		
The Writing Process: Language Strategy	NSE	100	149.79	-0.24	0.81
	NNSE	202	152.35		
The Writing Process: Organisation Strategy	NSE	100	154.06	-0.36	0.72
	NNSE	202	150.24		
The Writing Process: Feedback Strategy	NSE	100	162.49	-1.57	0.12
	NNSE	202	146.06		
The Writing Process: Mechanics Strategy	NSE	100	150.94	-0.78	0.94
	NNSE	202	151.78		

Out of the five strategies extracted from the 25 items under the writing process, there were no significant differences observed. Therefore, both NSE and NNSE used the five strategies in a similar way (see Figure 5.16).



**Figure 5.16: Comparison of NSE and NNSE on Writing Process Strategy**

### 5.3.2.3. Comparison of writing process strategies by gender

Is there a significant impact due to gender in the use of these strategies?

#### 5.3.2.3.1. The writing process: content strategy

For content strategy under the Writing Process, the mean rank from male students was 149.03 and that from female students was 153.94. Even though female students used this strategy more than male students, the usage is not significantly different with a p-value of 0.62 ( $>0.05$ ) and a z-value of -0.49 (see Table 5.29).

#### 5.3.2.3.2. The writing process: language strategy

For language strategy during the Writing Process, the mean rank from male students was 135.29 and that from female students was 167.50. Female students used this language strategy more than male students, and the difference in usage is significantly different with a p-value of 0.01 ( $<0.05$ ) and a z-value of -3.23 (see Table 5.29). Thus, female students pay greater attention to the way language is used than do their male counterparts.

### **5.3.2.3.3. The writing process: organisation strategy**

For the organisation strategy, the mean rank from male students was 147.34 while that from female students was 155.61. As with the previous strategy, female students tend to use this strategy more than male students. However, the difference is not significantly different with a p-value of 0.40 ( $>0.05$ ) and a z-value of -0.83 (see Table 5.29).

### **5.3.2.3.4. The writing process: feedback strategy**

For the feedback strategy, the mean rank from male students was 146.37 while that from female students was 156.57. Again female students used this strategy more than male students. However, the result is not significantly different with a p-value of 0.30 ( $>0.05$ ) and a z-value of -1.04 (see Table 5.29).

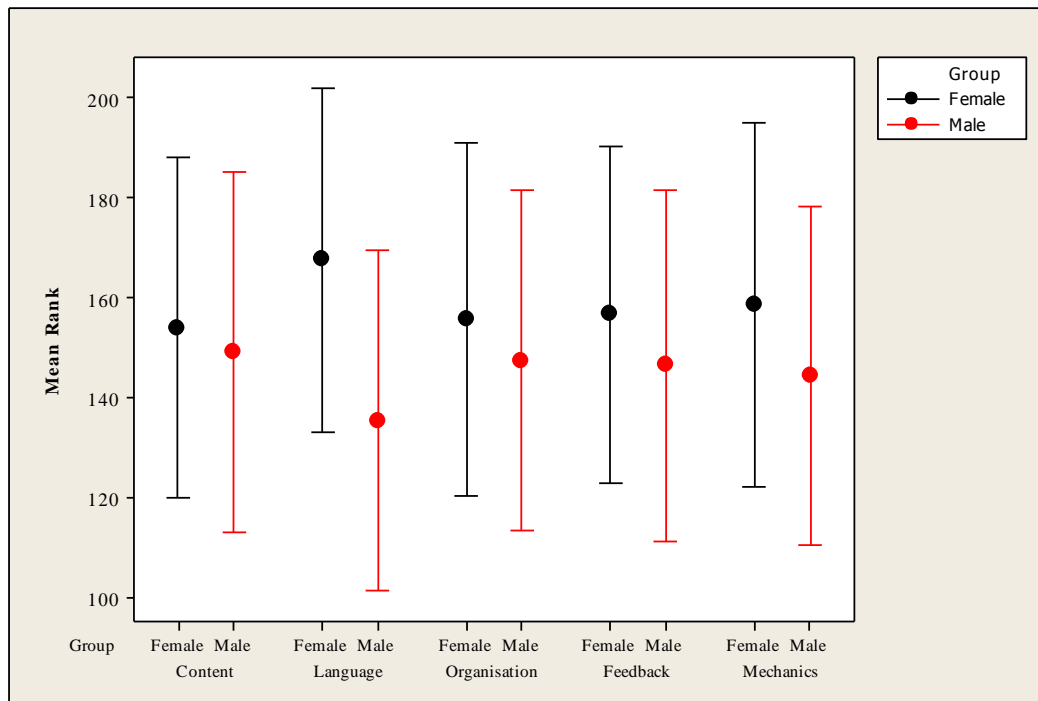
### **5.3.2.3.5. The writing process: mechanics strategy**

Female students used the mechanics strategy more with a mean rank of 158.63 compared with male students with a mean rank of 144.27. However, there is no significant difference in the use of this strategy with a p-value of 0.15 ( $>0.05$ ) and a z-value of -1.43 (see Table 5.29).

**Table 5.29: Comparison of Writing Process Strategies by Gender**

Strategy	Gender	N	Mean Rank	z-value	p-value
The Writing Process: Content Strategy	Male	150	149.03	-0.49	0.62
	Female	152	153.94		
The Writing Process: Language Strategy	Male	150	135.29	-3.23	<b>0.01</b>
	Female	152	167.50		
The Writing Process: Organisation Strategy	Male	150	147.34	-0.83	0.40
	Female	152	155.61		
The Writing Process: Feedback Strategy	Male	150	146.37	-1.04	0.30
	Female	152	156.57		
The Writing Process: Mechanics Strategy	Male	150	144.27	-1.43	0.15
	Female	152	158.63		

Table 5.29 shows that for all five strategies female students used them more than male students. The mean ranks from female students were higher than from male students for all five strategies. However, only language strategy was significantly different (see Figure 5.17 below).



**Figure 5.17: Comparison of Gender on Writing Process Strategies**

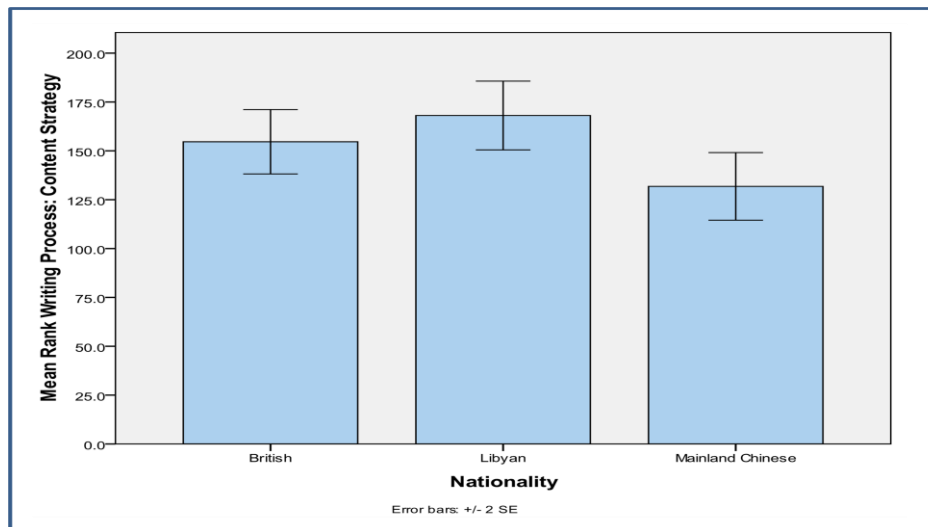
#### 5.3.2.4. Comparison of the writing process strategies by nationalities

Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA was used as there are more than three groups (British, Libyan, and Chinese)

##### 5.3.2.4.1. The writing process: content strategy

The mean rank given to this strategy by British, Libyan, and Chinese students were 154.64, 168.08 and 131.81 respectively. This shows that Libyan students used this strategy most, followed by the British students, then the Chinese students. The usage is significantly different with a chi-square value of 8.98 and a p-value of 0.01 ( $<0.05$ ). See Table 5.30 for details. To pinpoint where the differences lie, a pair-wise comparison (this test takes a pair of nationalities and compares them; it is the correct test to use instead of doing multiple t-tests) was carried out across nationalities. The result indicates that the difference was significant between Libyan and Chinese students with a p-value of 0.012 ( $<0.05$ ). The difference in usage between the Libyan and the British students was not significant (p-value=0.22 ( $>0.05$ )). Similarly, there was no significant difference in usage between British and Chinese students (p-value=0.12 ( $>0.05$ )). See Figure 5.18.





**Figure 5.18: Comparison of Content Strategy by Nationality**

#### **5.3.2.4.2. The writing process: language strategy**

For language strategy, the mean rank by British, Libyan, and Chinese students were 149.79, 145.10 and 159.59 respectively. Thus, Chinese students use this strategy most, followed by the British students, then the Libyan students. Unlike the content strategy, the difference in usage is not significant with a chi-square value of 1.47 and a p-value of 0.48 ( $>0.05$ ). See Table 5.30 for details.

#### **5.3.2.4.3. The writing process: organisation strategy**

For this strategy the mean rank by the British, Libyan, and Chinese students were 154.06, 160.91 and 139.56 respectively. Libyan students use this strategy most, followed by the British students, then the Chinese students. This pattern is similar to the content strategy discussed earlier; however, unlike the content strategy, the difference in usage is not significant with a chi-square value of 3.24 and a p-value of 0.20 ( $>0.05$ ) (See Table 5.30).

#### **5.3.2.4.4. The writing process: feedback strategy**

For this strategy the mean rank by British, Libyan, and Chinese students were 162.49, 142.68 and 149.44 respectively. Thus, the British students use this strategy most, followed by the Chinese students, then the Libyan students. For the first time the British students take the lead; however, the difference in usage is not significant with a chi-square value of 2.78 and a p-value of 0.25 ( $>0.05$ ). See details in Table 5.30.

#### 5.3.2.4.5. *The writing process: mechanics strategy*

For this strategy the mean rank by British, Libyan, and Chinese students were 150.94, 145.57 and 157.98 respectively. Chinese students use this strategy most, followed by the British students, then the Libyan students. The difference in usage is not significant with a chi-square value of 1.03 and a p-value of 0.60 (>0.05). See details in Table 5.30.

**Table 5.30: Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA Analysis of Writing Process Strategies across Nationalities**

Strategy	Nationality	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	p-value
The Writing Process: Content Strategy	British	100	154.64	8.98	<b>0.01</b>
	Libyan	101	168.08		
	Chinese	101	131.81		
The Writing Process: Language Strategy	British	100	149.79	1.47	0.48
	Libyan	101	145.10		
	Chinese	101	159.59		
The Writing Process: Organisation Strategy	British	100	154.06	3.24	0.20
	Libyan	101	160.91		
	Chinese	101	139.56		
The Writing Process: Feedback Strategy	British	100	162.49	2.78	0.25
	Libyan	101	142.68		
	Chinese	101	149.44		
The Writing Process: Mechanics Strategy	British	100	150.94	1.03	0.60
	Libyan	101	145.57		
	Chinese	101	157.98		

For all five strategies, only content strategy has a significant difference was observed in relation to nationalities.

#### 5.3.2.5. **Comparison of the writing process strategies by length of residence**

##### 5.3.2.5.1. *The writing process: content strategy*

The mean rank given to this strategy by students with one year, two years, three years, four years and five or more years of residence were 97.91, 108.55, 99.83, 81.96 and 121.17 respectively. Students with five or more years of residence used this strategy most, followed by those with two years of residence. It was used the least by students with four years of residence. However, there is no

evidence to suggest that year of residence is an important factor in using this strategy with a chi-square of 6.42 and p-value of 0.17 ( $>0.05$ ). See details in Table 5.31.

**Table 5.31: A Comparison of Writing Process: Content Strategy across Year of Residence**

Strategy	Length of residence in the UK	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	p-value
The Writing Process: Content Strategy	One year	79	97.91	6.42	0.17
	Two years	49	108.55		
	Three years	27	99.83		
	Four years	24	81.96		
	Five or more years	23	121.17		

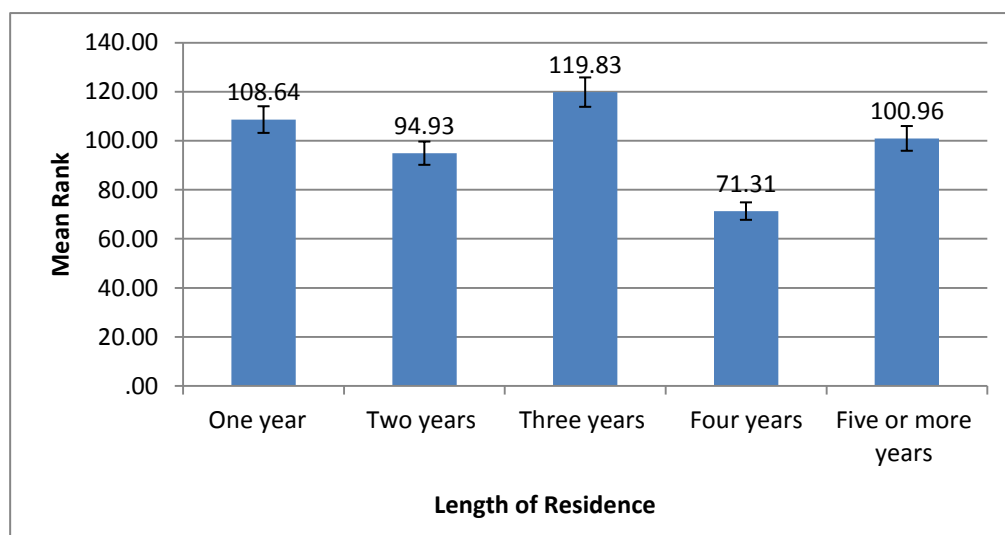
#### **5.3.2.5.2. The writing process: language strategy**

The mean rank given to this strategy by students with one year, two years, three years, four years and five or more years of residence were 108.64, 94.93, 119.83, 71.31 and 100.96 respectively. Students with three years of residence used this strategy most, followed by those with one year of residence. It was used the least by students with four years of residence, as was the case with the previous strategy. There is evidence to suggest that year of residence is an important factor in using this strategy with a chi-square value of 11.12 and p-value of 0.03 ( $<0.05$ ). See Table 5.32.

**Table 5.32: Comparison of Writing Process: Content Strategy across Year of Residence**

Strategy	Length of residence in the UK	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	p-value
The Writing Process: Language Strategy	One year	79	108.64	11.12	<b>0.03</b>
	Two years	49	94.93		
	Three years	27	119.83		
	Four years	24	71.31		
	Five or more years	23	100.96		

A p-value of 0.03 tells us that there is a difference across the five categories of length of residency. To pinpoint where the difference lies a pair-wise comparison was conducted and the result is shown in Figure 5.19. Students with one year of residence with a mean rank of 108.64 used the language strategy significantly more than students with four years of residence with a mean rank of 71.31; p-value=0.01 (<0.05). Similarly, students with three years of residence used the strategy significantly more than students with four years of residence p=0.01 (<0.05). No other pair-wise comparison was found to be significant, as all had p-values greater than 0.05.



**Figure 5.19: Comparison of Writing Process: Language Strategy across Year of Residence**

### 5.3.2.5.3. *The writing process: organisation strategy*

The mean rank given to this strategy by students with one year, two years, three years, four years and five or more years of residence were 102.73, 95.84, 103.26, 94.48 and 114.59 respectively. Students with five or more years of residence used this strategy most, followed by those with three years of residence. Next were students with one year of residence. The strategy was used the least by students with four years of residence, as is the case with the two previous strategies. However, there is no evidence to suggest that year of residence is an important factor in using this strategy with a chi-square of 2.08 and p-value of 0.72 (>0.05). See Table 5.33.

**Table 5.33: Comparison of Writing Process: Organisation Strategy across Year of Residence**

Strategy	Length of residence in the UK	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	p-value
The Writing Process: Organisation Strategy	One year	79	102.73	2.08	0.72
	Two years	49	95.84		
	Three years	27	103.26		
	Four years	24	94.48		
	Five or more years	23	114.59		

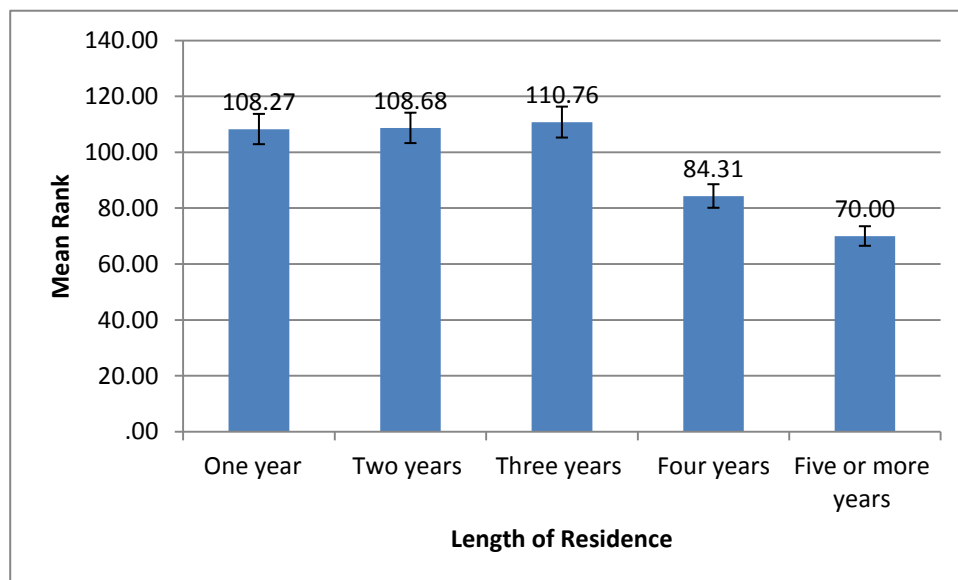
### 5.3.2.5.4. *The writing process: feedback strategy*

For the feedback strategy students with one year, two years, three years, four years and five or more years of residence gave the following mean ranks 108.27, 108.68, 110.76, 84.31 and 70.00 respectively. Students with three years of residence used this strategy most, followed by those with two years of residence. Next were students with one year of residence. The strategy was used the least by students with five or more years of residence, which does not follow the trend of the previous strategies in which students with four years of residence used the strategies the least. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that year of residence is an important factor in using the feedback strategy with a chi-square of 11.77 and p-value of 0.02 (<0.05). See Table 5.34.

**Table 5.34: Comparison of Writing Process: Feedback Strategy across Year of Residence**

Strategy	Length of residence in the UK	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	p-value
The Writing Process: Feedback Strategy	One year	79	108.27	11.77	<b>0.02</b>
	Two years	49	108.68		
	Three years	27	110.76		
	Four years	24	84.31		
	Five or more years	23	70.00		

The p-value of 0.02 tells us that there is a difference across the five categories of residency. To pinpoint where the difference lies, a pair-wise comparison was conducted and the result is shown in Figure 5.20. Students with one year, two years, and three years of residence used the feedback strategy significantly more than students with five or more years of residence with p-values of 0.01, 0.01 and 0.02 respectively. No other pair-wise comparison was found to be significant; all had p-values greater than 0.05.



**Figure 5.20: Comparison of Writing Process: Feedback Strategy across Year of Residence**

### 5.3.2.5.5. *The writing process: mechanics strategy*

The mean rank given to the mechanics strategy by students with one year, two years, three years, four years and five or more years of residence were 102.93, 82.62, 122.67, 103.58 and 109.78 respectively. Students with three years of residence used this strategy most, followed by those with five or more years of residence. Next were students with four years of residence. The strategy was used the least by students with two years of residence. However, there is no evidence to suggest that year of residence is an important factor in using the mechanics strategy with a chi-square of 9.23 and p-value of 0.06 ( $>0.05$ ) (See Table 5.35).

**Table 5.35: Comparison of Writing Process: Mechanics Strategy across Year of Residence**

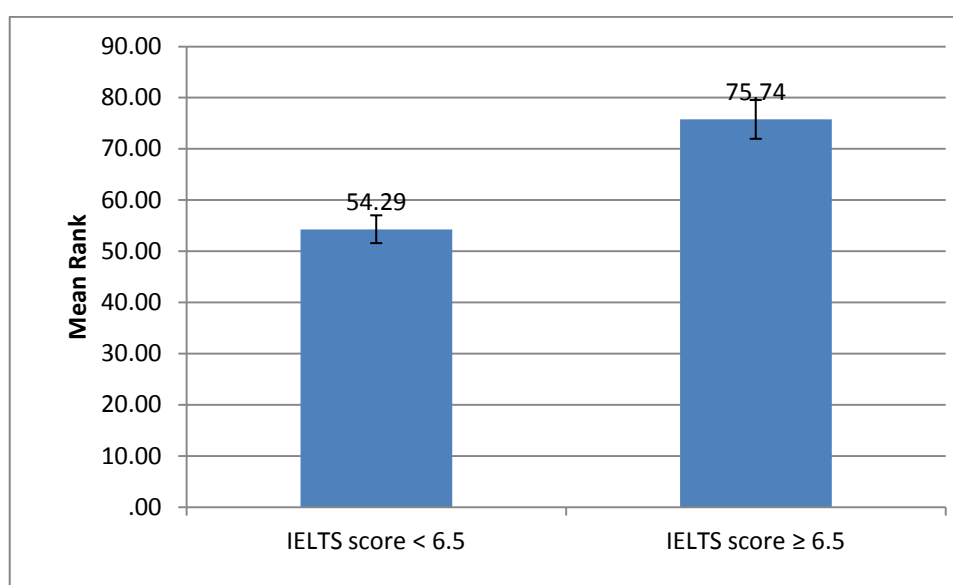
Strategy	Length of residence in the UK	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	p-value
The Writing Process: Mechanics Strategy	One year	79	102.93	9.23	0.06
	Two years	49	82.62		
	Three years	27	122.67		
	Four years	24	103.58		
	Five or more years	23	109.78		

### 5.3.2.6. Comparison of the writing process strategies by IELTS score

For four of the five strategies under the writing process—content, language, feedback and mechanics—no significant difference in usage was found between students who scored  $< 6.5$  and those who scored  $\geq 6.5$  on the IELTS test. The p-values are all greater than 0.05 (see Table 5.36). Significant difference in usage was observed only in the organisation strategy where students with IELTS score  $\geq 6.5$  make more use of the strategy than those with IELTS score  $< 6.5$ . Their respective mean ranks are 75.74 and 54.29; z-value of -3.21 and p-value 0.01 ( $<0.05$ ) (See Figure 5.21).

**Table 5.36: Comparison of Writing Process Strategies by IELTS Scores**

Strategy	IELTS score	N	Mean Rank	z-value	p-value
The Writing Process: Content Strategy	IELTS score < 6.5	81	57.25	-1.88	0.06
	IELTS score ≥ 6.5	41	69.90		
The Writing Process: Language Strategy	IELTS score < 6.5	81	65.80	-1.91	0.06
	IELTS score ≥ 6.5	41	53.00		
The Writing Process: Organisation Strategy	IELTS score < 6.5	81	54.29	-3.21	<b>0.01</b>
	IELTS score ≥ 6.5	41	75.74		
The Writing Process: Feedback Strategy	IELTS score < 6.5	81	65.34	-1.73	0.08
	IELTS score ≥ 6.5	41	53.91		
The Writing Process: Mechanics Strategy	IELTS score < 6.5	81	59.36	-.94	0.35
	IELTS score ≥ 6.5	41	65.72		



**Figure 5.21: Comparison of Writing Process: Organisation Strategy across IELTS Score**

### 5.3.2.7. Comparison of writing strategies according to subject areas

Arts students used the content strategy more with a mean rank of 160.10 compared to the mean rank of 145.43 for science students. However, there is no evidence to suggest that this usage is significantly different with a z-value of -1.44 and p-value of 0.15 (>0.05). See Table 5.37 for details.

Looking at the language strategy, the mean rank for science student was 151.95 and for arts students was 150.86; a minimal difference. This is confirmed by the z-value of -0.11 and p-value of 0.92 (>0.05). Therefore, there is no significant



difference in using this strategy between science and arts students. See Table 5.37 for details.

**Table 5.37: Comparison of Writing Strategies by Subject Area**

Strategy	Subject area	N	Mean Rank	z-value	p-value
The Writing Process: Content Strategy	Science	177	145.43	-1.44	0.15
	Arts	125	160.10		
The Writing Process: Language Strategy	Science	177	151.95	-0.11	0.92
	Arts	125	150.86		
The Writing Process: Organisation Strategy	Science	177	146.98	-1.09	0.28
	Arts	125	157.90		
The Writing Process: Feedback Strategy	Science	177	151.00	-0.12	0.90
	Arts	125	152.21		

For the organisation strategy, with a mean rank of 157.90 arts students used this strategy more than science students whose mean rank was 146.98. There is no evidence to suggest that this usage is significantly different with a z-value of -1.09 and p-value of 0.28 ( $>0.05$ ). See Table 5.37 for details.

Looking at the feedback strategy, the mean rank for science students was 151.00 and for arts students was 152.21; as with the language strategy, a minimal difference. This is confirmed by the z-value of -0.12 and p-value of 0.90 ( $>0.05$ ). Therefore, there is no significant difference in using this strategy between science and arts students. See Table 5.37 for details.

The mechanic strategy was analysed using a parametric method because the data was normally distributed and the variance was equal between science and arts students. The average value for science students was 3.44 and that for arts students was 3.25. Science students used this strategy more than arts students. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that this usage is significantly different with a t-value of 2.54 and p-value of 0.01 ( $<0.05$ ).

### 5.3.2.8. Comparison of writing strategies according to age group

Students who are older than 25 years used the content strategy more with a mean rank of 161.12 compare to a mean rank of 140.94 for students  $\leq 25$  years.

There is sufficient evidence to suggest that this usage is significantly different with a z-value of 4.06 and p-value of 0.04 (<0.05). See Table 5.53 for details.

Looking at the language strategy, the usage is reversed in comparison to the content strategy. With a mean rank of 161.28 students  $\leq 25$  years used this strategy more compared with the mean rank of 142.58 for students older than 25 years. However, there is no evidence to suggest that this usage is significantly different with a z-value of 3.51 and a p-value of 0.06 (>0.05). See Table 5.38 for details.

**Table 5.38: Comparison of Writing Strategies by Age Group**

Strategy	Age Group	N	Mean Rank	z-value	p-value
The Writing Process: Content Strategy	$\leq 25$ years	144	140.94	4.06	<b>0.04</b>
	> 25 years	158	161.12		
The Writing Process: Language Strategy	$\leq 25$ years	144	161.28	3.51	0.06
	> 25 years	158	142.58		
The Writing Process: Organisation Strategy	$\leq 25$ years	144	138.79	6.00	<b>0.01</b>
	> 25 years	158	163.09		
The Writing Process: Feedback Strategy	$\leq 25$ years	144	169.54	12.25	<b>0.01</b>
	> 25 years	158	135.06		

For the organisation strategy, with a mean rank of 163.09 students older than 25 years used this strategy more than students  $\leq 25$  years whose mean rank was 138.79. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that this usage is significantly different with a z-value of 6.00 and p-value of 0.01 (<0.05). See Table 5.38 for details.

For the feedback strategy, students  $\leq 25$  years used the strategy more than students older than 25 years with mean ranks of 169.54 and 135.06 respectively. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that this usage is significantly different with a z-value of 12.25 and p-value of 0.01 (<0.05). See Table 5.38 for details.

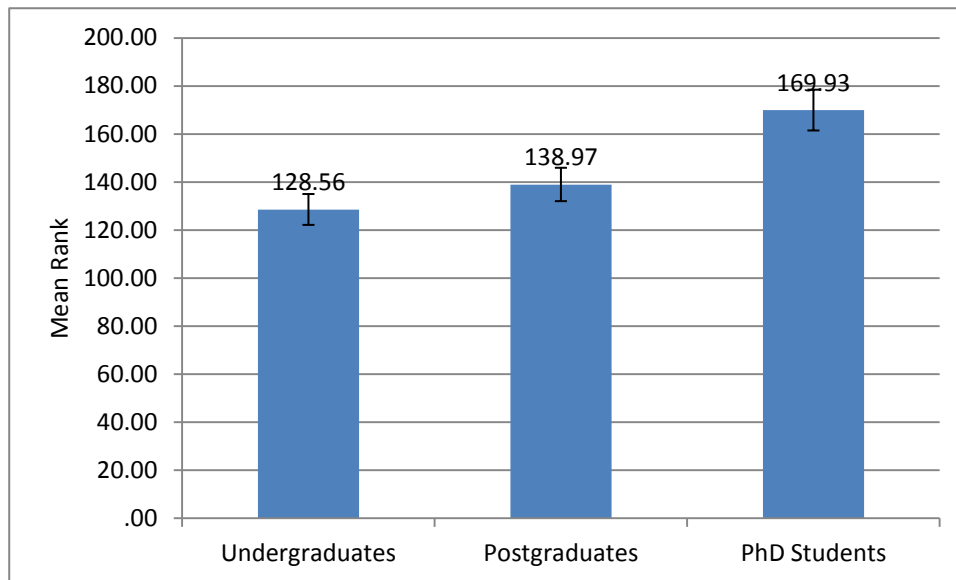
The mechanic strategy was analysed using a parametric method because the data was normally distributed and the variance was equal between the two age groups. The average value for students  $\leq 25$  years was 3.32 and that for students older than 25 years was 3.39. Older students used this strategy more; however, there is not sufficient evidence to suggest that this usage is significantly different with a t-value of -0.94 and p-value of 0.35 ( $>0.05$ ).

### 5.3.2.9. Comparison of writing strategies according to qualification

For the content strategy, PhD students used it most with a mean rank of 169.93, followed by postgraduate students with a mean rank of 138.97 and then by undergraduate students with a mean rank of 128.56. There is strong evidence to suggest that the usage of the content strategy is different among students with different qualifications with a chi-square value of 10.17 and p-value of 0.01 ( $<0.05$ ). See Table 5.39 for details. The p-value of 0.01 tells us that there is difference in usage across qualifications. To pinpoint where difference lies further analysis was undertaken. This indicates that PhD students used the content strategy significantly more than undergraduate students ( $p=0.002<0.05$ ). PhD students also used the strategy significantly more than postgraduate students ( $p=0.013<0.05$ ). There was no significant difference in usage between undergraduate and postgraduate students ( $p=0.35>0.05$ ). See Figure 5.22 for details.

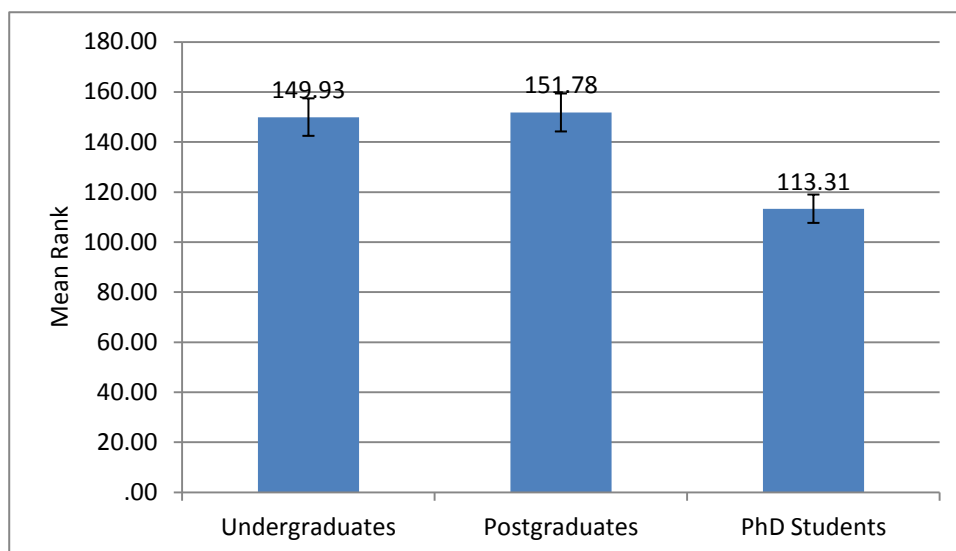
**Table 5.39: Comparison of Writing Strategies by Qualifications**

Strategy	Qualifications	N	Mean Rank	Chi-square	p-value
The Writing Process: Content Strategy	Undergraduates	94	128.56	10.17	<b>0.01</b>
	Postgraduates	126	138.97		
	PhD Students	64	169.93		
The Writing Process: Language Strategy	Undergraduates	94	149.93	10.64	<b>0.01</b>
	Postgraduates	126	151.78		
	PhD Students	64	113.31		
The Writing Process: Organisation Strategy	Undergraduates	94	141.98	4.02	0.13
	Postgraduates	126	134.37		
	PhD Students	64	159.26		
The Writing Process: Feedback Strategy	Undergraduates	94	164.37	17.36	<b>0.01</b>
	Postgraduates	126	142.62		
	PhD Students	64	110.14		



**Figure 5.22: Comparison of Content Strategy by Qualifications**

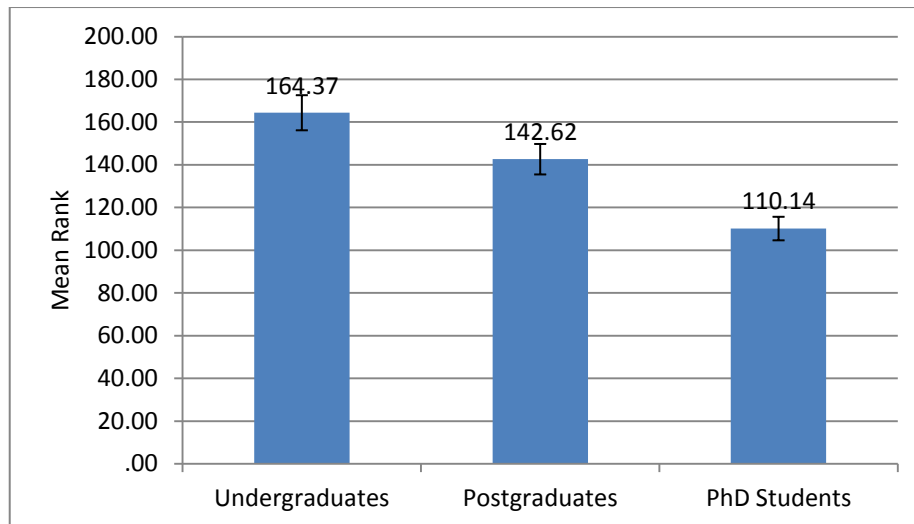
For the language strategy, postgraduate students used it most with a mean rank of 151.78, followed by undergraduate students with a mean rank of 149.93 and then by PhD students with a mean rank of 113.31. As with the content strategy, there is strong evidence to suggest that the usage of the language strategy is different among students with different qualifications, with a chi-square value of 10.64 and p-value of 0.01 ( $<0.05$ ). See Table 5.39 for details. Further analysis indicates that postgraduate students used the language strategy significantly more than PhD students ( $p=0.003<0.05$ ). Undergraduate students also used the strategy significantly more than PhD students ( $p=0.004<0.05$ ). There was no significant difference in usage between undergraduate and postgraduate students ( $p=0.76>0.05$ ). See Figure 5.23 for details.



**Figure 5.23: Comparison of Language Strategy by Qualifications**

For the organisation strategy, PhD students used it most with a mean rank of 159.26, followed by undergraduate students with a mean rank of 141.98, and then by postgraduate students with a mean rank of 134.37. There is no evidence to suggest that the usage of this strategy is significantly different across students with different qualifications with a chi-square value of 4.02 and p-value of 0.13 ( $>0.05$ ). See Table 5.39 for details.

For the feedback strategy, undergraduate students used it most with a mean rank of 164.37, followed by postgraduate students with a mean rank of 142.62, and then by PhD students with a mean rank of 110.14. As with the content and language strategies, there is strong evidence to suggest that the usage of the feedback strategy is different among students with different qualifications, with a chi-square value of 17.36 and p-value of 0.01 ( $<0.05$ ). See Table 5.39 for details. Further analysis indicates that undergraduate students used the feedback strategy significantly more than PhD students ( $p=0.001<0.05$ ). Postgraduate students also used the strategy significantly more than PhD students ( $p=0.008<0.05$ ). Also undergraduate students used this strategy significantly more than postgraduate students ( $p=0.045>0.05$ ). See Figure 5.24 for details.



**Figure 5.24: Comparison of Feedback Strategy by Qualifications**

As mentioned previously, the mechanic strategy was analysed using parametric statistics. The average for the mechanic strategy for undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD students were 3.38, 3.30 and 3.38 respectively. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the use of the mechanic strategy. This is confirmed by the z-value of 0.60 and p-value of 0.55 ( $>0.05$ ). As with the organisation strategy, there is no significant difference in the use of the mechanic strategy among students with different qualifications.

### **5.3.2.10. Interaction effects on the five strategies under the writing process**

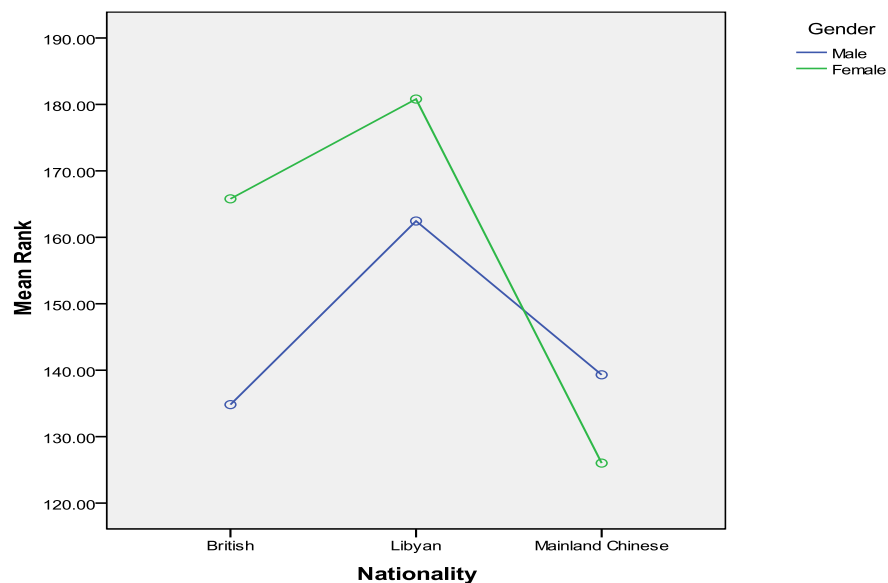
#### **5.3.2.10.1. The writing process: content strategy**

To establish if there is any interaction effect between gender and nationality, a univariate GLM analysis was performed. Table 5.40 displays descriptive statistics for each combination of factors in the model, that is, for nationality and gender in relation to the content strategy. It has been already established from previous analysis that there is nationality effect; the mean ranks for British, Libyan and Chinese students were 154.64, 168.08 and 131.81 respectively. Also, it has been established that there is no gender effect; the mean rank from male students in the sample was 149.03 compared to 153.94 from female students. However, there may be an interaction effect between gender and nationality, because differences in mean rank by nationality vary between genders. For example, Libyan female students tend to have a higher mean rank (180.81) than Libyan male students (162.45). Also British female students have a higher mean rank (165.79) than British male students (134.82).

**Table 5.40: Descriptive Statistics of Writing Process: Content Strategy**

Gender	Nationality	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	British	134.82	90.94	36
	Libyan	162.45	87.23	70
	Mainland Chinese	139.31	90.57	44
	Total	149.03	89.41	150
Female	British	165.79	75.59	64
	Libyan	180.81	91.22	31
	Mainland Chinese	126.02	84.30	57
	Total	153.94	84.70	152
Total	British	154.64	82.36	100
	Libyan	168.08	88.43	101
	Mainland Chinese	131.81	86.89	101
	Total	151.50	86.96	302

If there were no interaction effect, the lines in a profile plot would be parallel. Instead, the lines cross each other, as can be seen from Figure 5.25. This is an indication of an interaction effect, but it is not significant with a p-value of 0.18 (>0.05). Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest that the interaction effect is significant.



**Figure 5.25: Profile Plot of the Interaction between Gender and Nationality for Content Strategy**

**5.3.2.10.2. The writing process: language strategy**

Results from the GLM analysis for language strategy are shown on Table 5.41. The analysis carried out earlier indicated that there was no nationality effect on language strategy; the mean ranks for British, Libyan and Chinese students were 150.17, 157.08 and 147.24 respectively, no significant difference in their usage. However, there was a gender effect. The mean ranks from male and female students were 135.29 and 167.50 respectively. Female students used the strategy significantly more.

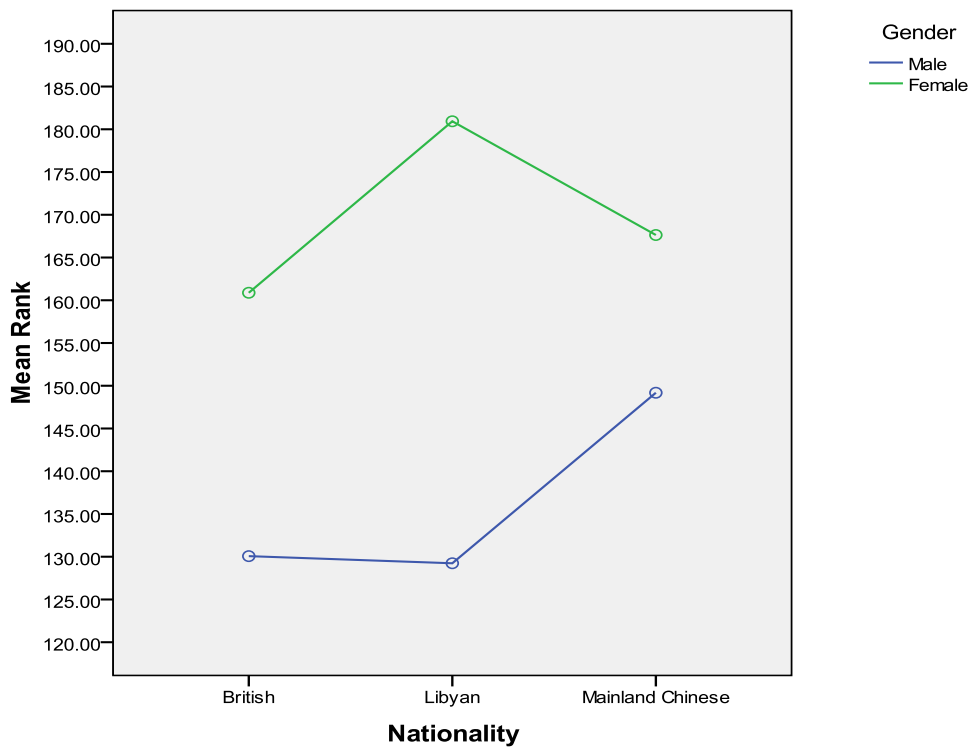
There may be an interaction effect between gender and nationality because differences in mean rank by nationality vary between genders. Libyan female students tend to have a higher mean rank (180.94) than Libyan male students (129.24). This trend is also true for Chinese students where the females have a higher score than males with mean ranks of 167.63 and 149.18 respectively. The trend is also true for the British students.

**Table 5.41: Descriptive Statistics of Writing Process: Language Strategy**

Gender	Nationality	Mean Rank	Std. Deviation	N
Male	British	130.07	93.50	36
	Libyan	129.24	79.98	70
	Mainland Chinese	149.18	83.90	44
	Total	135.29	84.43	150
Female	British	160.88	89.17	64
	Libyan	180.94	96.57	31
	Mainland Chinese	167.63	76.60	57
	Total	167.50	86.04	152
Total	British	149.79	91.50	100
	Libyan	145.10	88.24	101
	Mainland Chinese	159.59	79.98	101
	Total	151.50	86.62	302

The profile plot is shown in Figure 5.26, in which the two lines are not parallel. However, there is no significant interaction effect for the language strategy,  $p=0.42 (>0.05)$ .





**Figure 5.26: Profile Plot of the Interaction between Gender and Nationality for Language Strategy**

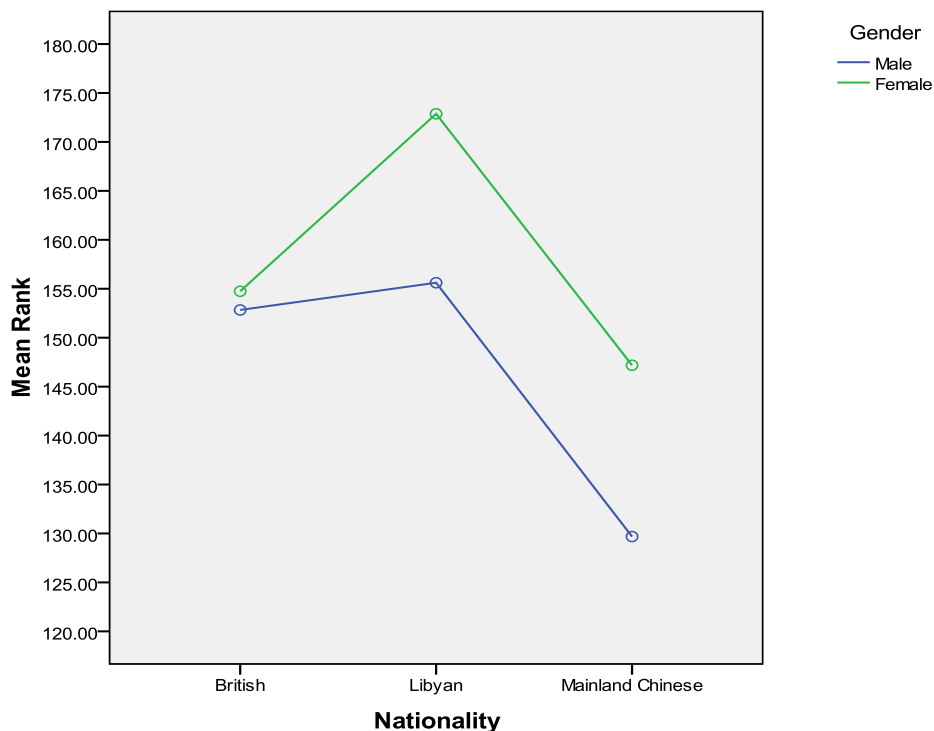
**5.3.2.10.3. The writing process: organisation strategy**

Results from the GLM analysis for organisation strategy are shown in Table 5.42. The analysis carried out earlier indicated that there were no nationality or gender effects on this strategy. The mean ranks from male and female students were 147.34 and 155.61 respectively, no significant difference in the use of the strategy. The mean ranks for British, Libyan and Chinese students were 154.06, 160.91 and 139.56 respectively; again, no significant difference in usage. However, female students used organisation strategy more than male students across the three nationalities, a similar trend to the language strategy discussed above.

**Table 5.42: Descriptive Statistics of Writing Process: Organisation Strategy**

Gender	Nationality	Mean Rank	Std. Deviation	N
Male	British	152.83	84.41	36
	Libyan	155.61	87.12	70
	Mainland Chinese	129.68	79.08	44
	Total	147.34	84.41	150
Female	British	154.74	90.18	64
	Libyan	172.87	88.85	31
	Mainland Chinese	147.18	84.81	57
	Total	155.61	87.85	152
Total	British	154.06	87.72	100
	Libyan	160.91	87.57	101
	Mainland Chinese	139.56	82.42	101
	Total	151.50	86.11	302

The profile plot is shown in Figure 5.27. Although the two lines were not parallel, the interaction effect was not found to be significant with a p-value of 0.78 (>0.05).



**Figure 5.27: Profile Plot of the Interaction between Gender and Nationality for Organisation Strategy**

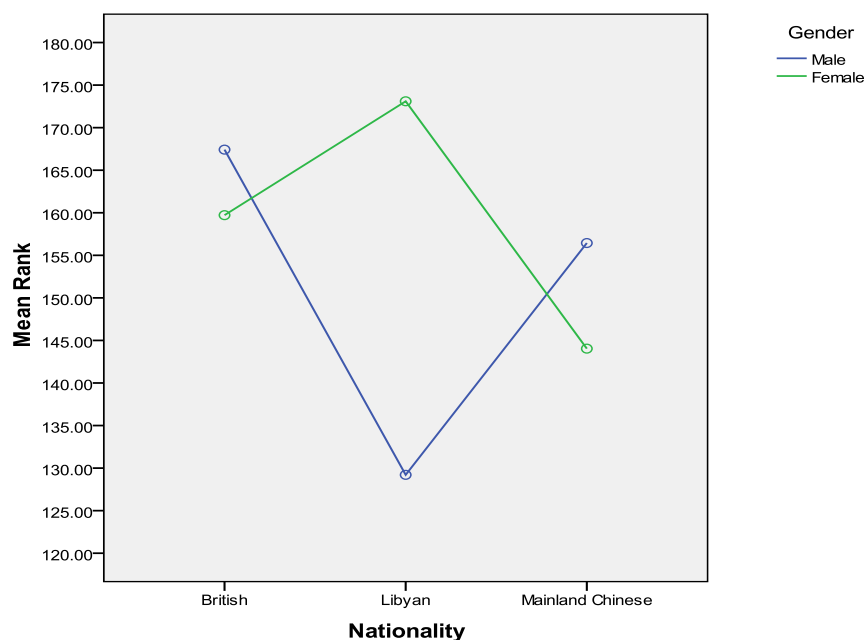
**5.3.2.10.4. The writing process: feedback strategy**

Results from the GLM analysis for feedback strategy are shown in Table 5.43. The analysis carried out earlier indicated that there were no nationality or gender effects on the feedback strategy. The mean ranks from male and female students were 146.37 and 156.57 respectively, no significant difference in the use of the strategy. The mean ranks for British, Libyan and Chinese students are 162.49, 142.68 and 149.44 respectively; again, no significant difference in usage.

**Table 5.43: Descriptive Statistics of Writing Process: Feedback Strategy**

Gender	Nationality	Mean Rank	Std. Deviation	N
Male	British	167.42	95.83	36
	Libyan	129.21	83.91	70
	Mainland Chinese	156.44	80.87	44
	Total	146.37	87.07	150
Female	British	159.72	88.16	64
	Libyan	173.10	84.67	31
	Mainland Chinese	144.04	78.07	57
	Total	156.57	83.95	152
Total	British	162.49	90.59	100
	Libyan	142.68	86.16	101
	Mainland Chinese	149.44	79.14	101
	Total	151.50	85.52	302

The profile plot is shown in Figure 5.28. There seems to be an interaction effect between gender and nationality as the lines crossed each other. There is strong evidence to suggest that there is an interaction effect for the use of the feedback strategy with a p-value of 0.04 (<0.05). As the profile plot shows, female Libyan students with a mean rank of 173.10 used the feedback strategy significantly more than Libyan male students with a mean rank of 129.21. This trend is reversed for the British students where the females used the strategy less with a mean rank of 159.72 than the males with a mean rank of 167.42. Similarly, the students from China follow the same pattern to the British students.



**Figure 5.28: Profile Plot of the interaction between Gender and Nationality for Feedback Strategy**

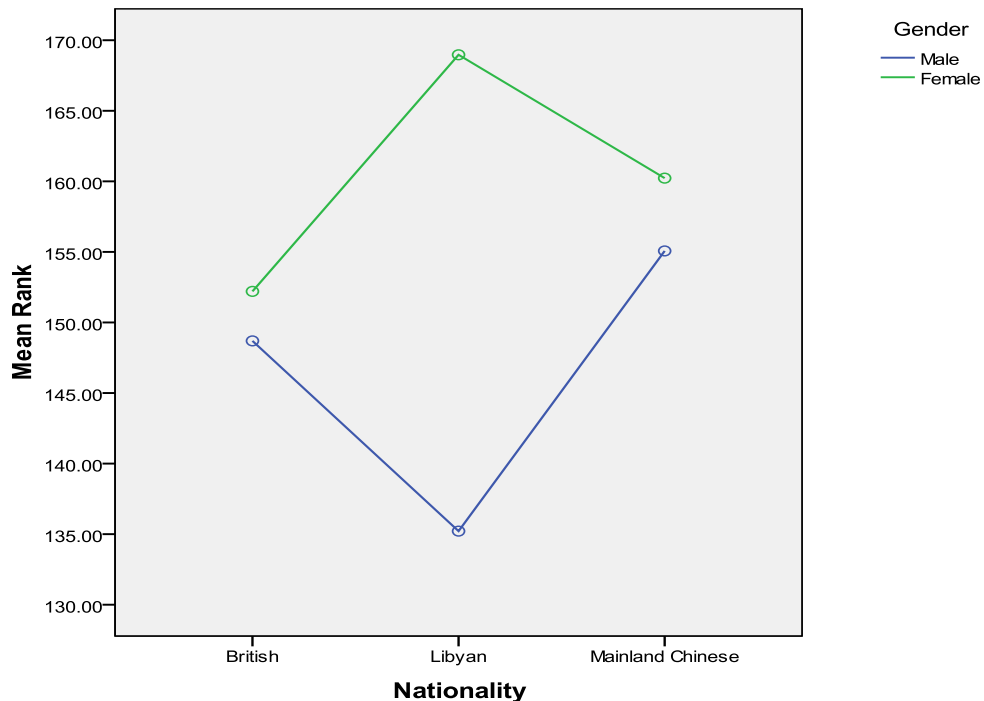
**5.3.2.10.5. The writing process: mechanics strategy**

Results from the GLM analysis for mechanic strategy are shown in Table 5.44. The previous analysis indicated that there were no nationality or gender effects on the mechanics strategy. The mean ranks from male and female students were 144.27 and 158.63 respectively, no significant difference in the use of the strategy. The mean ranks for British, Libyan and Chinese students were 150.94, 145.57 and 157.98 respectively, again no significant difference in usage.

**Table 5.44: Descriptive Statistics of Writing Process: Mechanics Strategy**

Gender	Nationality	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	British	148.69	85.23	36
	Libyan	135.21	81.15	70
	Mainland Chinese	155.07	85.99	44
	Total	144.27	83.47	150
Female	British	152.20	96.38	64
	Libyan	168.97	87.46	31
	Mainland Chinese	160.23	86.25	57
	Total	158.63	90.52	152
Total	British	150.94	92.10	100
	Libyan	145.57	84.17	101
	Mainland Chinese	157.98	85.75	101
	Total	151.50	87.25	302

The profile plot is shown in Figure 5.29. Female students used mechanics strategy more than male students across the three nationalities. However, the interaction effect was not found to be significant with a p-value of 0.43 ( $>0.05$ ).



**Figure 5.29: Profile Plot of the Interaction between Gender and Nationality for Mechanics Strategy**

### 5.3.3. Academic Writing: Revising and Editing

#### 5.3.3.1. Principal component analysis of revision items

There were 26 variables in this section in Revision and Editing section. The correlation matrix derived from these items had a determinant of 0.0000317; the KMO measure of sampling adequacy was 0.88 (minimum required is 0.5), and the Bartlett test of sphericity was significant. All these indicate that the data is suitable for PCA. From the PCA, five strategies for the Revision and Editing Process were extracted. An examination of each strategy and the items that make up the strategy is detailed in the following sections. Together the five strategies extracted account for 55% of the variance of the 26 items (see Table 45).

#### **5.3.3.1.1. *The revision and editing process: content strategy***

An examination of the variables under this strategy indicates that the items are related to the content. These include variables like making changes in the content, logical content, need for more explanations, and reference of main ideas in conclusion. See Table 5.45 for all the eight variables under this strategy.

#### **5.3.3.1.2. *The revision and editing process: mechanics strategy***

An examination of the variables under this strategy indicates that they are related to the mechanics of the Revision and Editing Process. These include variables such as appropriateness of citations, use of proper punctuation and spelling, and checking to ensure that the writing requirements have been met. See Table 5.45 for all the six variables under this strategy.

#### **5.3.3.1.3. *The revision and editing process: language strategy***

An examination of the variables under this strategy indicates that they are related to the issues of the use of language such as the structure of sentence, how they are connected, and checking reader understanding. See Table 5.45 for all the six variables under this strategy.

#### **5.3.3.1.4. *The revision and editing process: feedback strategy***

An examination of the variables under this strategy indicates that they are related to feedback. These include variables such as editing the draft copy either individually or collaboratively and proofreading. See Table 5.45 for the four variables under this strategy.

#### **5.3.3.1.5. *The revision and editing process: organisation strategy***

An examination of the variables under this strategy indicates that they are related to organisation. The two variables are clarity of organisation and leaving text for a while and then reading it later (See Table 5.45).

**Table 5.45: Extracted Strategies from Variables under the Revision and Editing Process**

	Extracted Strategies (Components)				
	Content	Mechanics	Language	Feedback	Organisation
Percent of variance	15.37	14.03	9.23	8.86	7.73
Cumulative Percent	15.37	29.40	38.64	47.49	55.23
Items					
I check if I have written everything I wanted to say.	0.51				
I check if the content is logical.	0.47				
I make changes in the content.	0.61				
I revise the draft to clarify the meaning.	0.56				
I check if more examples are needed.	0.72				
I check if more explanation is needed.	0.79				
I check if there is any deviation from the main idea.	0.45				
I check if the main ideas are referred to in the conclusion.	0.74				
I check my punctuation.		0.74			
I check my spelling.		0.71			
I check if the citations used are appropriate to my argument.		0.49			
I check to make sure that I have met the requirements of the writing activity.		0.49			
I prepare a final, polished draft.		0.72			
I check if I have used academic English conventions, e.g., formality and referencing.		0.47			
I check my sentence structure.			0.70		
I check if the sentences in the paragraph are connected.			0.71		
I connect shorter sentences into longer, complex sentences.			0.53		
I check if it is easy for the reader to understand.			0.47		
I read the text aloud to see if it sounds right.			0.55		
I break down sentences that are too long into shorter, simpler ones.			0.76		
I edit the draft myself.				0.64	
I edit the draft collaboratively.				0.68	
I give the draft to a classmate for proofreading.				0.75	
I give my draft to a native speaker to check. (if you are a non-native speaker of English)				0.70	
I check if the organisation of my writing is clear.					0.63
I leave the text for a while and then read it again later.					0.69

Five main strategies—content, mechanics, language, feedback and organisation—used by students during the Revision and Editing Process were established. These strategies are now examined in relation to the research questions.

- Do NSE and NNSE use similar or different academic writing strategies, and if so, what are they?
- Is there a significant impact due to nationality?
- Is there a significant impact due to gender?
- Is there a significant impact due to length of stay in the UK?
- Is there a significant impact due to IELTS score?
- Is there any significant interaction between gender and nationality?

### **5.3.3.2. Comparison of the revision and editing strategies between NSE and NNSE**

As with the strategies discussed previously, for each of the five strategies extracted under the Revision and Editing Process the average was calculated using the constituent items.

The average scores were used to address the research questions. It has been established through PCA that students used five main strategies in the Revision and Editing Process of writing activity. Each strategy will now be examined comparing their usage between NSE and NNSE.

#### ***5.3.3.2.1. The revision and editing process: content strategy***

For content strategy under the Revision and Editing Process of the writing activity, the mean rank for NSE was 169.37 and that for NNSE was 142.66. NSE use this strategy more than NNSE and the usage is significantly different with a p-value of 0.01 ( $<0.05$ ) and z-value of -2.51 (see Table 5.46). Therefore, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that NSE use the strategy more than NNSE.

#### ***5.3.3.2.2. The revision and editing process: mechanics strategy***

For the mechanics strategy the mean rank for NSE was 175.72 while that for NNSE was 139.51. As with the previous strategy, NSE use the mechanics



strategy significantly more than NNSE;  $p=0.01$  ( $<0.05$ ),  $z\text{-value}=-3.40$  (see Table 5.46).

**5.3.3.2.3. The revision and editing process: language strategy**

For language strategy the mean rank for NSE was 156.96 and for NNSE it was 148.80. Even though NSE use this strategy more than NNSE, the difference in usage is not statistically significant with a  $p\text{-value}$  of 0.44 ( $>0.05$ ) and a  $z\text{-value}$  of  $-0.77$  (see Table 5.46).

**5.3.3.2.4. The revision and editing process: feedback strategy**

For the feedback strategy the mean rank for NSE was 160.83 while that for NNSE was 146.88. Again NSE use the strategy more than NNSE; however, the result is not significantly different with a  $p\text{-value}$  of 0.19 ( $>0.05$ ) and a  $z\text{-value}$  of  $-1.31$  (see Table 5.46).

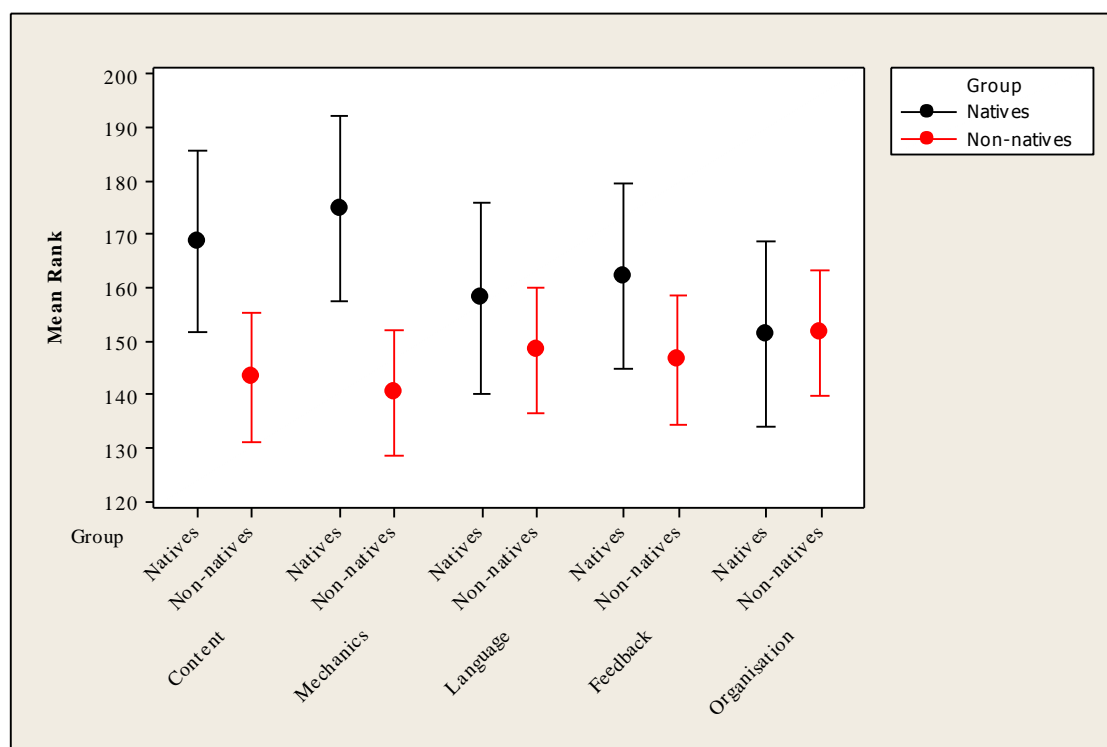
**5.3.3.2.5. The revision and editing process: organisation strategy**

For the organisation strategy the mean rank for NSE was 152.79 while that for NNSE was 150.86. There is no significant difference in the usage of this strategy between NSE and NNSE with a  $p\text{-value}$  of 0.85 ( $>0.05$ ) and a  $z\text{-value}$  of  $-0.18$  (see Table 5.46).

**Table 5.46: Comparison of Revision and Editing Process Strategies for NSE and NNSE**

Strategy	Natives and Non-natives	N	Mean Rank	z-value	p-value
Revision and Editing: Content Strategy	NSE	100	169.37	-2.51	<b>0.01</b>
	NNSE	202	142.66		
Revision and Editing: Mechanics Strategy	NSE	100	175.72	-3.40	<b>0.01</b>
	NNSE	202	139.51		
Revision and Editing: Language Strategy	NSE	100	156.96	-0.77	0.44
	NNSE	202	148.80		
Revision and Editing: Feedback Strategy	NSE	100	160.83	-1.31	0.19
	NNSE	202	146.88		
Revision and Editing: Organisation Strategy	NSE	100	152.79	-0.18	0.85
	NNSE	202	150.86		

Out of the five strategies extracted from the 26 items under Revision and Editing Process, significant differences were observed in two. From Figure 5.30, it can be seen there is a difference in the mean rank of the bars for the content and mechanics strategies, the two strategies with significant difference in usage between NSE and NNSE.



**Figure 5.30: Comparison of NSE and NNSE on Revision and Editing Process Strategy**

### 5.3.3.3. Comparison of the revision and editing strategies by gender

Is there any significant difference in the usage of these strategies between male and female students?

#### 5.3.3.3.1. The revision and editing process: content strategy

For content strategy under the Revision and Editing Process, the mean rank for male students was 143.90 and that for female students was 159.00. Thus, female students use this strategy more than male students. The difference in usage is, however, not significant with a p-value of 0.13 ( $>0.05$ ) and z-value of -1.51 (see Table 5.47).

**5.3.3.3.2. The revision and editing process: mechanics strategy**

For the mechanics strategy the mean rank for male students was 145.45 while that for female students was 157.47. As with the previous strategy, female students use the mechanics strategy more than male students; the difference is, however, not significant  $p=0.23$  ( $>0.05$ ),  $z\text{-value}=-1.20$  (see Table 5.47).

**5.3.3.3.3. The revision and editing process: language strategy**

For language strategy the mean rank for male students was 144.73 and that for female students was 158.18. Even though female students use this strategy more than male students, the difference in usage is not statistically significant with a  $p\text{-value}$  of 0.18 ( $>0.05$ ) and a  $z\text{-value}$  of -1.34 (see Table 5.47).

**5.3.3.3.4. The revision and editing process: feedback strategy**

For the feedback strategy the mean rank for male students was 151.16 while that for female students was 151.83. Again female students use the strategy more than male students; however, the result is not significantly different with a  $p\text{-value}$  of 0.95 ( $>0.05$ ) and a  $z\text{-value}$  of -0.07 (see Table 5.47).

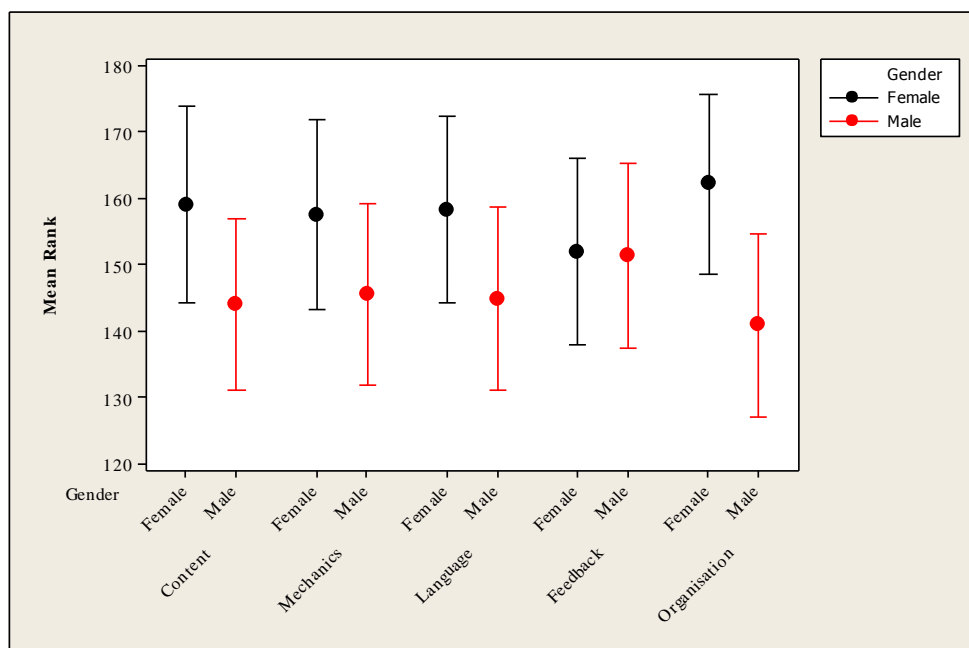
**5.3.3.3.5. The revision and editing process: organisation strategy**

For the organisation strategy the mean rank for male students was 140.76 while that for female students was 162.10. Female students use this strategy more than male students and the usage is significantly different with a  $p\text{-value}$  of 0.03 ( $<0.05$ ) and a  $z\text{-value}$  of -2.17 (see Table 5.47).

**Table 5.47: Comparison of Revision and Editing Process Strategies by Gender**

Strategy	Natives and Non-natives	N	Mean Rank	z-value	p-value
Revision and Editing: Content Strategy	Male	150	143.90	-1.51	0.13
	Female	152	159.00		
Revision and Editing: Mechanics Strategy	Male	150	145.45	-1.20	0.23
	Female	152	157.47		
Revision and Editing: Language Strategy	Male	150	144.73	-1.34	0.18
	Female	152	158.18		
Revision and Editing: Feedback Strategy	Male	150	151.16	-0.07	0.95
	Female	152	151.83		
Revision and Editing: Organisation Strategy	Male	150	140.76	-2.17	<b>0.03</b>
	Female	152	162.10		

Table 5.47 shows that for all five strategies female students use them more than male students. The mean ranks from female students were higher than from those male students for all five strategies. However, only that for organisation strategy was significantly different (see Figure 5.31).



**Figure 5.31: Comparison of Gender on Revision and Editing Process Strategies**

#### **5.3.3.4. Comparison of the revision and editing strategies across nationalities**

##### ***5.3.3.4.1. The revision and editing process: content strategy***

The mean rank given to this strategy by British, Libyan, and Chinese students were 169.37, 160.84 and 124.47 respectively. This shows that the British students used this strategy most, followed by Libyan students, then Chinese students. The difference in usage is significant with a chi-square value of 15.08 and a p-value of 0.001 ( $<0.05$ ). See the details in Table 5.48. To pinpoint where the differences lie, a pair-wise comparison was carried out across nationalities. The result indicates that the difference was significant between British and Chinese students with a p-value of 0.001. The result was also significant between Libyan and Chinese students with  $p=0.007$ . The difference in usage between the Libyan and the British students was not significant ( $p=0.76$ ).

##### ***5.3.3.4.2. The revision and editing process: mechanics strategy***

For the mechanics strategy the mean rank given by British, Libyan, and Chinese students were 175.72, 171.81 and 107.22 respectively. The British students use this strategy most, followed by Libyan students, then Chinese students: a similar pattern to the previous strategy. The difference in usage

was significant across nationality with a chi-square value of 39.38 and p-value of 0.001 ( $<0.05$ ). See details in Table 5.48. A pair-wise comparison showed that both British and Libyan students used the strategy significantly more than the Chinese students with p-values of 0.001 and 0.001 respectively. No significant difference was observed between the British and the Libyan students;  $p=0.94$  ( $>0.05$ ).

#### ***5.3.3.4.3. The revision and editing process: language strategy***

For this strategy the mean rank given by British, Libyan, and Chinese students were 156.96, 167.98 and 129.62 respectively. Libyan students use this strategy most, followed by the British students, then the Chinese students. The difference in usage was significantly different with a chi-square value of 10.39 and p-value of 0.006 ( $<0.05$ ). See details in Table 5.48. Pair-wise comparison indicated that the difference was significant only between Libyan and Chinese students with a p-value of 0.005 ( $<0.05$ ). The difference in usage of the strategy was not significant between British and Libyan students or between British and Chinese students with p-values of 0.63 and 0.06 respectively.

#### ***5.3.3.4.4. The revision and editing process: feedback strategy***

For this strategy the mean rank given by British, Libyan, and Chinese students were 160.83, 139.81 and 153.96 respectively. The British students use this strategy most, followed by the Chinese students, then the Libyan students. For the first time the Chinese students took the second position. However, the difference in usage is not significant with a chi-square value of 3.06 and a p-value of 0.22 ( $>0.05$ ). See details in Table 5.48.

#### ***5.3.3.4.5. The revision and editing process: organisation strategy***

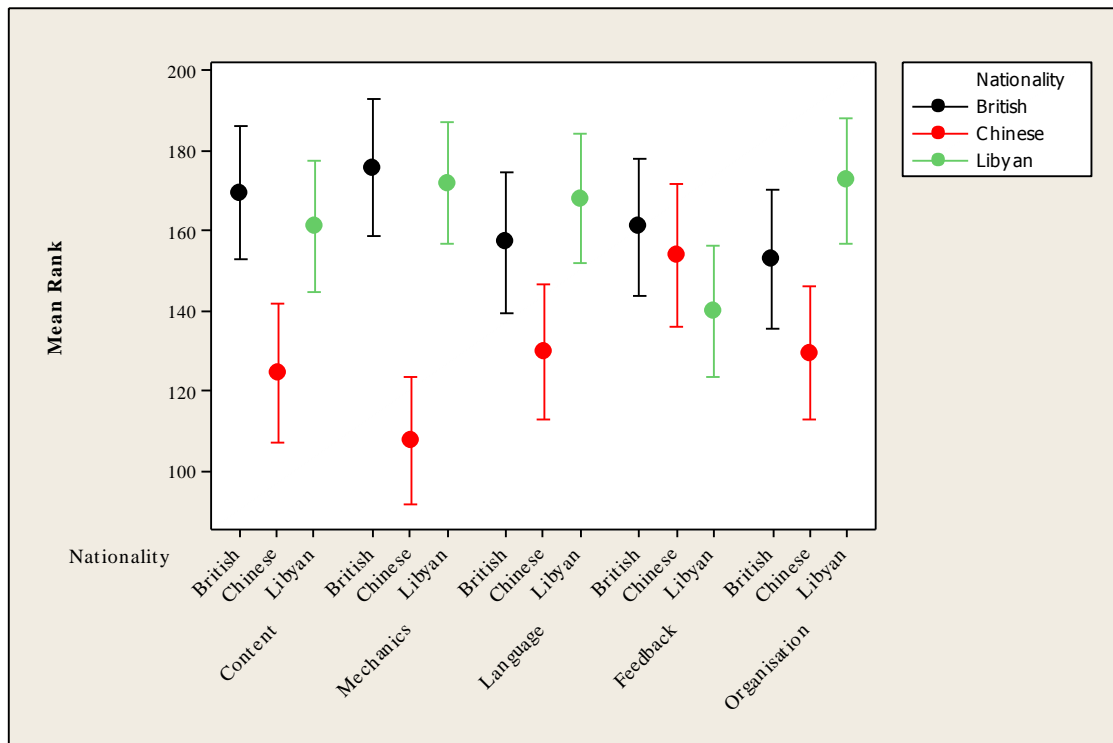
For this strategy the mean rank by the British, Libyan, and Chinese students were 152.79, 172.47 and 129.26 respectively. The Libyan students used this strategy most, followed by the British students, then the Chinese students. The difference in usage is significant with a chi-square value of 12.92 and a p-value of 0.002 ( $<0.05$ ). See details in Table 5.48. Pair-wise comparison indicated that the difference was significant only between Libyan and Chinese students with a p-value of 0.001 ( $<0.05$ ). The difference in usage of the

strategy was not significant between the British and the Libyan students or between the British and the Chinese students with p-values of 0.22 and 0.12 respectively.

**Table 5.48: Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA Analysis of Revision and Editing Process Strategies across Nationalities**

Strategy	Nationality	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	p-value
Revision and Editing: Content Strategy	British	100	169.37	15.082	<b>0.001</b>
	Libyan	101	160.84		
	Mainland Chinese	101	124.47		
Revision and Editing: Mechanics Strategy	British	100	175.72	39.382	<b>0.001</b>
	Libyan	101	171.81		
	Mainland Chinese	101	107.22		
Revision and Editing: Language Strategy	British	100	156.96	10.394	<b>0.006</b>
	Libyan	101	167.98		
	Mainland Chinese	101	129.62		
Revision and Editing: Feedback Strategy	British	100	160.83	3.057	0.217
	Libyan	101	139.81		
	Mainland Chinese	101	153.96		
Revision and Editing: Organisation Strategy	British	100	152.79	12.923	<b>0.002</b>
	Libyan	101	172.47		
	Mainland Chinese	101	129.26		

For four of the five strategies under the Revision and Editing Process, there was significant difference in their use according to nationality. The feedback strategy was the only strategy that did not show any significant difference in its usage. It was used in a similar way by students from Britain, Libya, and China. As shown on the Figure 5.32, the Chinese students used these strategies the least having the lowest mean rank for all strategies except for the feedback strategy.



**Figure 5.32: Comparison of the Revision and Editing Strategies across Nationality**

### 5.3.3.5. Comparison of revision and editing strategies by length of residence

Is length of residence an important factor influencing the use of these strategies?

#### 5.3.3.5.1. *The revision and editing process: content strategy*

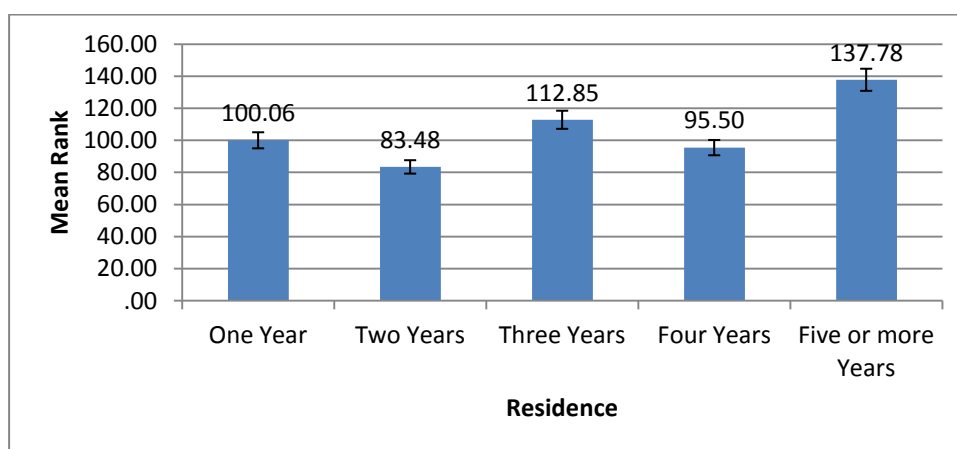
The mean rank given to this strategy by students with one year, two years, three years, four years and five or more years of residence were 100.06, 83.48, 112.85, 95.50 and 137.78 respectively. Students with five or more years of residence use this strategy most, followed by those with three years of residence. It was used the least by students with two years of residence. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that year of residence is an important factor in using this strategy with a chi-square of 14.90 and p-value of 0.005 (<0.05). See details in Table 5.49.



**Table 5.49: Comparison of Revision and Editing Process: Content Strategy across Year of Residence**

Strategy	Length of residence in the UK	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	p-value
Revision and Editing: Content Strategy	One year of residence	79	100.06	14.895	<b>0.005</b>
	Two years of residence	49	83.48		
	Three years of residence	27	112.85		
	Four year of residence	24	95.50		
	Five or more years of residence	23	137.78		

To find out which pair of mean ranks was significantly different a pair-wise comparison was done. The analysis indicated that students with five or more years of residence used the strategy significantly more than students with two or four years of residence with p-values of 0.044 and 0.002 respectively. No other pair-wise comparison was significant (see Figure 5.33).



**Figure 5.33: Comparison of Revision and Editing Process: Content Strategy across Year of Residence**

#### **5.3.3.5.2. The revision and editing process: mechanics strategy**

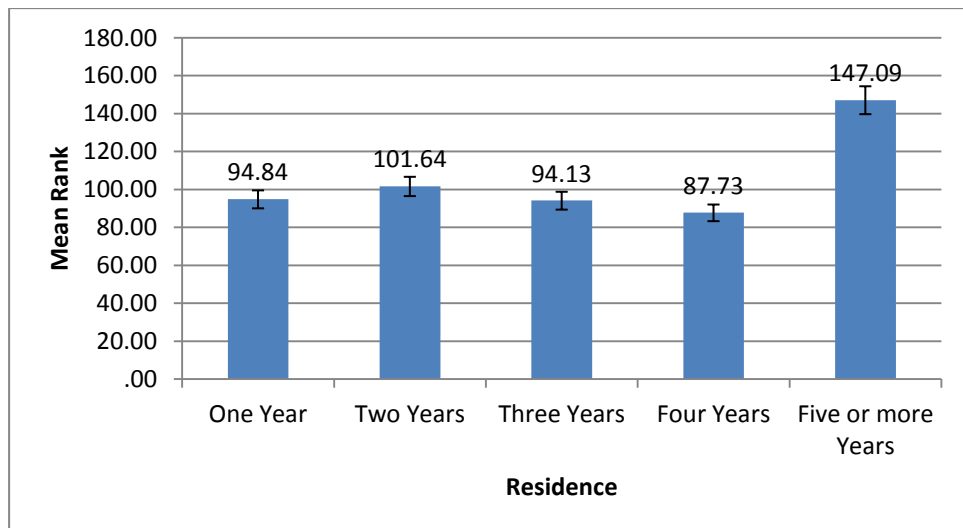
The mean rank given to this strategy by students with one year, two years, three years, four years and five or more years of residence were 94.84, 101.64, 94.13, 87.73 and 147.09 respectively. Students with five or more years of residence used this strategy most, followed by those with two years of residence. It was used the least by students with four years of residence.

There is sufficient evidence to suggest that year of residence is an important factor in using this strategy with a chi-square value of 16.89 and p-value of 0.002 (<0.05). See details in Table 5.50.

**Table 5.50: Comparison of Revision and Editing Process: Mechanics Strategy across Year of Residence**

Strategy	Length of residence in the UK	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	p-value
Revision and Editing: Mechanics Strategy	One year of residence	79	94.84	16.894	<b>0.002</b>
	Two years of residence	49	101.64		
	Three years of residence	27	94.13		
	Four year of residence	24	87.73		
	Five or more years of residence	23	147.09		

The p-value of 0.002 indicates that there is a difference across the five categories of residency. To pinpoint where the differences lie, a pair-wise comparison was conducted and the result is shown in Figure 5.34. Students with five or more years of residence with a mean rank of 147.09 used the mechanics strategy significantly more than all the other students with p-values of 0.001, 0.009, 0.006 and 0.003 respectively. No other pair-wise comparison was found to be significant, all had p-values greater than 0.05.



**Figure 5.34: Comparison of Revision and Editing Process: Mechanics Strategy across Year of Residence**

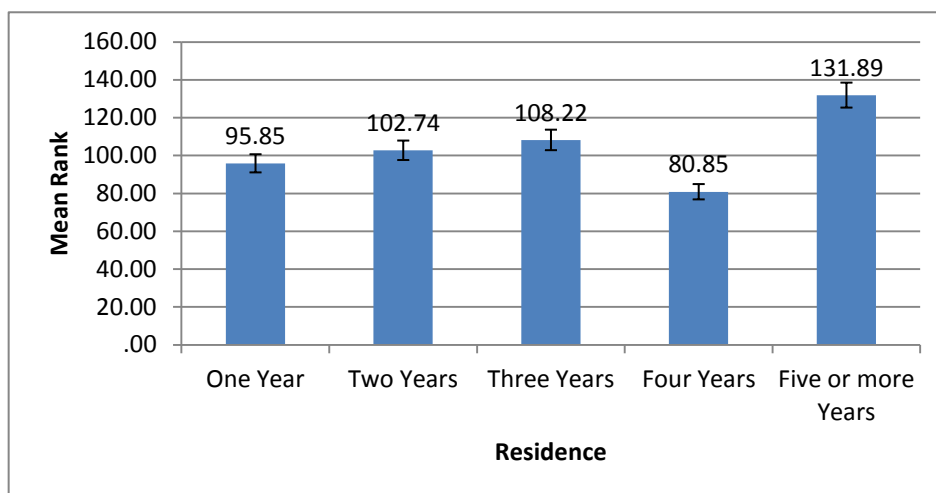
### 5.3.3.5.3. *The revision and editing process: language strategy*

The mean rank given to the language strategy by students with one year, two years, three years, four years and five or more years of residence were 95.85, 102.74, 108.22, 80.85 and 131.89 respectively. Students with five or more years of residence used this strategy most, followed by those with three years of residence. Next were students with two years of residence. The strategy was used the least by students with four years of residence; as with the previous strategy. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that year of residence is an important factor in using this strategy with a chi-square of 10.41 and p-value of 0.034 (<0.05). See details in Table 5.51.

**Table 5.51: Comparison of Revision and Editing Process: Language Strategy across Year of Residence**

Strategy	Length of residence in the UK	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	p-value
Revision and Editing: Language Strategy	One year of residence	79	95.85	10.409	<b>0.034</b>
	Two years of residence	49	102.74		
	Three years of residence	27	108.22		
	Four year of residence	24	80.85		
	Five or more years of residence	23	131.89		

The p-value of 0.034 only highlights that there is a difference across the five categories of residency. To pinpoint where the differences lie, a pair-wise comparison was conducted and the result is shown in Figure 5.35. Students with five or more years of residence with a mean rank of 131.89 used the language strategy significantly more than students with one year or students with four years of residence with p-values of 0.048 and 0.015 respectively. No other pair-wise comparison was found to be significant, all had p-values greater than 0.05.



**Figure 5.35: Comparison of Revision and Editing Process: Language Strategy across Year of Residence**

**5.3.3.5.4. The revision and editing process: feedback strategy**

For the feedback strategy students with one year, two years, three years, four years and five or more years of residence gave the following mean ranks 102.51, 96.64, 113.98, 95.88 and 99.59 respectively. Students with three years of residence use this strategy most, followed by those with one year of residence. Next were students with five or more years of residence. The strategy was used the least by students with four years of residence. There is not sufficient evidence to suggest that year of residence is an important factor in using the feedback strategy with a chi-square of 1.86 and p-value of 0.76 (>0.05). See details in Table 5.52.

**Table 5.52: Comparison of Revision and Editing Process: Feedback Strategy across Year of Residence**

Strategy	Length of residence in the UK	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	p-value
Revision and Editing: Feedback Strategy	One year of residence	79	102.51	1.86	0.762
	Two years of residence	49	96.64		
	Three years of residence	27	113.98		
	Four year of residence	24	95.88		
	Five or more years of residence	23	99.59		

### 5.3.3.5.5. *The revision and editing process: organisation strategy*

The mean rank given to the organisation strategy by students with one year, two years, three years, four years and five or more years of residence were 99.37, 99.77, 109.02, 84.96 and 120.93 respectively. Students with five or more years of residence use this strategy most, followed by those with three years of residence. The strategy was used the least by students with four years of residence. However, there is no evidence to suggest that year of residence is an important factor in using the organisation strategy with a chi-square of 5.28 and p-value of 0.26 (>0.05). See details in Table 5.53.

**Table 5.53: Comparison of Writing Process: Mechanics Strategy across Year of Residence**

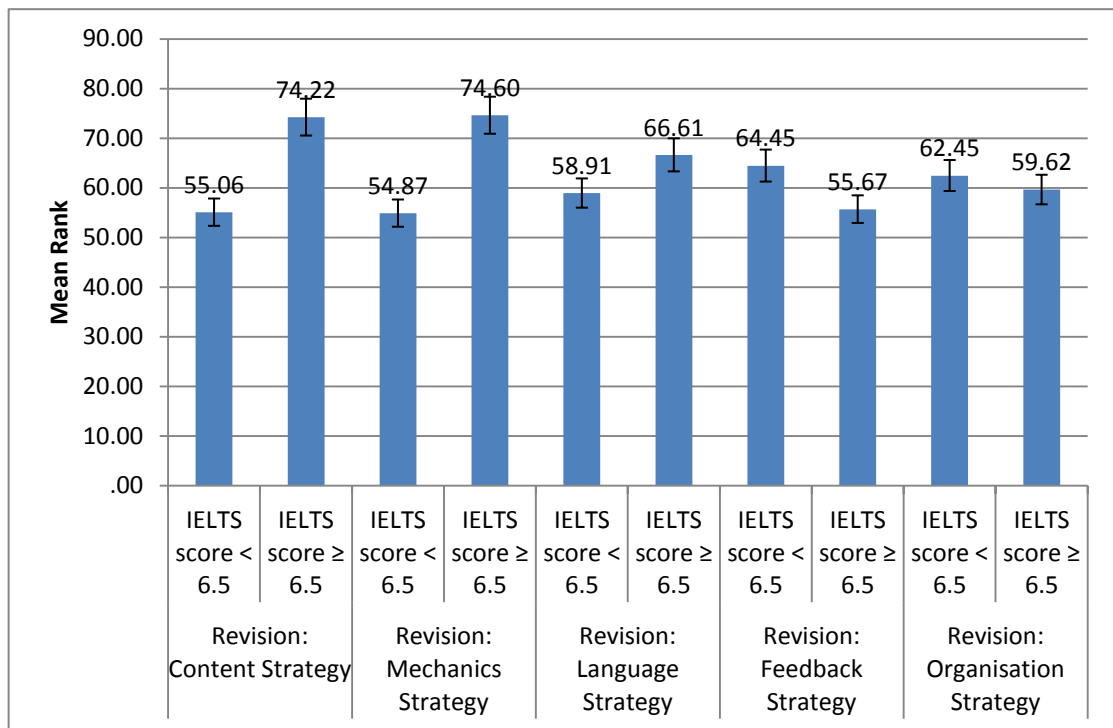
Strategy	Length of residence in the UK	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	p-value
Revision and Editing: Organisation Strategy	One year of residence	79	99.37	5.275	0.26
	Two years of residence	49	99.77		
	Three years of residence	27	109.02		
	Four year of residence	24	84.96		
	Five or more years of residence	23	120.93		

### 5.3.3.6. Comparison of revision and editing strategies according to IELTS score

For three of the five strategies under the Revision and Editing Process—language, feedback and organisation—no significant evidence in usage was found between students who scored < 6.5 and those who scored ≥ 6.5 on the IELTS test. The p-values are all greater than 0.05 (see Table 5.54). A significant difference in usage was observed in the content strategy where students with IELTS score ≥ 6.5 made greater use of the strategy than those with IELTS score < 6.5. Their respective mean ranks were 74.22 and 55.06; z-value of -2.83 and p-value 0.005 (<0.05) (See Figure 5.36). A significant difference was also observed in the usage of the mechanics strategy. Students with IELTS score ≥ 6.5 had a higher mean rank than students with IELTS score < 6.5 (z-value=-2.92, p=0.004).

**Table 5.54: Comparison of Revision and Editing Process Strategies by IELTS Scores**

Strategy	IELTS Score	N	Mean Rank	z-value	p-value
Revision and Editing: Content Strategy	IELTS score < 6.5	81	55.06	-2.83	<b>0.005</b>
	IELTS score ≥ 6.5	41	74.22		
Revision and Editing: Mechanics Strategy	IELTS score < 6.5	81	54.87	-2.92	<b>0.004</b>
	IELTS score ≥ 6.5	41	74.60		
Revision and Editing: Language Strategy	IELTS score < 6.5	81	58.91	-1.14	0.254
	IELTS score ≥ 6.5	41	66.61		
Revision and Editing: Feedback Strategy	IELTS score < 6.5	81	64.45	-1.30	0.193
	IELTS score ≥ 6.5	41	55.67		
Revision and Editing: Organisation Strategy	IELTS score < 6.5	81	62.45	-0.43	0.669
	IELTS score ≥ 6.5	41	59.62		



**Figure 5.36: Comparisons of Revision and Editing Process: All Five Strategies across IELTS Score**

**5.3.3.7. Comparison of revision and editing strategies according to subject areas**

Arts students used the content strategy more with a mean rank of 158.11 compared to the mean rank of 146.83 for science students. There is no evidence to suggest that this usage is significantly different with a z-value of -1.11 and p-value of 0.27 (>0.05). See Table 5.55 for details.

Looking at the mechanics strategy, again arts students used it more with a mean rank of 161.92 compared to science students with a mean rank of 144.14. There is no evidence to suggest that this usage is significantly different with a z-value of -1.75 and p-value of 0.08 (>0.05). See Table 5.55 for details.

**Table 5.55: Comparison of Revision and Editing Strategies by Subject Area**

Strategy	Subject area	N	Mean Rank	z-value	p-value
Revision and Editing: Content Strategy	Science	177	146.83	-1.11	0.27
	Arts	125	158.11		
Revision and Editing: Mechanics Strategy	Science	177	144.14	-1.75	0.08
	Arts	125	161.92		
Revision and Editing: Language Strategy	Science	177	145.03	-1.54	0.12
	Arts	125	160.67		
Revision and Editing: Feedback Strategy	Science	177	150.26	-0.29	0.77
	Arts	125	153.25		
Revision and Editing: Organisation Strategy	Science	177	139.77	-2.84	<b>0.01</b>
	Arts	125	168.12		

For the language strategy, again arts students used it more with a mean rank of 160.67 compared to science students with a mean rank of 145.03. There is no evidence to suggest that this usage is significantly different with a z-value of -1.54 and p-value of 0.12 (>0.05). See Table 5.55 for details.

For the feedback strategy, arts students used it more with a mean rank of 153.25 compared to science students with a mean rank of 150.26. There is no evidence to suggest that this usage is significantly different with a z-value of -0.29 and p-value of 0.77 (>0.05). See Table 5.55 for details.

For the organisation strategy, arts students used it more with a mean rank of 168.12 compared to science students with a mean rank of 139.77. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that this usage is significantly different with a z-value of -2.84 and p-value of 0.01 (>0.05). See Table 5.55 for details.

Arts students used all five strategies more than science students under the Revision and Editing Process; however, only the usage in the organisation strategy was significantly different.

### 5.3.3.8. Comparison of revision and editing strategies according to age group

Students who are older than 25 years used the content strategy more with a mean rank of 172.63 compared to the mean rank of 128.31 for students  $\leq 25$  years. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that this usage is significantly different with a z-value of -4.42 and p-value of 0.01 ( $<0.05$ ). See Table 5.56 for details.

Looking at the mechanics strategy students who are older than 25 years used the mechanics strategy more with a mean rank of 172.16 compared to the mean rank of 128.83 for students  $\leq 25$  years old. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that this usage is significantly different with a z-value of -4.32 and p-value of 0.01 ( $<0.05$ ). See Table 5.56 for details.

**Table 5.56: Comparison of Revision and Editing Strategies by Age Group**

Strategy	Age	N	Mean Rank	z-value	p-value
Revision and Editing: Content Strategy	$\leq 25$ years old	144	128.31	-4.42	<b>0.01</b>
	$> 25$ years old	158	172.63		
Revision and Editing: Mechanics Strategy	$\leq 25$ years old	144	128.83	-4.32	<b>0.01</b>
	$> 25$ years old	158	172.16		
Revision and Editing: Language Strategy	$\leq 25$ years old	144	141.97	-1.82	0.07
	$> 25$ years old	158	160.19		
Revision and Editing: Feedback Strategy	$\leq 25$ years old	144	167.73	-3.10	<b>0.01</b>
	$> 25$ years old	158	136.71		
Revision and Editing: Organisation Strategy	$\leq 25$ years old	144	130.28	-4.12	<b>0.01</b>
	$> 25$ years old	158	170.84		

Students who are older than 25 years used the language strategy more with a mean rank of 160.19 compared to the mean rank of 141.97 for students  $\leq 25$  years. There is, however, no evidence to suggest that this usage is significantly different with a z-value of -1.82 and p-value of 0.07 ( $>0.05$ ). See Table 5.56 for details.



Students who are older than 25 years used the feedback strategy less with a mean rank of 136.71 compared to the mean rank of 167.73 for students  $\leq 25$  years old. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that younger students used the feedback strategy more than older students with a z-value of -3.10 and p-value of 0.01 ( $<0.05$ ). See Table 5.56 for details.

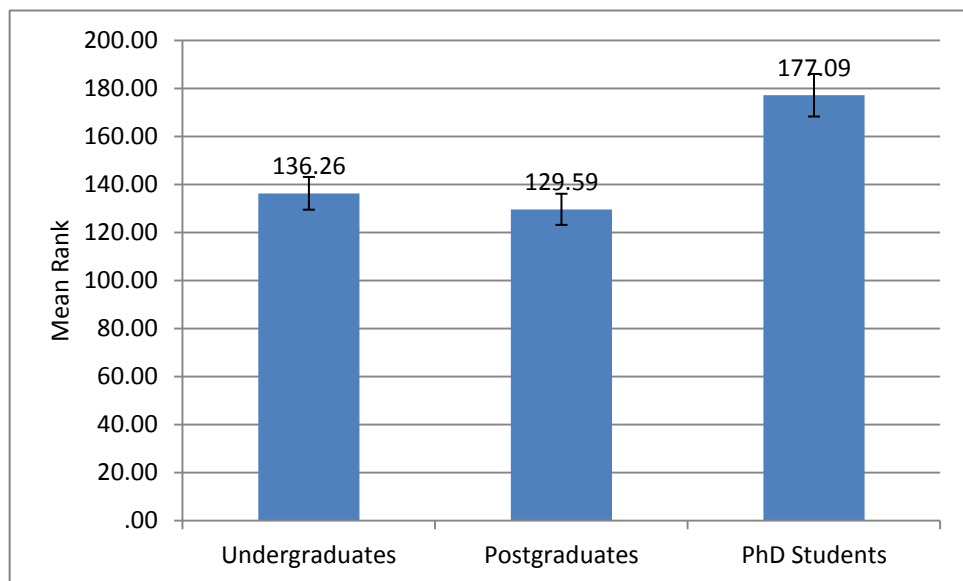
Students who are older than 25 years used the organisation strategy more with a mean rank of 170.84 compared to the mean rank of 130.28 for students  $\leq 25$  years old. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that this usage is significantly different with a z-value of -4.12 and p-value of 0.01 ( $<0.05$ ). See Table 5.56 for details.

#### **5.3.3.9. Comparison of revision and editing strategies according to qualifications**

For the content strategy PhD students used it most with a mean rank of 177.09, followed by undergraduate students with a mean rank of 136.26 and then by postgraduate students with a mean rank of 129.59. There is a strong evidence to suggest that the usage of the content strategy is different among students with different qualifications with a chi-square value of 15.07 and p-value of 0.01 ( $<0.05$ ). See Table 5.57 for details. The p-value of 0.01 only tells us that there is a difference in usage across qualifications. To pinpoint where the difference lies, further analysis was undertaken. This indicates that PhD students used the content strategy significantly more than undergraduate students ( $p=0.001<0.05$ ). PhD students also used the strategy significantly more than postgraduate students ( $p=0.001<0.05$ ). There was no significant difference in usage between undergraduate and postgraduate students ( $p=0.50>0.05$ ). See Figure 5.37 for details.

**Table 5.57: Comparison of Revision and Editing Strategies by Qualifications**

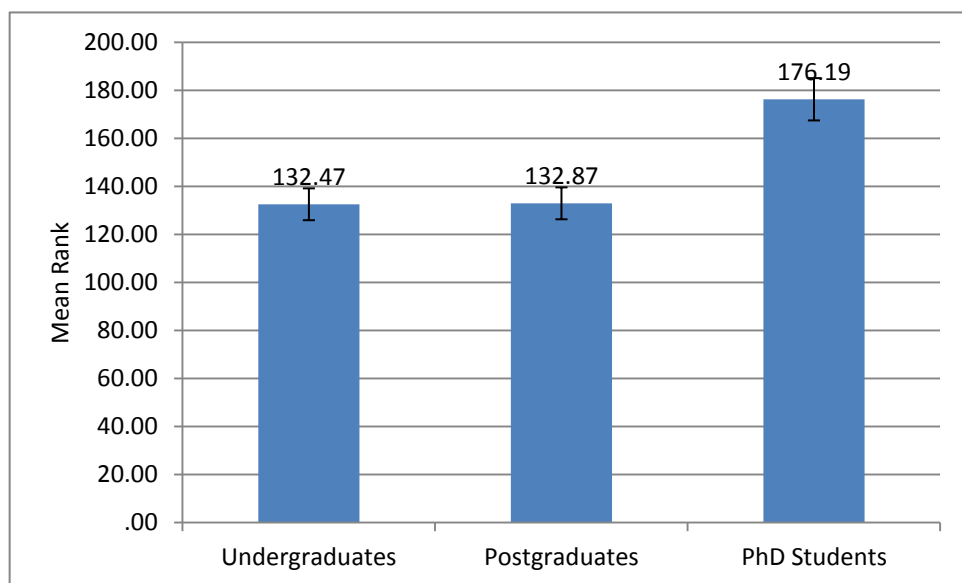
Strategy	Qualifications	N	Mean Rank	Chi-square	p-value
Revision and Editing: Content Strategy	Undergraduates	94	136.26	15.07	<b>0.01</b>
	Postgraduates	126	129.59		
	PhD Students	64	177.09		
Revision and Editing: Mechanics Strategy	Undergraduates	94	132.47	14.00	<b>0.01</b>
	Postgraduates	126	132.87		
	PhD Students	64	176.19		
Revision and Editing: Language Strategy	Undergraduates	94	141.30	3.23	0.20
	Postgraduates	126	135.52		
	PhD Students	64	157.99		
Revision and Editing: Feedback Strategy	Undergraduates	94	154.46	8.59	<b>0.01</b>
	Postgraduates	126	146.58		
	PhD Students	64	116.91		
Revision and Editing: Organisation Strategy	Undergraduates	94	124.27	13.88	<b>0.01</b>
	Postgraduates	126	140.79		
	PhD Students	64	172.65		



**Figure 5.37 Comparison of Content Strategy by Qualifications**

For the mechanics strategy PhD students used it most with a mean rank of 176.19, followed by postgraduate students with a mean rank of 132.87 and then by undergraduate students with a mean rank of 132.47. There is strong evidence to suggest that the usage of the mechanics strategy is different

among students with different qualifications with a chi-square value of 14.00 and p-value of 0.01 ( $<0.05$ ). See Table 5.57 for details. The p-value of 0.01 tells us that there is a difference in usage across qualifications. To pinpoint where the difference lies, further analysis was undertaken. This indicates that PhD students used the mechanics strategy significantly more than undergraduate students ( $p=0.002<0.05$ ). PhD students also used the strategy significantly more than postgraduate students ( $p=0.001<0.05$ ). There was no significant difference in usage between undergraduate and postgraduate students ( $p=0.86>0.05$ ). See Figure 5.38 for details.

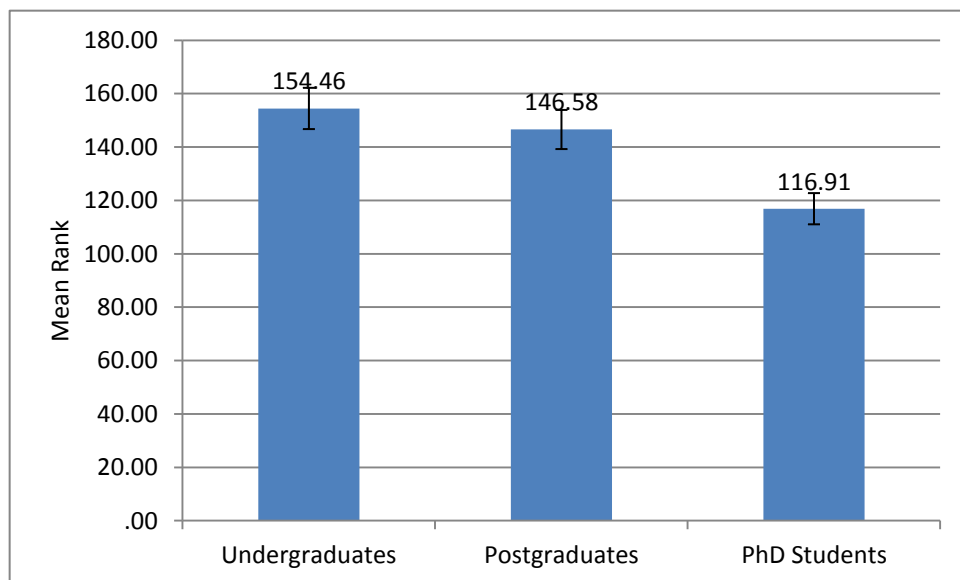


**Figure 5.38: Comparison of Mechanic Strategy by Qualification**

For the language strategy PhD students used it most with a mean rank of 157.99, followed by undergraduate students with a mean rank of 141.30 and then by postgraduate students with a mean rank of 135.52. There is no evidence to suggest that the usage of the language strategy is different among students with different qualifications with a chi-square value of 3.23 and p-value of 0.20 ( $>0.05$ ). See Table 5.57 for details.

For the feedback strategy undergraduate students used it most with a mean rank of 154.46, followed by postgraduate students with a mean rank of 146.58 and then by PhD students with a mean rank of 116.91. There is strong

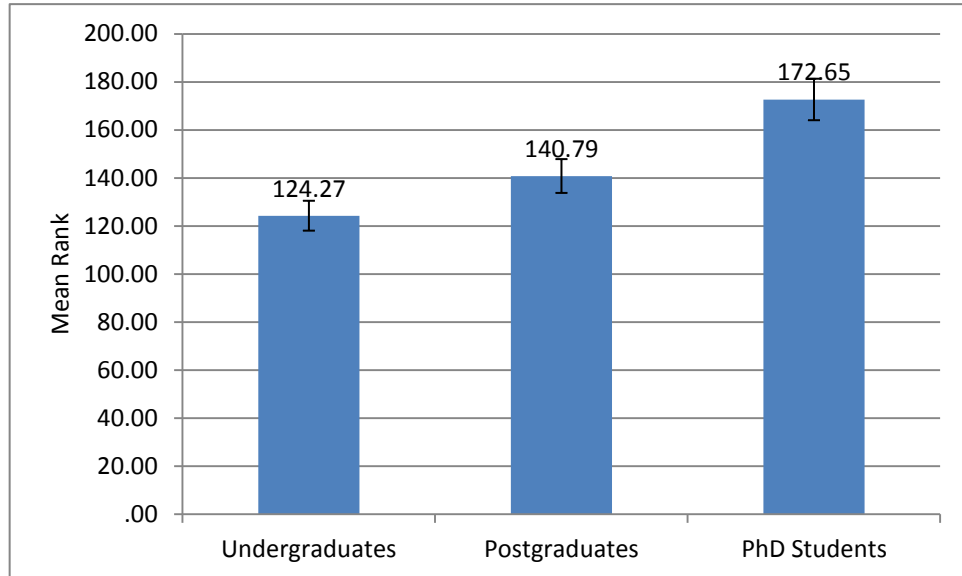
evidence to suggest that the usage of the feedback strategy is different among students with different qualifications with a chi-square value of 8.59 and p-value of 0.01 ( $<0.05$ ). See Table 5.57 for details. The p-value of 0.01 tells us that there is a difference in usage across qualification. To pinpoint where the difference lies, further analysis was undertaken. This indicates that undergraduate students used the feedback strategy significantly more than PhD students ( $p=0.003<0.05$ ). Postgraduate students also used the strategy significantly more than PhD students ( $p=0.023<0.05$ ). There was no significant difference in usage between undergraduate and postgraduate students ( $p=0.53>0.05$ ). See Figure 5.39 for details.



**Figure 5.39 Comparison of Feedback Strategy by Qualifications**

For the organisation strategy PhD students used it most with a mean rank of 172.65, followed by postgraduate students with a mean rank of 140.79 and then by undergraduate students with a mean rank of 124.27. There is strong evidence to suggest that the usage of the organisation strategy is different among students with different qualifications with a chi-square value of 13.88 and p-value of 0.01 ( $<0.05$ ). See Table 5.57 for details. The p-value of 0.01 tells us that there is a difference in usage across qualifications. To pinpoint where the difference lies, further analysis was undertaken. This indicates that PhD students used the organisation strategy significantly more than undergraduate students ( $p=0.001<0.05$ ). PhD students also used the strategy

significantly more than postgraduate students ( $p=0.01<0.05$ ). There was no significant difference in usage between undergraduate and postgraduate students ( $p=0.13>0.05$ ). See Figure 5.40 for details.



**Figure 5.40: Comparison of Organisation Strategy by Qualifications**

### **5.3.3.10. Interaction effects on the five strategies under the revision and editing process**

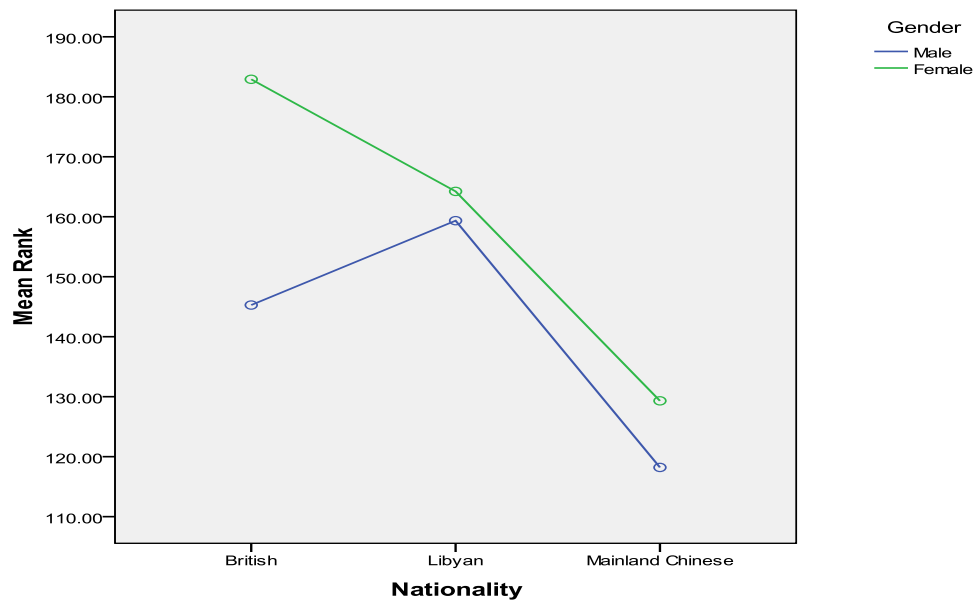
#### **5.3.3.10.1. The revision and editing process: content strategy**

To find out if there is any interaction effect between gender and nationality, a univariate GLM analysis was performed. Table 5.58 displays descriptive statistics for each combination of factors in the model; that is, for nationality and gender for the content strategy. Previous analysis has already established that nationality is an important factor influencing the use of this strategy; the mean ranks for British, Libyan and Chinese students were 169.37, 160.84 and 124.47 respectively. Gender was not found to be an important factor in using this strategy; the mean rank for male students in the sample was 143.90 compared to 159.00 for female students. Thus, the interaction effect between nationality and gender was not significant with a p-value of 0.39 ( $>0.05$ ).

**Table 5.58: Descriptive Statistics of Revision and Editing Process: Content Strategy**

Gender	Nationality	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	British	145.28	72.16	36
	Libyan	159.34	78.07	70
	Mainland Chinese	118.20	84.81	44
	Total	143.90	80.18	150
Female	British	182.91	88.63	64
	Libyan	164.23	94.32	31
	Mainland Chinese	129.31	90.72	57
	Total	159.00	93.16	152
Total	British	169.37	84.67	100
	Libyan	160.84	82.95	101
	Mainland Chinese	124.47	87.93	101
	Total	151.50	87.14	302

The profile plot in Figure 5.41 shows that the female students used the strategy more than the male students for all three nationalities, thus the profile line for female students is above that for male students. The gap between female and male students is wider for British than for Libyan or Chinese students.



**Figure 5.41: Profile Plot of the Interaction between Gender and Nationality for Content Strategy**

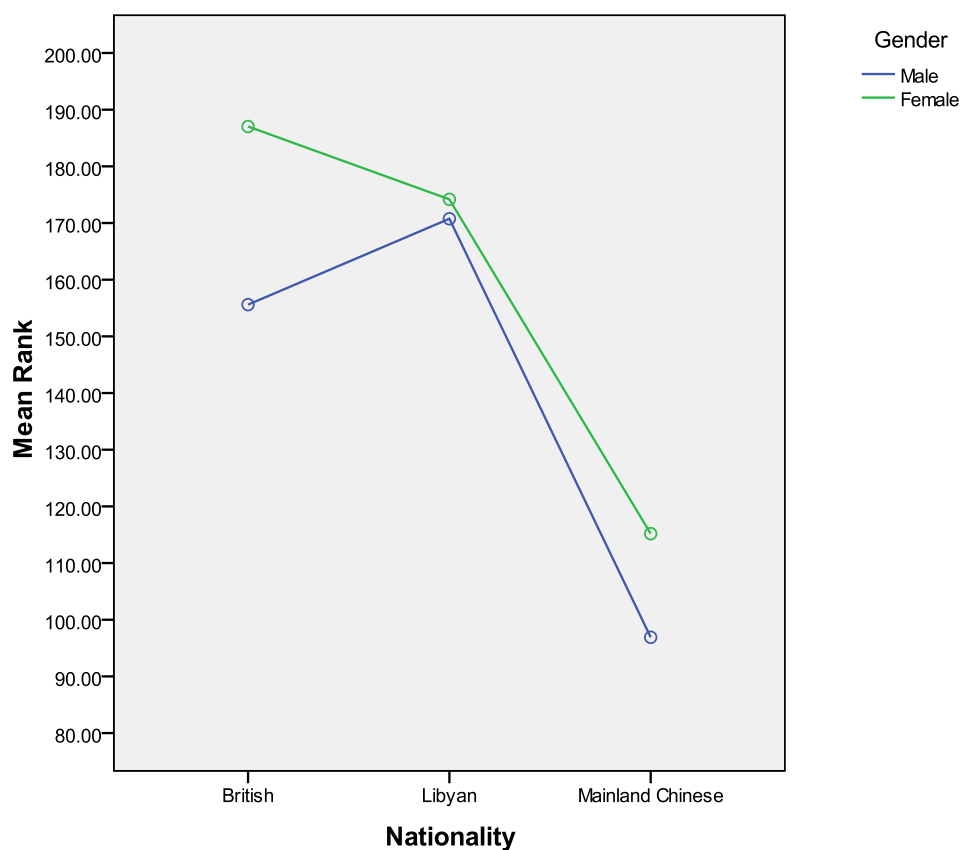
### 5.3.3.10.2. The revision and editing process: mechanics strategy

Results from the GLM analysis for the mechanics strategy are shown in Table 5.59. Analysis carried out earlier indicated that nationality was an important factor when using mechanics strategy, while gender was not. The mean ranks from male and female students were 145.45 and 157.47 respectively. The mean ranks for British, Libyan and Chinese students were 175.72, 171.81 and 107.22 respectively. The interaction effect between nationality and gender on the mechanics strategy was not significant with a p-value of 0.52 (>0.05).

**Table 5.59: Descriptive Statistics of Revision and Editing Process: Mechanics Strategy**

Gender	Nationality	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	British	155.60	83.88	36
	Libyan	170.76	77.46	70
	Mainland Chinese	96.90	77.73	44
	Total	145.45	84.83	150
Female	British	187.03	85.70	64
	Libyan	174.18	78.76	31
	Mainland Chinese	115.18	82.55	57
	Total	157.47	89.03	152
Total	British	175.72	85.97	100
	Libyan	171.81	77.49	101
	Mainland Chinese	107.22	80.61	101
	Total	151.50	87.04	302

The profile plot in Figure 5.42 is very similar to that of the content strategy discussed above. It shows that the female students used the strategy more than the male students for all three nationalities. The profile line for female students is above that for male students. The gap between female and male students is wider for British than for Libyan or Chinese students.



**Figure 5.42: Profile Plot of the Interaction between Gender and Nationality for Mechanics Strategy**

**5.3.3.10.3. The revision and editing process: language strategy**

Results from the GLM analysis for language strategy are shown in Table 5.60. The analysis carried out earlier indicated that nationality was an important factor while gender was not important in using this strategy. The mean ranks from male and female students were 144.73 and 158.18 respectively, while the mean ranks for British, Libyan and Chinese students are 156.96, 167.98 and 129.62 respectively.

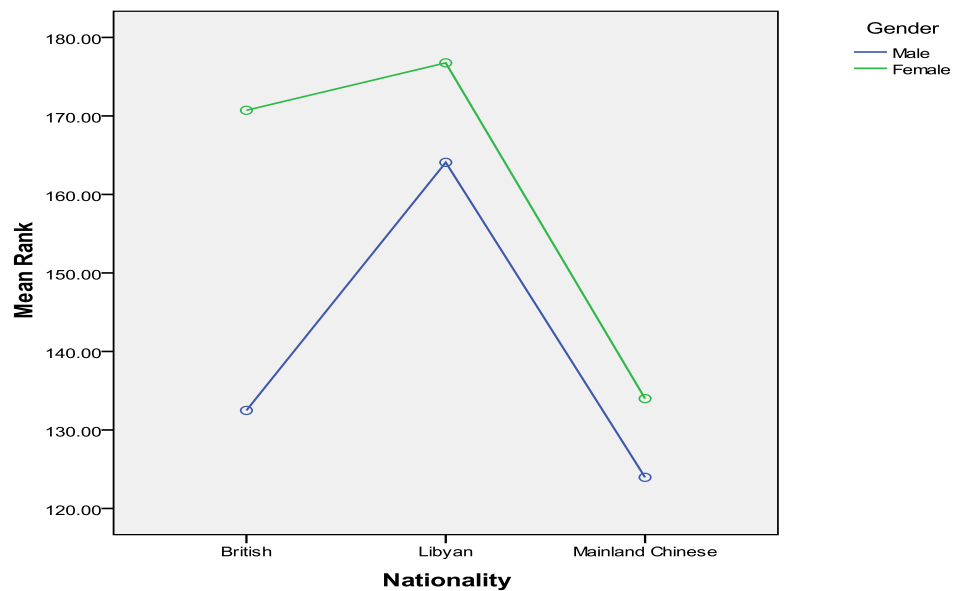
Female students used the language strategy more than male students across the three nationalities, a similar trend to the last two strategies discussed above.



**Table 5.60: Descriptive Statistics of Revision and Editing Process: Language Strategy**

Gender	Nationality	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	British	132.49	81.77	36
	Libyan	164.09	83.57	70
	Mainland Chinese	123.97	87.69	44
	Total	144.73	85.81	150
Female	British	170.72	90.75	64
	Libyan	176.76	78.74	31
	Mainland Chinese	133.99	85.58	57
	Total	158.18	87.99	152
Total	British	156.96	89.13	100
	Libyan	167.98	81.94	101
	Mainland Chinese	129.62	86.21	101
	Total	151.50	87.03	302

The profile plot is shown in Figure 5.43. The interaction effect was not found to be significant with a p-value of 0.46 ( $>0.05$ ). Again the gap between British female and male students was wider compared to the other nationalities.



**Figure 5.43: Profile Plot of the Interaction between Gender and Nationality for Language Strategy**

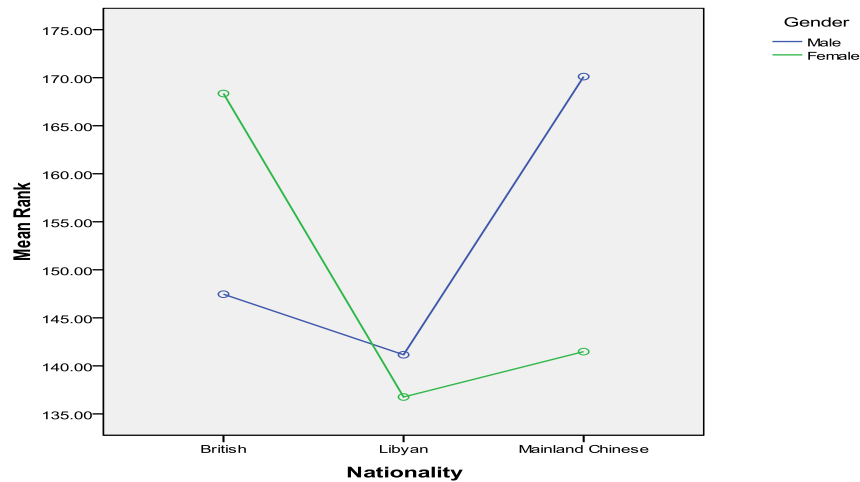
#### 5.3.3.10.4. The revision and editing process: feedback strategy

Results from the GLM analysis for feedback strategy are shown in Table 5.61. The analysis carried out earlier indicated that neither nationality nor gender were important factors on the feedback strategy. The mean ranks from male and female students were 151.16 and 151.83 respectively. The mean ranks for British, Libyan and Chinese students were 160.83, 139.81 and 153.96 respectively.

**Table 5.61: Descriptive Statistics of Revision and Editing Process: Feedback Strategy**

Gender	Nationality	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	British	147.46	86.46	36
	Libyan	141.16	82.05	70
	Mainland Chinese	170.11	92.20	44
	Total	151.16	86.50	150
Female	British	168.35	85.93	64
	Libyan	136.76	87.99	31
	Mainland Chinese	141.48	88.04	57
	Total	151.83	87.73	152
Total	British	160.83	86.28	100
	Libyan	139.81	83.50	101
	Mainland Chinese	153.96	90.55	101
	Total	151.50	86.98	302

The profile plot is shown in Figure 5.44. There seems to be an interaction effect between gender and nationality as the lines cross. As the profile plot shows, the female British students with a mean rank of 168.35 used the feedback strategy more than British male students with a mean rank of 147.46. This trend is reversed for the Chinese students where the females used the strategy less with a mean rank of 141.48 than the males with a mean rank of 170.11. Similarly, the students from Libya follow the same pattern to the Chinese students. However, there is not sufficient evidence to suggest that there is an interaction effect for the use of the feedback strategy with a p-value of 0.14 ( $>0.05$ ).



**Figure 5.44: Profile Plot of the Interaction between Gender and Nationality for Feedback Strategy**

**5.3.3.10.5. The revision and editing process: organisation strategy**

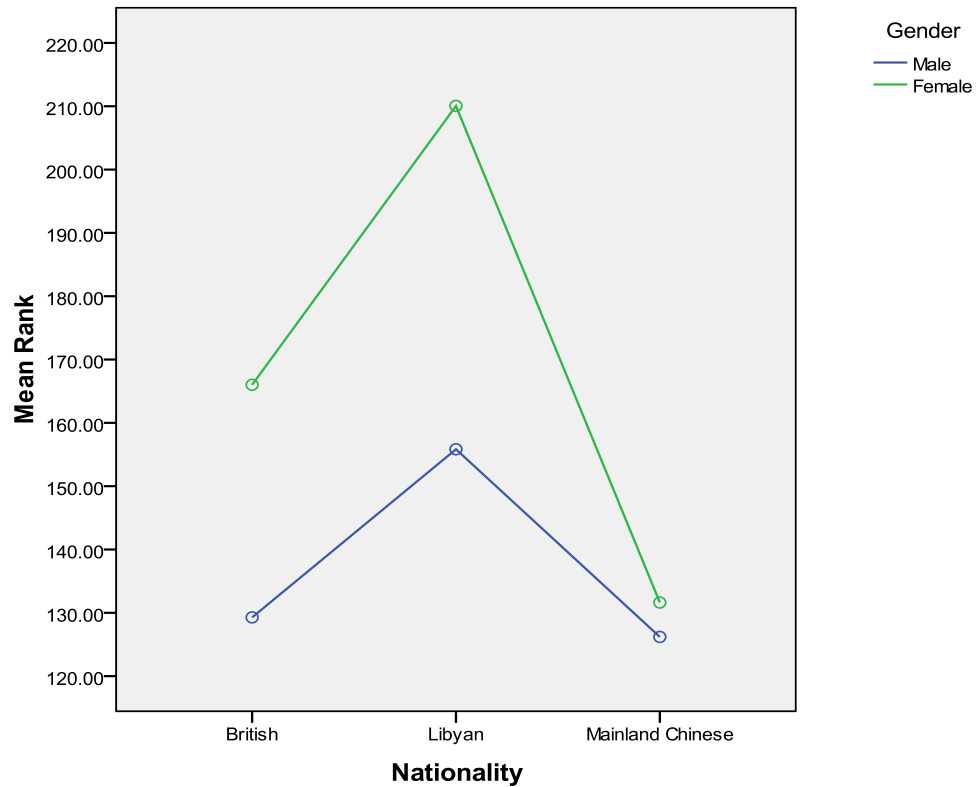
Results from the GLM analysis for organisation strategy are shown in Table 5.62. Previous analysis indicated that both nationality and gender were important factors on the organisation strategy. The mean ranks from male and female students were 140.76 and 162.10 respectively. The mean ranks for British, Libyan and Chinese students were 152.79, 172.47 and 129.62 respectively.

**Table 5.62: Descriptive Statistics of Revision and Editing Process: Organisation Strategy**

Gender	Nationality	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	British	129.28	87.85	36
	Libyan	155.83	79.07	70
	Mainland Chinese	126.19	90.14	44
	Total	140.76	85.17	150
Female	British	166.01	84.52	64
	Libyan	210.05	68.63	31
	Mainland Chinese	131.62	81.34	57
	Total	162.10	84.85	152
Total	British	152.79	87.11	100
	Libyan	172.47	79.74	101
	Mainland Chinese	129.26	84.89	101
	Total	151.50	85.54	302

The profile plot is shown in Figure 5.45. Female students used the organisation strategy more than male students across the three nationalities.

The interaction effect was not found to be significant with a p-value of 0.12 (>0.05).



**Figure 5.45: Profile Plot of the Interaction between Gender and Nationality for Organisation Strategy**

#### 5.4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Table 5.63 below summarises where the variations in academic writing strategy use was significant. The table highlights the differences by variable and according to each stage of writing process. The blank cells indicate similarities in use among HE students of the north east of England.

**Table 5.63: A Summary of the Main Findings**

Planning & preparation	NSE/ NNSE	Gender	Nationality	Year of residence	IELTS score	Subject area	Age	Qualification
Organisation Strategy	<b>0.04</b>	<b>0.01</b>						
Content Strategy								
Feedback Strategy							<b>0.024</b>	<b>0.02</b>
Writing Strategies	NSE/ NNSE	Gender	Nationality	Year of residence	IELTS score	Subject area	Age	Qualification
Content Strategy			<b>0.01</b>				<b>0.04</b>	<b>0.01</b>
Language Strategy		<b>0.01</b>		<b>0.03</b>				<b>0.01</b>
Organisation Strategy					<b>0.01</b>		<b>0.01</b>	
Feedback Strategy				<b>0.02</b>			<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.01</b>
Mechanics Strategy						<b>0.01</b>		
Revision & Editing Strategies	NSE/ NNSE	Gender	Nationality	Year of residence	IELTS score	Subject area	Age	Qualification
Content Strategy	<b>0.01</b>		<b>0.001</b>	<b>0.005</b>	<b>0.005</b>		<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.01</b>
Mechanics Strategy	<b>0.01</b>		<b>0.001</b>	<b>0.002</b>	<b>0.004</b>		<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.01</b>
Language Strategy			<b>0.006</b>	<b>0.034</b>				
Feedback Strategy							<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.01</b>
Organisation Strategy		<b>0.03</b>	<b>0.002</b>			<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.01</b>

The table shows the three main stages of the writing process that students go through when writing up a piece of work. For each stage, the strategies used by the students were extracted using PCA. For the planning and preparation stage, three strategies used were identified, namely: organisation, content and feedback strategies. For the actual writing process, five strategies were identified, namely: content, language, organisation, feedback and mechanics strategies. For the final stage of writing process revision and editing strategy five main strategies were identified, namely: content, mechanics, language, feedback and organisation strategies. In total, thirteen strategies were extracted. For the three main factors of research interest—nativeness, gender

and nationality; and the five factors that emerged—years of residence, IELTS score, subject area, age and qualification, there were similarities and differences across the thirteen strategies identified.

#### **5.4.1. The Three Main Factors of Nativeness, Gender, and Nationality**

Looking at the first stage of the writing process, planning and preparation organisation strategy, there was a significant difference between NSE and NNSE. NSE students used this strategy more than NNSE students. Similarly, there was a significant difference in the use of this strategy according to gender where female students used this strategy more than male students. However, there was similarity in the use of this strategy according to nationality. That is, Chinese, Libyan and the British students used this strategy in a similar way. For the content and feedback strategies, there were similarities in their use for the three factors of interest.

When examining the second stage of the writing process, there was similarity in the use of content strategy between NSE and NNSE students. There was also similarity with regard to this strategy according to gender. However, the use of this strategy was significantly different according to nationality. The Libyan students used this strategy significantly more than the Chinese students. There was no difference in use between Libyan and the British students or between British and Chinese students. For the remaining four strategies, there were similarities of use across the three main factors except for gender with the language strategy where female students used the strategy more than male students.

With respect to the final stage of the writing process revision and editing, there was a significant difference in use of content and mechanic strategies between NSE and NNSE where the former used the strategies significantly more than the later. For the main factor of gender for the five strategies, significant difference was seen only on the organisation strategy where female students used it more than male students. For the main factor of nationality, there were significant differences in the use of the strategies except for the feedback strategy where there was similarity of use.

#### **5.4.2. Other Factors**

For the first stage of writing, only the factors of age and qualification show a significant difference of use with the feedback strategy. There were similarities of use for the other factors.

For the second stage, there were differences and similarities across strategies and across factors. For example, there was significant difference of use of the content strategy by age while there was similarity of use of the language strategy by age.

The same pattern was seen in the final stage of the writing process where differences and similarities across strategies and across factors existed.

#### **5.4.3. Overall Observations**

It is apparent from this summary table that at the early stages of the writing process there is a tendency towards adopting similar strategies identified. However, as the writing process progresses, more differences can be seen for the main factors of interest. For example, for the first stage of the writing process there are 24 cells, i.e. three identified strategies and eight main factors of interest. Only in four out of the 24 cells (17%) were there significant differences, namely nativeness and gender on the planning and preparation organisation strategy; and age and qualification on the planning and preparation feedback strategy. Accordingly, there were more similarities than differences in the use of these strategies.

For the second stage of the writing process there are 40 cells, i.e. five identified strategies and eight main factors of interest. In twelve out of the 40 cells (30%) there was a significant difference in the use of the strategies. That is to say, more significant differences when compared to the first stage of the writing process.

For the third and final stage of the writing process revision and editing also has 40 cells i.e. five identified strategies and eight main factors of interest. In more than 52% of the cells there was a significant difference in the use of the strategies. There is strong evidence to suggest that as the writing process

reaches its final stage there are significant differences in the use of the identified strategies.

Thus, the above table concludes the analysis of the quantitative data. Through the process of the analysis, the extensive amount of data that were obtained from carrying out the academic writing strategy questionnaire have been ordered and summarised in an attempt to provide an answer to the research questions. For De Vos et al., the purpose of this process is “to reduce data to an intelligible and interpretable form so that the relations of research problems can be studied, tested and conclusion drawn” (2002:223). This is what was carried out through this chapter and is summarised in Table 5.63.

The results obtained from the qualitative data—semi-structured interviews—are be reported in the next chapter in order to triangulate the quantitative findings, as well as to provide a logical synthesis between the quantitative and the qualitative data within the context of the research questions.



## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **6.1. INTRODUCTION**

After categorising and quantifying the academic writing strategies employed by higher education (HE) students in Chapter 5, describing the actual experiences of the participants in their own words is the next logical step (Ponterotto, 2002). Therefore, this chapter focuses on the qualitative data accumulated through 12 individual interviews with HE students, which serves to triangulate the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire presented in the previous chapter. At this stage, qualitative data analysis is used “to help the account ‘live’ and communicate to the reader through the telling quotation or apt example” (Robson, 2002:456). Though this “analysis phase is exciting because of the continuing sense of discovery” (Rubin, 1995:227), Rubin further cautions that analysing the results of qualitative research is a very sophisticated and demanding process that calls for hard, concentrated effort, a clear mind as well as an intuitive approach to the data. If successful, the results can be impressive, leading to a deeper understanding of issues and their causes.

Unlike quantitative data, qualitative data consist of words and observations. Analysis and interpretation are required to bring order and understanding. This requires creativity, discipline and a systematic approach since “[t]here is no clear and accepted single set of conventions for analysis corresponding to those observed with quantitative data” (Robson, 2002:456). Thus, this chapter highlights the theory behind the analysis of qualitative data and the method of analysis for qualitative data, thereafter the data is categorised and the analysis undertaken.

#### **6.2. THE THEORY BEHIND THE ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA**

In qualitative research, more than one theoretical explanation can emerge from the data and therefore researchers have to investigate the utility and power of these explanations by cycling between data generation and data analysis until they reach a conclusion. Hence, data obtained from the

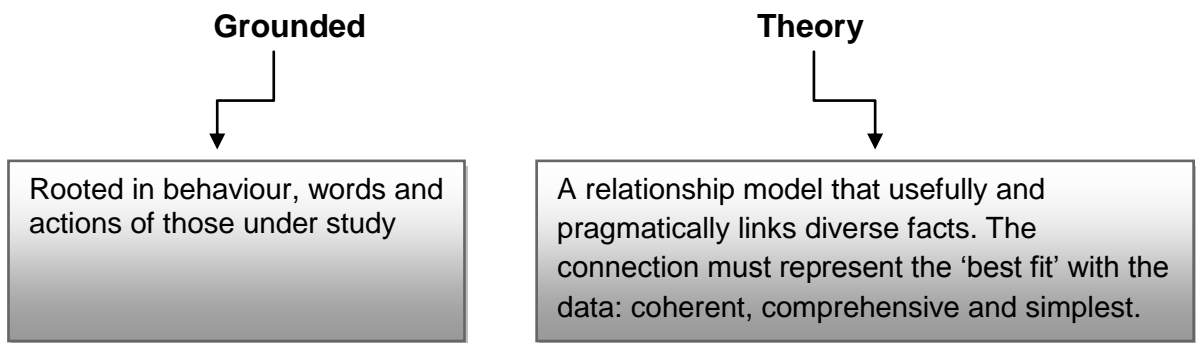
qualitative interviews “form explanations and theories that are grounded in the details, evidence, and examples of the interviews” (Rubin, 1995:4). Accordingly, the quality of the data is the keystone of the project’s success.

Qualitative analysis is interpretive—it explains meaning (Powell & Renner, 2003). As Rubin states: “The purpose of the data analysis is to organise the interviews to present a narrative that explains what happened or provide a description of the norms and values that underlie cultural behaviour” (1995:229). It is based on context—meaning is tied to a specific setting and population; therefore, meaning will change over time (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). It is iterative as analysis and data collection is undertaken concurrently. This iterative process is termed the constant comparative method, in which the researcher seeks to recruit more participants in order to reach data saturation through the comparison of themes in the transcripts.

In short, the research was carried out in the north east of England’s five universities at which HE students are engaged in academic writing in order to study the phenomenon in its natural setting. The research attempts to make sense of and interpret the phenomenon in terms of the meanings those HE students bring to it.

### **6.3. GROUNDED THEORY AS A METHOD OF ANALYSIS FOR THE QUALITATIVE DATA**

Since “the aim is to *generate* a theory to explain what is central in the data” (Robson, 2002:493), a Grounded Theory approach was employed. Grounded Theory focuses on the discovery of theory development rather than logical deductive reasoning which relies on prior theoretical frameworks (Charmaz, 2006). Figure 6.1 illustrates the name.



**Figure 6.1: Explaining the Name of Grounded Theory**

approach has relied upon the use of open, axial and selective coding mechanisms (Glaser & Strauss; 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It is argued that blindly adhering to highly systematized procedures with regard to analysis does not lie easily with an interpretivist stance. Charmaz (2006) outlines a number of analytic stages including initial and focused coding and provides an overview of axial and theoretical coding to be considered by the researcher for potential use in the context of data. Essentially, the researcher's data and emerging analysis determine the next analytic step as opposed to blindly following a set of pre-determined steps.

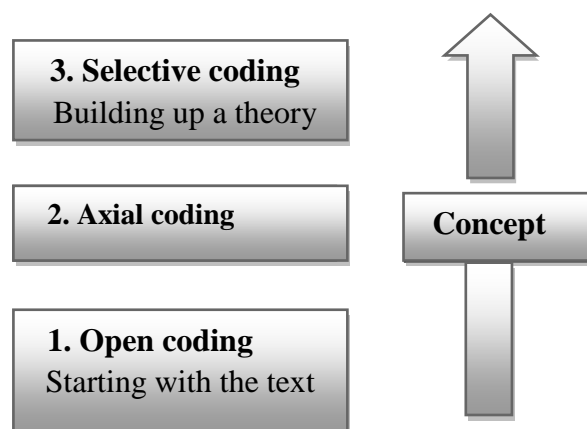
Glaser (1992) proposes that it is an objective method with the researcher playing a passive role in developing theory from the data. The themes are supposed to emerge from the data and as such no literature review should be performed. However, Charmaz (2006), a student of both Glaser and Strauss, proposes a constructionist version of grounded theory in which she suggests that the researcher is not passive but actively involved in constructing knowledge from the data. The data itself is a social construction of reality as perceived by the participants whose experiences are being studied. For the purpose of this study, Charmaz's (2006) constructionist version was adopted in which a preliminary literature review is permitted to increase the knowledge base of the researcher and identify gaps in the theoretical literature for the proposed research to fill. Thus, I acknowledge that I did not have a blank mind when I collected my data. Since I am doing academic research, there were assumptions and key ideas which came from the analysis of the quantitative data, as well as from the literature. Nevertheless, there were also emergent

themes which came out of the data which were really important and made me rethink my initial assumptions.

According to Robson, the researcher's task is "to find a central core category which is both at a high level of abstraction and grounded in (i.e. derived from) the data ... collected and analysed" (2002:493). "The researcher does not search for the exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories of the statistician but, instead, identifies the salient, grounded categories of meaning held by participants in the setting" (Marshall, 1999:154). In Grounded Theory, process goes "bottom-up" as researchers start from the data and end up with a model (see Figure 6.2).

### 6.3.1. Grounded Theory Analysis Process

As mentioned above, in using the Grounded Theory methodology it is assumed that the theory is buried in the data awaiting to be discovered; coding makes some of the theory's components visible and memoing adds the relationships which link the categories to each other.



**Figure 6.2: Grounded Theory Analysis Process**

### 6.3.2. Analysis Procedure

In order to be fully immersed and familiar with the data, the researcher conducted the interviews, and was the transcriber and the coder in analysing the data. The qualitative data was transcribed to help import the text file into the qualitative data analysis software programme, NVivo, in order to facilitate data analysis. Another reason for transcribing the interviews is that it was

easier to work with transcripts than tapes since data can be analysed line-by-line. As the analysis of data happened simultaneously with the data gathering, initial codes were applied to the next set of data, identifying emerging theories that were tested on subsequent data sets. Data which could not be coded were checked, and their differences and similarities were identified. In short, data collection, transcription, coding and memoing occurred simultaneously from the outset. Sorting occurred when all categories were saturated.

#### **6.3.2.1. Preparing data for analysis**

A number of stages were undertaken in order to prepare the data for analysis. First, the initial interview tape was listened to and the transcript read once without trying to develop codes. Then the data was re-read and preliminary notes added to the margins (See Appendix D). This was the initial stages of organising themes. Subsequently, the notes were used to develop a primitive system of classifications into which data was sorted—the broad regularities ascertained formed the first theme. See Appendix E for further clarification. All the interview transcriptions were organised into a similar format—written in the left hand two-thirds of the page. This allowed for notes to be made alongside the raw data (margins). Important bio-data about interviewees were also identified at the head of the notes to help recognise these properties later. Then, raw data were identified with unique codes for reference purposes. Back-up copies of all original material were also made.

#### **6.3.3. Open Coding**

Initially the transcripts were fractured—word-by-word, sentence-by-sentence and paragraph-by-paragraph. Then provisional dimensions and concepts (labels) were produced which involved a closer reading of the data. Coding took the form of naming a segment or line of data, using, where possible, words reflecting action—gerunds (Glaser, 1978) (see Appendix F). This was done in order to focus on the processes inherent in the data instead of regular nouns, the use of which may lead to the researcher making too-early “conceptual leaps” (Charmaz, 2006:48).

After finishing the first transcription, the process of open coding was started. Grounded Theory uses three levels of coding, initially open coding was adopted, this was the stage where the raw data—transcripts—were initially examined, and were coded through a process which fractured the interview into discrete threads of data. These data were eventually assembled and accumulated to form categories of similar phenomena. The process of open coding examined the data without any limitations in its scope, and without the application of any filters. Thus all data were accepted and none were excluded, this allowed for patterns to be found, which led to common strategies used by HE students that were of interest. As the categories began to fill, those that were most dense became core categories (Glaser 2001).

The codes were initially pencilled in the margin, but then computer software was used to help handle the data. Coding was in effect analysis and thus once coding was completed, much of the analysis had been done. The following guidelines were used:

- Descriptive coding was used in order to obtain the range of what participants said about a certain theme or sub-theme
- The codes were made to stand out (colours, bold, brackets, special symbols), (see Table: 6.2)
- Patterns in the data and the ideas that helped to explain the existence of those patterns were then looked for.

The researcher continued re-reading the texts and developing more detailed codes within the initial codes while highlighting relevant quotes. These codes were what Marshall et al term “Analyst-constructed typologies [which] are those created by the researcher that are grounded in the data but not necessarily used explicitly by participants” (1999:154-155). Then the text related to certain themes was removed and reassembled by codes on a separate sheet of paper (see Appendix F).

When the initial coding was completed on the 12 transcripts, a list was compiled consisting of all initial codes: this ran to 24 pages. At this point, in order to make the process manageable, all initial codes (from all participants) pertaining to one particular interview question (e.g. what might stop you when writing an academic task?) were put together (including all repetition) for further analysis (see Appendix E). Focused coding then commenced (and was ongoing) on separate segments of the data. This was the process in which those initial codes which appeared to be the most useful, significant and frequent were selected and tested against the data as a whole. This process draws heavily on the constant comparative method and involves the comparison of data with data and then data with codes. When this coding stage had ended in relation to all segments of the data, the analytic process was reviewed in order to decide if formal axial and theoretical coding were appropriate and useful in terms of the emerging analysis.

This was a time-consuming stage which involved manually working through the transcripts in turn to collect numerous quotes and examples of each existing category and to identify new ones. However, one of the advantages of working manually was that when the coding was written in the margin I was much freer to which bits of the paragraph were being referred. Initially, the intention was to use NVivo software to help manage the data. However, when in practice the computer software could not allow coding text unless it was highlighted. A manual system proved to be more efficient. Many categories were identified from the first transcript; thereafter fewer new categories were found in each subsequent transcript, as the proportion of new information decreased. The end point of this process was the production of an initial list of categories (see appendix F).

#### **6.3.4. Axial Coding**

The next stage of the analysis, axial coding, involved refining this list by deleting or combining some categories, followed by making connections between the categories and defining properties. For instance, themes were collapsed, others condensed and new ones introduced. In other words, axial coding included: describing properties of categories; searching for conditions,

causes and consequences; searching for strategies and interactions and building relations between categories. From the results of the first set of interviews, core categories began to emerge which highlighted areas such as what strategies HE students do to overcome any problems in writing, when they use these strategies, how they use them and why they use them.

### **6.3.5. Selective Coding**

The next stage, selective coding, involved the identification of a core category or general themes from which the theory arose. As core categories became apparent, the third level of coding, selective coding, was introduced. Selective coding allows filtering and the coding of data that were determined to be more relevant to the emerging concepts. When a core category was identified, coding any sentences that did not relate to it ceased as coding was done only for the core category, its connected categories and the properties of both. Therefore, subsequent interviews became increasingly focused, as did the coding, the retrieved data were relevant only to the unfolding social process.

### **6.3.6. Theoretical Coding**

The final stage of coding was the theoretical coding. "Categories are saturated when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of your theoretical categories" (Charmaz, 2006:113). Saturation is both a peculiarity and strength of Grounded Theory. Unlike other methods of qualitative analysis which acquire rigour through multiple levels of confirmation or triangulation (Mertens, 1998), Grounded Theory builds an analytical case by constantly seeking new categories of evidence. Eventually, at a certain stage in the data collection, a point is reached where no new data results from additional data collection; this is the point of saturation: "One keeps on collecting data until one receives only already known statements" (Seldén, 2005:124). Theoretical coding examines these saturated categories and provides the researcher with analytical criteria which assists in the development of conceptual relationships between categories and their relevance to the literature (Glaser 1978, 1992). As the coding procedure before this phase worked to fracture the data and cluster them according to abstract similarity, theoretical coding was saturated after 12 interviews and



therefore no further interviews were necessary (See Appendix F for a list of theoretical saturation).

### **6.3.7. Memoing**

As the researcher was thinking about the study formally and informally memos were kept—notes about any thoughts and feelings associated with the research. This served as a way to separate bias from analysis, as suggested by Marshall et al (1999). Cards were used for memoing to note hypothesis about categories and particularly about relationships between categories. These cards were used to note down any theoretical ideas that came to mind as they are easy to sort and to keep track of theoretical thinking while coding. A large number of memos accumulated as the core category and the categories related to it became saturated. A lower inference approach, which is more inductive and uses the language of the interviewees, was used because it helped the researcher to be in a more solid ground. Nevertheless, the theoretical concepts contained in these memos were used in the discussion chapter in which the qualitative findings are interpreted and compared to the literature.

## **6.4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

All the background information recorded for the 12 interviews is recorded in Table 6.1.

**Table 6.1: Background Information of the Participants**

Part.	Gender	Nationality	Age	Native language	University	Degree prospect	Major	Length of residence	IELTS
Kamal	M	Libyan	38	Arabic	Newcastle	MA	Education	2 years	6.5
Ahmad	M	Libyan	46	Arabic	Sunderland	PhD	Education	1 year	NG
Laila	F	Libyan	26	Arabic	Northumbria	MSc	Pharmacy	2 years	8
Asma	F	Libyan	35	Arabic	Durham	PhD	Translation	5 years	5
Wong	M	Chinese	30	Chinese	Sunderland	PhD	Computing	3 years	6.5
Lee	M	Chinese	32	Chinese	Sunderland	MA	TESOL	1 year	6.5
Maya	F	Chinese	28	Chinese	Durham	MA	TESOL	1 year	6.5
Han	F	Chinese	34	Chinese	Newcastle	MA	Education	2 years	6.5
Chris	M	British	33	English	Sunderland	PhD	Pharmacy	NA	NA
Aidan	M	British	52	English	Durham	PhD	Sociology	NA	NA
Mary	F	British	56	English	Newcastle	PhD	Education	NA	NA
Sally	F	British	45	English	Sunderland	PhD	Bio Medicine	NA	NA

## 6.5. SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

Building on the aims of the quantitative analysis in Chapter 5, the qualitative phase is exploratory and holistic in nature and aims to elicit as much information as possible about how and why participants use particular academic writing strategies. As this constituted a large volume of words, a summary of findings has been provided in the form of tables to clarify the main findings (see the following Tables summarising the findings). The strategies were identified and highlighted from participants' comments and highlighted in the tables in different colours: blue for British; green for Libyans; and red for Chinese (see Appendix F). Quotes from the participants are also provided to facilitate explanation of the strategies they use.

## 6.5.1. Planning

### 6.5.1.1. Strategy use when planning

When discussing their planning and preparation strategies, participants show a number of issues including: having a timetable, imitating, outlining, resourcing, and obtaining feedback.

**Table 6.2: Planning and Preparation Strategies Used by the Three Groups**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Having a timetable</b>	-having a time table(F) -setting deadlines (M)		
<b>Imitating</b>		-adopting and adjusting a similar plan (M)	-looking at a model (F), (M)
<b>Outlining</b>	-webbing (F) -outlining (F) -writing a draft structure (F) -doing a table of contents (M) -filling in titles (M)	-analysing the topic (F) -dividing the assignment into stages (M) -writing headings (M) -outlining (M), (F)	-writing plan (F) -figuring requirements (F), (M) -finding a way of writing (M) -generating ideas(M)
<b>Resourcing</b>	-reading the background (M)	-collecting relevant materials (M)	-consulting references (F) -understanding the area (M), (F)
<b>Obtaining feedback</b>	-discussing with supervisors (M), (F)		-asking tutors and classmates (M), (F)

#### 6.5.1.1.1. Having a timetable

NSE interviewees provided responses of having formal and informal timetables for their writing task. For example, Mary, a PhD student, commented: “with the Masters the timetable was very much according to when the assignment has to be in by. In the PhD, I did myself a timetable but I wasn’t completely neurotic about it.” An informal timetable was considered as the one which is flexible. Sally, doing her PhD in Bio-medicine, clarified: “I can do it in my mind, for example, I think I want to get this finished within the next two weeks ... but sometimes that slips so it is not kind of fixed timetable.”

However, none of the NNSE participants mentioned having formal or informal timetable for their writing.

#### **6.5.1.1.2. Outlining**

NSE and NNSE students reported using outlining strategies. They make notes, draw diagrams and do mapping to facilitate the organization of information. Mary, a PhD student, explained: “I did a kind of chapter block so I get myself headings of what I want to include within that heading.”

#### **6.5.1.1.3. Imitating**

NNSE participants took the opportunity to look at others’ work as a model in order to adopt similar plans as Kamal, a Libyan participant doing his MA in Education at Newcastle University, commented:

From my experience, all I do I just ask people who have passed this module and ask them to give me any supplemental materials first or any assignments they did submitted before, so I ask for their assignment and look through all what they did and from that I gathered the information I wanted.

Ahmad, a Libyan PhD student at the University of Sunderland, reported adjusting plans used by other students, stating that: “I try to find something which is very similar to my assignment and try to follow the strategies the writer used, I mean the plan.” This strategy was not mentioned by any of the NSE participants.

#### **6.5.1.1.4. Resourcing**

In addition to imitating models and looking for submitted assignment, NNSE participants reported relating new information to prior knowledge and relating different parts of that information to each other. They also consult references and use strategies which focus on understanding the topic. Lee, an MSc Chinese student, stated that to: “It is difficult for me to understand the area ... what is the title about ... so I ... read a lot about the topic before I start writing.” Maya, an MA Chinese student in TESOL, stated that “I need to read the requirements of the assignment very carefully. I need to figure out what the tutor really wants me to write about; you cannot go sideways”. A common strategy used by both NSE and NNSE participants is reading for background. As Aidan, a NSE, described:

There are a number of standard texts for writing which I have looked at methodology, to look at the methodology of writing. And reading roles and reading the backgrounds and looking for reasons why I have chosen the methodology I have, justification, plainly and simply. And on the other side of the coin, the rejection of other methodologies why I didn't do it that way, why I chose this.

#### **6.5.1.1.5. Getting feedback**

Both NSE and NNSE used the strategy of getting feedback from others but they approached it differently. In order to understand the topic, NNSE students ask for clarification from their tutors and colleagues. However, NSE students discuss their plans only with their study team. As Sally explains, "I write an outline plan, it might consist of few lines, a few bullet points and then I will go and discuss those with my supervisor to see if there is any area there I might be missing and I could expand it on then I will take it from there and redrafted it."

#### **6.5.1.2. How planning and preparation strategies were used**

To dig more deeply into the data, participants were asked how they use their planning strategies (see Table 6.3).

**Table 6.3: The way planning and preparation strategies are used**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Having a timetable</b>	-having a timetable according to when the assignment has to be in -being not neurotic about the timetable completely		
<b>Imitating</b>		-looking at submitted assignments -looking at a model -checking references they used	-looking at a model
<b>Outlining</b>	-having a core of what a chapter is, then aims of the different ideas -listing different elements to talk about -incorporating pieces into relevant structure	-thinking and writing the mainframe in Arabic, translating into English -deciding what comes under each heading -deciding the main idea of argument	-structuring my ideas -writing the title -reading the requirement word-by-word and line-by-line
<b>Resourcing</b>	-reading extensively about the background	-collecting information -reading and paraphrasing -writing summaries from articles	-consulting references -finding sufficient materials
<b>Rationalising format</b>			-thinking of the number of paragraphs -thinking of content -thinking of purpose of sequence
<b>Getting feedback</b>	-discussing the plan with study team	-asking a colleague	-consulting tutors and supervisors

Mary, an NSE student, explained how she used the web diagram when planning for a chapter in her thesis by:

I tend to use web diagrams so I have a core of what the chapter is and then the aims of what the different ideas and then comes what included within those ideas; as I read things I allocated authors' ideas onto this web and by the end I actually found I had kind of what this chapter needs to be.

In contrast, Laila, a Libyan student doing her MSc in Pharmacy uses her L1 to facilitate the writing process: “I start thinking about the mainframe or idea what it would be and then try to link the ideas in Arabic together and then translate them and then I try to put some English expressions about them.”

### 6.5.1.3 Reasons for strategies use

A range of responses were provided when participants were asked about the reasons behind adopting certain strategies (see Table 6.4).

**Table 6.4: Motives in Employing Particular Planning and Preparation Strategies**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Timetable</b>	-Getting mad without it -Creating pressure to meet deadlines -Getting that done by then giving you a longer time to do next piece		
<b>Imitating</b>		-adapting a similar plan -being not acquainted to find references -making use of strategies used by others	-imitating others' writing is good for me to improve
<b>Outlining</b>	-Writing my own ideas -knowing what to say -getting a big picture -meeting what's expected	-knowing what's exactly required	-not going sideways -writing is a way of thinking -making myself clear
<b>Resourcing</b>	-finding gaps -finding reasons	-avoiding plagiarism -having a sense of varieties -keeping points from articles and books read	-understanding the area
<b>Feedback</b>	-lacking confidence -lacking experience -sharing views with supervisors	-asking a colleague about the right words to be used	-asking for clarification -to know what is required
<b>Using L1</b>		-thinking in Arabic -activating prior knowledge -writing the outline in Arabic	-thinking in Chinese

Having a timetable allows NSE students to meet deadlines as “Creating pressure is good ... to meet deadlines.” It is also necessary to give them sufficient time to do the next piece of writing otherwise they “get mad”. Getting feedback was justified by lacking of “confidence and experience” by some and willingness to share their “thoughts and views with supervisors” by others. Sally stated that: “I do not feel confident really ... as well as my supervisor has already completed the PhD, he is experienced in writing thesis and he has been a supervisor for many students.”

The reason for using a web diagram and a table of contents is that “you get the big picture, you can see any holes to be filled or stuff that need to be taken out.”

NNSE students on the other hand justified copying or adjusting other’s plans by trying “to make use of the strategies used by others” and by being “not acquainted to find references and sources easily I need to check the references they used.” See Table 6.4 for natives and non-natives’ motives in adopting certain strategies.

## 6.5.2. Formulating

### 6.5.2.1. Strategies used when writing

**Table 6.5: Strategies Used when Writing**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Pouring ideas</b>	-translating ideas into writing -writing my own ideas -sink strategy -presenting results	-having the basis – introduction, body, conclusion -pouring ideas as they are, giving them to proof readers to check for making sense -dividing the assignment into stages, analysing each stage, writing everything about each idea	-writing my own ideas and making use of expressions used by natives
<b>Resourcing</b>		- reading and writing sentences and connecting them -reading and writing paragraphs and connecting them	-using sources -reading and writing



At this stage of writing, NSE students tended to pour their own ideas on to pages, thereby delaying thinking about language, structure and the readers until they are in the revision stage. Aidan, a PhD student in Sociology, mentioned:

I think I have what it's called, the 'sink' methodology? Excuse me, you just put everything in the sink... Yea! Whatever comes into your head. I just sit down, obviously with the subject matter in mind and just put it down. It is better to write rubbish than write nothing at all because there may be a few nuggets in that draught that you can actually use.

However, NNSE students read comprehensively, summarise and paraphrase articles to have a sense of varieties and to avoid plagiarism. They tend to divide the writing process into stages as Ahmad, the PhD Libyan student, clarified:

I divide the assignment into certain stages and what I'm going to do in the first stage and then when I move to the second stage what I'm going to do and take them one by one, take for example the first idea try to analyse it try to write everything about that idea and then move to another and move to another till I finish.

NNSE tried to seek appropriate models for their writing. They borrowed previous students' assignments to learn the organisation of assignment writing as they said it was very helpful to improve their academic writing. Ahmad found papers with viewpoints similar to his and studied the layout of those papers. He found papers that had similar structures with an introduction, methods, results and discussion section and imitated this format to frame his own thesis. Looking for the language structure was another reason for imitating native speakers of English's academic writing as Han, an MA student in education, explains:

Copying a native speaker's writing I think is very effective strategy. When you copy you just think why they use this sentence form ... when I write it myself what kind of words and sentence form I will use ... comparison is very important for me to improve.

#### **6.5.2.1.1. The use of spoken English and L1**

NSE students reported the influence of spoken English particularly when they think and try to map their ideas. NNSE students, conversely, said that they use

their L1 to help them compensate for L2 limitations and provided a variety of proportion of L1 use, including:

- “I use 60% Chinese and 40% English when I write in English”
- “I think may be equally in English and Chinese”
- “thinking in L1 [Arabic]most of the time”
- “writing purely in English”

#### **6.5.2.1.2. How spoken English and L1 were used**

Mary, a NSE student, clarified the way she makes use of spoken English as “thinking as speaking or reading first [i.e.] formulating the diagram first then describing and rationalising afterwards.”

Wong, who held a positive attitude towards using his L1, approached his written assignment by reading the topic first then thinking of it in Chinese. Lee, an MA TESOL student, provided more details on how he uses his L1: “I always translate everything from Chinese to English not written just in my mind; I have Chinese sentences then I translated them into English.” Ahmad uses his L1 when he is “unable to write or describe something in English; I have the idea in my mind in Arabic so I try to translate or transfer it to English.”

However, the NNSE group is aware of the problems of translating and transferring language and ideas from their L1 to their L2. They tried to eliminate their L1 interference by trying to think and write in English only. Ahmad, a PhD Libyan student stated:

I try just to suspend thinking in Arabic and try thinking in English. But I think these needs a lot of time. I try to read my writing from a critical point of view and try to criticize myself as a writer by pretending that this piece of writing is not mine and read it again to see beyond the lines.

#### **6.5.2.1.3. Why they use them**

When participants were asked to give details about the reasons behind implementing these strategies, different responses were provided (see Table 6.6).

**Table 6.6: Rationale for Applying Spoken English and L1 Strategies**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Using spoken English</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-thinking first then describing, very rarely the other way around</li> <li>-easier to think and write in spoken English</li> <li>-not having a clean slate as the mind of one who never spoke English before</li> </ul>		
<b>Using L1</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-it is easier to think in L1</li> <li>-thinking properly and in a more complicated way</li> <li>-can't escape from my native language</li> <li>-it is a habit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-it is natural to think in L1</li> <li>-lacking English competence</li> <li>-wasting time</li> <li>-thinking and writing in English makes writing understandable</li> </ul>

Writing for NSE students is a way of thinking so it is normal and easier to think in spoken not academic English. Mary elucidates this notion by saying: “thinking first then describing – very rarely the other way around.” Chris considered it to be “easier to think and write in spoken English as we don’t have a clean slate as the mind of one who never speaks English before.”

NNSE students’ responses were different. Those who believe in the use of L1 emphasised that: “the first language influences the second language; it is very natural it is not because of some reasons; there is no reason.” It also appears that L1 helps them to have a clear picture of the whole task as Laila clarifies:

I think it is easier to think in Arabic because it is my first language so I can think properly and in a more complicated way so that when I write I can imagine how the assignment would be after it is finished. Then I try to translate and add some English expressions or point of views from my experience here in the UK.

On the contrary, those NNSE who suggested that L1 should be avoided justified their point of view by giving two reasons. First, translating from L1 to L2 as argued by Lee is time consuming “because of time limit so I can’t write every sentence into my mother tongue or Chinese and translate it to English, so it’s a waste of time.” Second, interference from L1 makes their writing unclear for NSE as clarified by Kamal: “It is difficult to transfer your Arabic language into English the way that English speakers can understand it.”

## 6.6. CONSIDERING THE READER

To find out about the audience awareness amongst participants, both NSE and NNSE were asked for information about their readers, e.g. whether they consider them?, who their readers are?, and when and why they consider them? (see Table 6.7).

**Table 6.7: Considering Readers**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Considering readers</b>	-to some extent -always aware of readers -being conscious of audience	-thinking a little bit of readers -thinking of the readers all the time -considering readers	-rarely thinking of readers -considering readers

Lee, a NNSE student, focuses on his main writing difficulties—allowing his ideas to flow freely—and therefore avoids thinking about his readers. He explains: “I just think of myself and think of my understanding and my experience. No, I rarely think of my readers.” Mary, a NSE student, has a similar focus when she writes:

I think, probably my focus is more on what do I want to say and how can I say it. You have to pay attention to the reader because you have to think how they are going to read that but I think it is more that finding a way for me to express my idea rather what the reader is going to read.

In other cases, however, the focus is considerably different from those mentioned above. Aidan, a NSE explains:

I have not had to think about my readers but I have got to think about been too subjective, been bias because of my position as an inside researcher. So, yes I think I am probably more conscious of the reader because of that because I am an inside researcher. So, I always think about that and try to balance, I really got to balance everything and not to discount things that I don't like because it doesn't control. Yes! I always think about who is going to read this.

However, NSE and NNSE students who consider their readers acknowledged that thinking of their audience delayed their submission of their written work. Asma, a PhD student at Durham University majoring in translation, commented: “that is why I am late because all the time I am thinking of the reader.”

### 6.6.1. Who is the Reader to be Considered?

**Table 6.8: The audience**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Who is audience?</b>	-examiners -general audience	-general readers -experts	-tutors and supervisors -thinking of readers in general

Participants who considered their audience thought of experts, supervisors, and examiners as well as general readers to be the focus of their written work (see Table 6.8). They provided the following comments: “Actually, at the very beginning we were told that it is the supervisors who check our assignments; they are the only readers of our assignments so I have to be very careful about my choice of words and the style of writing.”

However, students who considered their supervisors and examiners as the only readers of their written work questioned the need for making the language of their writing explicit as they think that the reader is familiar with the content. As Laila, a NNSE doing her MSc in pharmacy, reported: “I wrote my graduation project for pharmacist who knew everything about the project.” Raising the same issue, Ahmad wondered the need to avoiding jargons since he felt: “In the end, people who are going to read it are either the examiners or people who are interested in the field of my study who are already acquainted with the jargon and the terminology.”

Students who held negative views about their topics are of the opinion that the public will not be interested. As Adam questioned, “Who is going to read this? Probably as you know yourself in your darker moments nobody is going to read this rubbish anyway.”

### 6.6.2. When to Consider Readers

Despite their audience awareness, differences occur at what stage of writing NSE and NNSE students think of readers (see Table 6.9).

**Table 6.9: When to Consider the Audience**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>When considering readers</b>	-at the editing stage -after written paragraphs -constantly being corrected for readers	-thinking of readers but not from the beginning -before submitting your work	-when writing academic things

Sally, for example, considered the reader constantly: “I am often reading and reading chapters as I have written them, oh well, I mean paragraphs as I have written them is that reading right? Is that making sense?” Mary, who considered her readers at the editing stage, revealed, “Probably part of the editing because I think I have to look at it and think is this going to make sense to the reader and I have to go back and rewrite the pieces.” Chris, however, says “the first draft without thinking of readers, then constantly being corrected for the reader.”

### 6.6.3. How the Reader is Being Considered

**Table 6.10: Strategies Used to Consider Audience**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Evaluating</b>	-re-reading written paragraphs and checking if they sound right -going back checking for missing things	-writing and reading and checking of making sense	-using correct grammar -good sentence structure -using academic English -being very careful about the choice of words the style of writing.
<b>Clarifying</b>	-re-addressing what is written -explaining things	-clarifying ideas for each paragraph -simplifying the language	
<b>Balancing</b>	-re-addressing what is written -explaining things	-being neutral -making ideas flow easily	
<b>Obtaining feedback</b>	-handing it to a proof-reader	-giving it to proofreaders to decide whether the message is clear or not -asking for feedback from others	-taking supervisors' ideas into account

For NNSE students who think of their supervisors as the only readers of their work, they need to consider their supervisors preferred style of writing. Maya, a Chinese MA student, commented: "I need to take supervisors ideas into account when I am writing academic things." When having a problem in expressing himself, Lee "will consult the books or the materials or dictionaries." To check for clarity, Kamal gave his piece of writing to another person to check. In addition to clarity, Aidan tried his best "to make it interesting enough for someone who may not know the subject, who will pick it and say ah! I know what he is talking about."

### 6.6.4. Why Considering Readers

Participants in this research provided a range of motives for considering their readers (see Table 6.11).

**Table 6.11: Reasons for Considering Audience**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Reasons for considering audience</b>	-people will read and criticise it -avoiding bias -to be understandable	-seeking understandable language for non-expert readers	-to please supervisors -delivering understandable message -being not confident in English

These included: “pleasing supervisors by avoiding American English,” avoiding bias by “present a case on its merits,” delivering an “understandable language for non-expert readers” and to avoid criticism.

Laila, who used to pay little attention to the readers when she wrote her academic assignments, became more aware of the importance of this issue after having an academic writing course in the UK as she reflected on her experience: “I’ve learnt that I can read a lot of topics which are different. They can be scientific and geographic and I can still understand them because they were not written for specific readers they were written for general readers.”

## 6.7. DRAFTING

**Table 6.12: Number of Drafts**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Number of drafts</b>	4-12	1-4	1-6

NSE students, who in general tended to produce more drafts, related drafting to the length of the assignment, what they want to say and the complexity of the written work. As Mary explained:

It varies on how well the writing is going, it varies on what I want to say some of the chapters I’ve done for my PhD are now about 11 or 12 drafts and some are about 4 or 5 so usually it would be 2 drafts before I gave it to somebody else to read to get a feedback from them but then you can keep going and going because what’s their feedback then that makes another draft and then I check whether I can redo it.

Conversely, Laila only writes one draft as she favours a get-it-right-before-moving-on strategy involving self-monitoring production for linguistic and



ideational content. As she stated, “I just write the first ideas and then I add on the first draft the ideas I want to add on the same draft.” Laila also prefers to handwrite the content rather than typing it into the computer. She clarified, “I feel more comfortable when I handwrite so that when I read my writing again I can find the gaps but when I read it on the computer I usually find it OK.”

### 6.7.1. Why They Write Subsequent Drafts

Various reasons were provided to rationalise writing subsequent drafts (see Table 6.13). Getting new ideas, balancing, seeking perfection and adapting feedback seem to have an affect on the number of drafts produced by NSE and NNSE students.

**Table 6.13: Reasons for Writing Many Drafts**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Getting ideas</b>	-getting new ideas -trying to be succinct -expanding ideas -deleting some sentences	-clarifying ideas -giving more examples -adding or changing ideas	-having a rough idea at the beginning -getting some new ideas -changing previous ideas -realizing previous ideas are not appropriate
<b>Dealing with language problems</b>		-detecting L1 interference -correcting spelling and grammatical mistakes	-correcting sentences -changing the structure but not ideas -improving the first one -detecting mistakes -detecting spoken English
<b>Seeking perfection</b>	-seeking perfection -reaching high standard of writing -learning to improve from each draft -bouncing -balancing		
<b>Adjusting feedback</b>	-adapting feedback	-giving it to proof-reader -adapting feedback	-native speaker’s feedback

Maya, the Chinese MA student, rationalised writing four drafts as:

I think at the very beginning you have a very rough idea of what you are going to write and two or three days later you get some new ideas I want to activate and may be one week later maybe your

previous ideas are completely wrong or not appropriate and I want to just change it completely if that's possible.

For Mary, who is in the editing stage of her thesis, stated:

Even the conclusions that really being the one that I've revisited and revisited and revisited because every time you revisit the literature review that can have a knock on effect on what you're saying and what you're discussing at the end and what you're discussing come backs to the conclusion. And this kind of balancing, going back and forward.

However, Aidan linked writing many drafts to the tendency of seeking perfection. "I refine and refine and refine, go away and have some coffee and come back and just say oh that's rubbish and just delete the whole thing. You know, a bit of perfectionist like that."

## 6.8. PROBLEMS IN WRITING

**Table 6.14: Problems in Writing**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Problems in language</b>	-getting typo errors -getting grammatical errors -thinking in colloquial not academic English	-getting grammatical mistakes -punctuation	-forming sentences
<b>Getting information</b>		-not used to find references or sources easily	-understanding the topic -finding appropriate resources -getting information from texts
<b>Mechanics</b>	-referencing -structuring -overwriting	-redundancy -coherence -connection	-referencing -structuring and ordering of paragraphs
<b>Writing to a high standard</b>	-not confident in writing at PhD level -writing in depth -thinking critically	-critical writing -writing in a complicated style	-writing like natives -writing a good conclusion -reasoning
<b>Producing a clear message</b>	-expressing myself -mixing up -adjusting new ideas in the plan -thinking in a different way -searching for the right word	-not having enough words to express my ideas -failing to give the exact word	-expressing myself clearly -understanding the topic -choosing proper words

A consistent theme among the interviewees whether they are NSE or NNSE, males or females, was that they “don’t find it easy” to write academically. “I have to arrange it systematically as I go.” “Committing those ideas to paper, this process I did not particularly enjoyed and because I didn’t enjoy because I didn’t find it quite easy I suppose and that made me not have faith in my power to do it as well.” Another comment suggested academic writing was traumatic since “lacking of sleep and stress make it difficult to keep my train of thoughts.”

Concerning language use, all groups reported lacking confidence in the use of language in general. For spelling and grammar Mary, a PhD NSE student, comments, “I did not notice the spelling. I read what I want to read and not what is actually there so I get a lot of kind typo errors; I get grammatical errors that I’m not conscious of at all.”

Finding the right words is an issue raised by both NSE and NNSE. Aidan, for instance, gets “very frustrated” when he searches for the “right word” and he keeps “talking hoping that it will come” to him. Ahmad, the PhD Libyan student, states his problem as:

Sometimes we fail to give the exact word because you know in English some words have more than one meaning; what goes in this context doesn’t go in that context; may be it has another meaning so we have to be very careful about that. This is one of the main problems I really face.

Finding enough words and using the right expression are concerns raised by NNSE students as Laila reported, “Sometimes I don’t have enough words to express my ideas; this is one of the main problems so I keep just thinking and thinking which just wastes my time and at the end I give up”. While Lee, a Chinese MA student, believed that “expressions” is his main problem as he stated, “my tutors couldn’t understand some of the sentences or something like that. It is my problem of expressions. It is not just one phrase or sentence but maybe the whole paragraph”.

Overwriting, however, is a problem expressed by only the NSE participants. They do not have trouble achieving the word limit; however, they experience

problems in cutting assignments down to the limit. Mary commented, “I find it extremely difficult to look at it and think what I’ve written in there that could be taken out.”

Starting a new chapter is considered to be the hardest part of the writing process. Sally, a British PhD student, explained, “I am OK once I am in mid-flow but actually starting it. Well it is easiest if I am actually focus and I know exactly what I want to write”.

Other problems experienced in the writing phase were ordering the ideas “when I am writing I don’t know which part should be put first and which should follow the first one”, referencing as it considered being “the most boring thing to do”, and lacking of confidence in critical thinking and writing: “I don’t feel confident I am writing to a PhD level. I feel I like writing to a master’s level.”

#### **6.8.1. Strategies Used to Overcome Writing Problems**

As shown in Table 6.14, both NSE and NNSE had problems in writing and struggled to put down what they wanted to say. However, the strategies they used to overcome those problems were varied.

To compensate for L2 limitations, a NNSE student reported using their L1. As Laila describes: “I try to find simple words, then translate them into Arabic then in English and then see if they match or not”.

To meet the word limits, NSE participants needed a reducing strategy. Mary reported:

I look at every sentence and save the words that you can take out and then look at the next sentence and see if that really need to be there go to each sentence that you save it ready to be there and see if really needs to be there and in that way I find sentences that actually saying the same thing but just in a different way and I mange to take points out and mange to reduce the number of words.

The reason for using tools such as software for synonyms is to help NSE avoiding repetition:

I use the computer thesaurus to see other words I could use. I don’t like to keep using same word over and over again. I try to find

different ways to saying it. Instead of saying argued, I try to search for the words that have the same meaning I can use within the context.

However, it was used by NNSE to compensate for L2 limitation.

Using endnote software for referencing was considered “ideal” by NSE participants.

Reading seems to be the resort that all groups use when having problems in writing. NNSE use the reading strategy “because the more you read the better you write”. It also “gives you different choices; you just pick up one of these choices and as long as you started then just you go”. A NSE participant described that “I very rarely stop reading even at work during my lunch break, there’s always a book open”.

To overcome his problem of expressions, Lee tried to learn by getting feedback from his tutor as he explained: “I read the correction of my tutors carefully; if I had a chance or time I’ll go back to her or to him and ask about my expressions. How do you understand it and then just compare it with my understanding. Mostly I make notes especially for phrases or lexicons.”

Having breaks and getting away from writing was a strategy adopted by NSE and NNSE when lacking ideas of what to write and when their ideas were mixed up. For coherence and redundancy, NNSE gave their writing to proofreaders whereas NSE discussed their reduction strategies with their study team.

### **6.8.2. Reasons for Adopting the Above Strategies**

When asked for reasons behind the choice of a particular strategy, participants provided a variety of responses (see table 6.15).

**Table 6.15: Strategies Used to Overcome Problems in Writing**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Thinking consciously</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-knowing where one has gone wrong</li> <li>-thinking consciously of what is it I try to say</li> <li>-developing a system to do the task</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-being careful about the negative meaning of some words within a certain context</li> <li>-suspending thinking in Arabic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-writing conclusions in different ways</li> </ul>
<b>Writing tools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-using endnote for referencing is ideal</li> <li>-using software for synonyms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-using software for grammar and synonyms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-using software for synonyms</li> </ul>
<b>Getting feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-asking somebody else to read it</li> <li>-asking PhD colleagues</li> <li>-asking for feedback from supervisors</li> <li>-having courses and workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-asking a native speaker to proofread my work</li> <li>-asking PhD colleagues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-reading my tutors' feedback carefully</li> <li>-comparing their understanding with mine</li> <li>-negotiating my writing with tutors</li> <li>-making notes especially for phrases or lexicons</li> </ul>
<b>Getting the flow</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-trying to reflect</li> <li>-telling the story instead of giving facts</li> <li>-arranging writing task systematically as I go</li> <li>-keeping writing till the word comes</li> <li>-just kept going</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-thinking and rethinking</li> <li>-reading my assignment carefully</li> </ul>	
<b>Getting away from writing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-leaving a task for a time</li> <li>-doing some displacement activity</li> <li>-getting away from office environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-getting away from it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- having breaks</li> <li>-leaving the text</li> </ul>
<b>Reading strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-reading some articles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-intensive reading strategy</li> <li>-looking for different arguments</li> <li>-picking up ideas from</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-finding similar information from books</li> </ul>

Issue	NSE		NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese	
		literature		
<b>Reducing</b>	-taking bits out			
<b>Compensating</b>		-finding simple words		
<b>Using models</b>		-learning from proficient writers by noting some expressions and adapting them -comparing what I've written to others	-copying natives for writing only not ideas	

For NSE, writing at the PhD level requires a conscious way of thinking in order to understand where one has gone wrong. Thus, they “need to arrange it systematically”. Using writing tools helped both NSE and NNSE students with referencing and avoiding repetition. Using L1 helped NNSE think critically. Intensive reading helped NSE and NNSE in “building up much information that will help you to start writing”. “Seeing all those articles written for this area helped me to get inspired”. Not taking tutors’ feedback into consideration results in “getting a lower mark” as stated by NNSE. Reading and comparing NNSE’s writing with that of native speakers’ was helpful as “when you read you note what the writer is writing so you can learn from them”.

### 6.9. REVISING

In order to progress with their writing, to check they are on track and to generate ideas, participants reported using the strategies of revising their writing (see Table 6.16).

**Table 6.16: Type of Revising Strategy Adopted**

Issue	NSE		NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese	
<b>Revising parts</b>	-revising is a continuous cycle -revising the bits, revising the whole	-revising systematically after each page -revising after being stopped	-through the whole process and in the end	
<b>Revising the whole</b>	-waiting till chapter is done	-revising the whole before submission	-after finishing the whole task	

All groups paid particular attention to revising their writing process. Since they typed the content into the computer directly when they wrote, the revision process was continuous except for Laila who handwrote her assignment.

Mary found the revising process extremely difficult: “I find it difficult to rearrange it or to think of it even in a different way I have to consciously think what is it you trying to say, do that at the basic one, look at this paragraph again and think of what is your end message and I found that really quite difficult.” However, Aidan revised constantly as he described:

From one day to the next, I can go back to it and say, not like that, do it again. So, just constant revision and sometimes, probably to the extent even when I had let it go, I think, I could have put that differently, which is a bit crazy isn't? You know as well as I do that there comes a time when you say, it's time to cut the rubbish. And get rid of it.

Laila's revision strategy was conditional: “I revise after finishing if I write it in one day but if I write something and stopped so I revise it again just to remind myself about the point in which I stopped.” However, Kamal and Lee revised their assignments “section by section not at the end of the assignment.”

### 6.9.1. How the Revising Strategies were Employed

**Table 6.17: How Revising Strategies were Used**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Making use of writing tools</b>	-relying on software for grammar and spelling -deleting -cutting and pasting -highlighting	-having software to check it	-using Microsoft Word for spelling -grammar
<b>Central revising</b>	-looking at subject content -checking the depth of what's written -logic -checking for missing things -re-reading -looking for ways to improve the text	-checking the content, reading it aloud -trying to read it from another point of view	-appropriateness of words



Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Peripheral revising</b>		-superficial revising	-revising the order of paragraphs -sentence form
<b>Making use of feedback</b>	-revising by myself -revising with supervisors -revising with my husband		-conferring with peers -asking native speaker to check for clarity

As for the other mistakes such as the expression mistakes, Han showed her “assignments to peers and even tutors and if they identify some mistakes in it just correct them.” Despite revising his writing systematically, Ahmad, a Libyan PhD student, also revised it five or six times before submission.

### 6.9.2. Reason for Revising Strategies Adopted

Aiden who relied on word processing, gave details on how he revised his writing: “Reading it, re-reading it and then how can this be better expressed. Delete or cut! Cut and paste is wonderful isn’t? That sentence doesn’t look right there, highlight it, dragged it in there, much better. I think word processing is a gift, I really do.” Han (Chinese), Kamal (Libyan) and Chris (British) also relied on a Microsoft Word “to check the grammar and spelling mistakes.” However, they were all aware that grammar and spelling checkers are not always correct. As Kamal cautioned: “Even software sometimes does help but you need to be careful with this because software is not human, it is not going to help you with every piece of information.”

Those who see revising as a continuous cycle follow this policy to ensure that their writing is legible. Revising also helps to make sense, identify mistakes, detect L1 interference and maintain the flow. Maya rationalised her constant revising by being a second language learner who “cannot write everything correct at once. I always need time to correct it.” Han had another point of view, as she felt: “we are human and we do a lot of mistakes. Sometimes when you write you’re not going to watch every single word because your assignment is not going to be a 100 word; it’s a 5000 word”. Aidan, a self-

confessed perfectionist, stated: “Again thinking about the reader, thinking about own development, thinking about, have I explained that fully? Just that constant need to ensure that that’s the best I can produce at that time”. Chris explained: “If I only revise at the end, there will be so many mistakes to be corrected so you don’t know where to start”.

**Table 6.18: Reasons for Revising the Whole/Parts**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Revising the whole</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-revising bits makes supervisors forget the context</li> <li>-revising the whole to avoid confusion</li> <li>-making sense</li> <li>-checking for legibility</li> <li>-knowing where the difficulty is</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-looking for the overall organisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-having a whole feeling of the assignment</li> <li>-local revising makes you forget what to write next</li> <li>-focusing on writing first</li> <li>-checking the whole for mistakes</li> </ul>
<b>Revising parts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-if only at the end there will be so many mistakes to correct so you don’t know where to start</li> <li>-thinking about readers</li> <li>-thinking of own development</li> <li>-fully explaining</li> <li>-producing the best</li> <li>-putting it differently</li> <li>-proof reading is expensive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-having problems in connecting ideas</li> <li>-not watching every single word of a lengthy assignment</li> <li>-getting the flow</li> <li>-finding gaps</li> <li>-L1 interference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-noticing and correcting spelling mistakes</li> <li>-checking for logic</li> <li>-revising the clarity of each idea –I’m not sure of my expressions</li> </ul>

In contrast, those who were in favour of revising the whole draft justified their preference by arguing that, “I can understand the gaps between all the paragraphs but if I read each paragraph separately I think it will be OK at sometimes but it is not well-organized in the whole assignment that is why I prefer to revise it after finishing.”

## 6.10. EDITING

### 6.10.1. Editing by Oneself vs. Editing with Others' Help

Different preferences were mentioned when discussing the editing strategies (see Table 6.19).

**Table 6.19: Type of Strategy Use when Editing**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Solo editing</b>	-editing by myself	-editing it by myself first -having no idea about proof reading before	-editing by myself mostly
<b>Collaborative editing</b>	-giving it to study team -husband -an expert -proofreaders	-asking help from experts only– not classmates, not any native speaker -giving it to a native speaker -negotiating my writing with others	-seeking help from peers or supervisors when getting stuck -seeking help from proper person -giving parts not all of it to native speakers

NNSE participants prefer to edit their drafts by themselves first, then cooperate with peers, or ask for help from more proficient L2 users and native English speakers. As Maya explained: “I think mostly I do it myself; if I got stuck, have no idea myself I will turn it to my supervisors or peers for help.” Kamal gives his assignment to “a native speaker to see if he understands it.” However, others, who tried to give their work to a native speaker, realised that “not every native speaker is good at writing.” Laila, the MSc student in pharmacy, prefers to “ask someone who’s an expert because I’m not professional in academic writing. I’m a more scientific writer so I prefer to ask those who know better about academic writing.” Before coming to the UK, Asma thought editing with others is a type of cheating as she explains:

Honestly, I do not use a proof-reader at all, even when I submit my MA thesis. I remember when my PhD supervisor asked me did you pick up a proof-reader. I asked what a proof-reader is. I haven’t heard about it before. I think it is illegal before but now I contact many proof-readers just after I finish I give it to them.

NSE students mostly edit their own writing. Whenever they gave it to someone else, the decision whether to take others’ feedback on board is still theirs.

Mary, the PhD student, explains: “Other people like my husband or supervisor will look at it and they will make pencil comments then it is up to me because I am the writer whether I use those comments or not ... so I do the actual editing myself.”

Aidan reported having a critical friend during his bachelor’s degree but for his master’s and PhD there was nobody to perform that sort of relationship as everyone is doing something different. What he did in his PhD is: “at least I will have a couple of go at it before I bring someone else to look at it which insist on putting ‘Zs’ where there are ‘Ss’, that is the idiosyncrasies of America and England.” However, Chris never gave his writing to anyone except his supervisors as his “subject is very complicated to give it to anyone.”

### 6.10.2. Reasons for Adopting Solitary/Collaborative Editing Strategy

**Table 6.20: Reasons for Solitary/Collaborative Editing Strategy**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Solitary editing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-having to be in control of my work</li> <li>-proofreaders don't know the context of my topic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-not every native speaker is good at writing</li> <li>-giving your work to a proof-reader to check is considered to be illegal</li> <li>-worrying about my writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-preferring editing by own</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborative editing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-not noticing spelling</li> <li>-being more dyslexic</li> <li>-difficulty rethinking</li> <li>-checking for “Zs” and “Ss”</li> <li>-getting different feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-not professional in academic writing</li> <li>-being more a scientific writer</li> <li>-to make sure the message is clear</li> <li>-getting feedback</li> <li>-being non-native</li> <li>-sharing ideas with others helps me to improve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-being not confident in academic writing</li> <li>-improving by feedback</li> <li>-being not sure of proper words</li> </ul>

Although both NSE and NNSE participants employed solitary editing and collaborative editing strategies, they approached them differently. The desire of being in control of their work, the complexity of the subject area and editing costs were the reasons for preferring solitary editing provided by NSE participants. For Chris: “It is difficult to proofread my topic. Proofreaders don’t

know the right context.” Sally found proofreaders very expensive. Whereas finding the right proof-reader was the issue for NNSE participants as Han explained: “Editing with other people is a good way to improve but sometimes I can't find the proper person to revise for me ... you know everybody is busy and I can't occupy other people's time.”

The NNSE participants who edit their work with others' help justified that by being “not native speaker of English”, “not confident” of their writing, proofreaders are “more experienced” and getting “benefit from other people's ideas on my work.” Asma gave more details: “Because you know when I give it for proof reading that means they are native speakers and may be educated or related to my area, so to be sure that everything I write is making sense.

### 6.10.3. Aspects of Language to be Looked at

**Table 6.21: Aspects of Language**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Linguistic aspects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-spelling</li> <li>-grammar</li> <li>-construction of sentences</li> <li>-breaking down long sentences</li> <li>-punctuation</li> <li>-using synonyms</li> <li>-quotations</li> <li>-italics</li> <li>-references</li> <li>-paragraphing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-grammar</li> <li>-linking</li> <li>-structure</li> <li>-punctuation</li> <li>-coherence</li> <li>-semantics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-spelling</li> <li>-grammar</li> <li>-sentence structure</li> <li>-semantics</li> </ul>
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-ideas</li> <li>-getting the flow</li> <li>-simplicity</li> <li>-clarity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-development of ideas</li> <li>-clear ideas</li> <li>-content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-getting the flow</li> </ul>

At this stage, the checks made by the participants were related to using the strategies of judging performance of the assignment. NSE students checked for depth and sense of their writing, and dealt with any linguistic problems they noticed. As Chris describes: “Content definitely, is what interests me. Content is what makes me starting writing. It is the most important thing; others are just

tools to do it. Then to make it understandable I look for spelling and grammar.” Aidan checked for “construction, grammar, paragraph, and sentences which were far too long and ideas.” However, Sally paid more attention to “the subject content and the depth of what I have written; logic.”

Alongside content, grammar, spelling and construction, NNSE students checked for an understandable message, a well-constructed argument and L1 interference. Laila who writes only one draft explains: “I have to pay attention to everything, the grammar, cohesion, coherence, linking words, everything; so after it is finished I try to see if it is well-organised and if all the ideas lead and support the main idea.” While Lee has problems “only in expressions”; Laila checked “mainly for the content”; and Kamal checked for:

Understandable language as long as your assignment is going to be easy to read and understand. For punctuation, I try to write short sentences as much as I can, but sometimes when you write a piece of information you transfer it from Arabic to English. Those areas need to be amended really. Sometimes you put the wrong words to express the ideas you want to give to others.

#### **6.10.4. Rationales for Checking Content/Linguistic Aspects**

The explanations NSE participants provided for checking the content at the final stage were “to get the flow,” “to make sure it does make sense” and to “reduce without losing the argument.” Checking for linguistic aspects was justified by “breaking down long sentences,” “paragraphs are tidy,” “looking nice to read,” “ensuring everything is correct” and “checking for good quality.” Aidan explains: “When a good idea comes, you just want to keep writing it and writing it then you realize that the sentences are far too long and you got to break it down the pieces.”

A range of responses were provided by NNSE participants to justify checking for linguistic aspects. Han, a Chinese doing her PhD in education, detailed why she has to check for everything:

I think writing is a comprehensive thing, everything is very important for example small misspelling will give the reader very bad impression for your language ability. Grammar also very useful if the writing have wrong grammar then the reader cannot understand what you are expressing and the structure you know good

sentences structure can help deliver your end message so all of these parts are very important.

**Table 6.22: Reasons for Checking Certain Aspects of Language**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Linguistic aspects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-paragraphs are tidy</li> <li>-looking nice to read</li> <li>-easy to read and understand</li> <li>-ensuring everything is correct</li> <li>-checking for good quality</li> <li>-making sure I did it in the best way I feel I can</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-giving the impression of trustworthiness</li> <li>-making sure the message is there in an understandable way</li> <li>-breaking down long sentences</li> <li>-seeking understandable language</li> <li>-being a non-native speaker</li> <li>-making silly mistakes</li> <li>-writing in English while thinking in Arabic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-grammatical mistakes cannot be tested by Microsoft</li> <li>-eliminating mistakes hated by supervisors</li> <li>-spelling mistakes give bad impression about your language ability</li> <li>-grammatical mistakes prevent readers understanding the message</li> <li>-good sentence structure ensuring delivery of the message in the right way</li> <li>-ensuring everything is correct</li> <li>-being not confident in these aspects</li> </ul>
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-reducing without losing the argument</li> <li>-making sense to readers</li> <li>-avoiding massive big chunks</li> <li>-content is what interests me</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-amending translated ideas and language</li> </ul>	

Maya and Wong, who specifically checked for grammatical mistakes, rationalised this approach by arguing “grammatical mistakes in writing sometimes cannot be tested by Microsoft” and there are the mistakes “specially hated by supervisors.” While Ahmad, a PhD student assumed:

“Because I’m not a native speaker so I should look at the language. Sometimes we commit very silly mistakes which don’t mean; we don’t know these things. But when we write in English we just think in Arabic and therefore commit some grammatical mistakes.”

Raising the issue of quality Laila thinks that: “If you read anything and you find mistakes you can’t trust it but if you read something and find it perfect in grammar, spelling, linking its ideas together so you can go with it and read it again and again.” However, Lee who looked only for content justified that by being “confident in spelling and grammar” while for Asma language was not her main concern as “grammar can be revised by proof readers but the content, the message, this is the main aspect and if it makes sense that mean you get the message; the exact message that you want to say.”

### 6.11. WRITING BLOCKS

Like everybody else, participants in this research get writers’ block now and again. Personal and external factors affect the way NSE and NNSE participants complete the writing task (see Table 6.23).

**Table 6.23: Types of Writing Blocks**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Personal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-writing continuously</li> <li>-not having a clear idea</li> <li>-not knowing where I was</li> <li>-getting stressed</li> <li>-being easily distracted</li> <li>-working for a long time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-unrelated ideas</li> <li>-getting confused by the amount of literature</li> <li>-getting upset for being unable to write up to the standard required for a PhD</li> <li>-my writing doesn’t reflect what is imaginative in my mind</li> <li>-getting stressed</li> <li>-writing for a long time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-not comprehending the assignment</li> <li>-conflicting ideas</li> <li>-finding appropriate words</li> <li>-writing long assignments</li> <li>-being not in the mood</li> </ul>
<b>External</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-interruption</li> <li>-noise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-noise</li> <li>-having other demands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-noise, music</li> <li>-roommates</li> </ul>



### **6.11.1. Personal Factors**

The main personal factors that stop NSE students are “feeling stressed,” “writing continuously” and “not having a clear idea.” Mary argues “I suppose I’m easily distracted, on the other hand, if I get on a piece of writing and it is going well then I’m not. I get the flow.” While for Chris “the process I found personally more difficult if I tried to do it continuously.”

In addition to the above three factors “conflicting ideas,” “finding appropriate words,” “getting confused by the amount of literature,” being “unable to write up to the standard required for a PhD” and being “unable to reflect” were only mentioned by NNSE students. Maya clarifies: “Sometimes I get stuck just because I can’t find the appropriate word; for example, you need to use a lot of words instead of says, states, claims I need to find a new word as a synonym to replace them.” Laila gets writer’s block when “I feel I wrote too much to the extent that I can’t write with the same efficiency so I’ll stop writing.”

### **6.11.2. External Factors**

Interruption and noise stop both groups from completing the writing task. For Mary the effect of the interruption is a relative matter: “If it is just a phone call or something then I would just go back reread what I just being writing and just go back into it. If it was, say, my husband coming saying can we have lunch that kind of disruption could take longer.” Finding the time for writing is a concern shared by NSE and NNSE students. For Aidan and Laila “it is difficult for me because there are other demands at home.”

### **6.11.3 Strategies Used to Avoid Blocking**

#### **6.11.3.1. Coping with individual factors**

When getting stuck, Aidan thinks: “I am mature enough to just leave it, just to go away from it, do some displacement activity or leave it all alone.” When she could not concentrate on her current writing Mary reported that:

I quickly decided if you really were sitting at the computer thinking I don’t want be doing this then that was the signal to go and do something else and then go back to it or even do a bit of reading around the subject or play with a diagram or something else instead

of trying to write. Quite a lot of ideas and ways of saying things came to me when I was actually doing something else.

To deal with the intensive pressure of academic writing, Chris tries to “see a friend to refresh my mind, taking time out, taking breaks, sleeping, leaving it to next day but not sitting at my computer till finish.” Laila tries to “do anything interesting: watching TV or surfing the web, anything, then I come back to start afresh.” While Ahmad tries to “relax, go out, change my mood, then I come back and try to write again.”

**Table 6.24: Strategies Used to Avoid Blocking**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Displacement activities</b>	-reading around the subject -playing with a diagram -stop and think about it -highlighting relevant things from books and journal articles to find them easily -writing bits	-focusing on the recent publications	-figuring out the question with tutors and other classmates
<b>Overdoing</b>		-trying to write each idea and developing it in a separate paragraph then putting the related paragraphs in certain order to make sense	-reconsidering ideas -dividing the task -referring to some references
<b>Getting away from writing</b>	-working in the garden -taking time out -walking away -sleeping and leaving the task to the next day	-leaving the task for a while -watching TV -surfing the web -having a cup of tea -relax -going out	
<b>Avoiding distraction</b>	-writing at home		-using the university library

To avoid contradictory ideas in her assignment, Maya consults “some references to check which part of my idea is correct and which part is not and modify it to make it coherent.” To find her way through the sheer amount of literature, Asma goes back to “the source I get the information from and read it again and get the main message and compare it with the paragraph I think it is not making sense.”

Lee, a type of low blocker, tries not to stop writing once he started “because if I stopped I would need time to go back again which is difficult so I just wrote day and night without sleeping.”

### **6.11.3.2. Coping with external factors**

To avoid distraction and stay focused, Sally, a NSE, writes at home. Wong, a Chinese student, uses the Library seeking peace to concentrate. Laila, an MSc Libyan student who has two children, writes late at night when there is no interruption.

## **6.12. MEETING DEADLINES**

Both NSE and NNSE participants felt great pressure from their studies (see Table 6.25). Those who were doing their MSc and MA sometimes had to hand in three or four assignments simultaneously. PhD participants also needed to send their supervisors their work at arranged times. Concerning this issue, the difference in strategy use between NSE and NNSE students is interesting. All NNSE participants said they could not sleep when they had to complete their work, a strategy which was never mentioned by any NSE participant.

For NNSE participants, writing extensive PhDs and Masters level academic assignments under deadline pressure, in their L2, is a highly complex and stressful process. “I try to do my best not to leave myself to the deadline but sometimes the piece of writing doesn’t reflect my thinking, my image, what I have in my mind.” As a result, they use a wide variety of strategies. They worked late into the night in order to complete the assignments as Laila and Maya both reported: “I try not to sleep at night and just write and write.” “I overwork and ask for help from experts.” Ahmad puts himself in “a very hard situation and works very hard” as “deadlines exert a lot of pressure” on him. Kamal puts the deadline in front of him and tries to focus on his assignment by “stopping social life, switching off the TV and not browsing the internet.” Wong said that when the submission date becomes close, he ignores linguistic distractions, and concentrates only on ideas. Asma also tries to “omit other things and give the priority to writing.”

**Table 6.25: Strategies Used to Meet Deadlines**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Overburden</b>		-working better under pressure -suffering from meeting deadline	-working day and night
<b>Time-management</b>	-trying not to get close to deadline -learning to meet deadlines at school -dealing with assignments in time -avoiding working under pressure -trying not to panic about things by having timetable -trying to do my best -being organised		
<b>Rushing at the end</b>	-spending more time on the computer -rushing at the end -keeping doing it -putting everything aside and concentrating on it -basically write down everything I want to do	-making use of every minute -giving writing priority -ignoring other demands -stopping social life -switching off TV -stop browsing the Internet	-neglecting grammar points -concentrating on ideas - asking experts
<b>Keeping submission date</b>	-keeping submission date in mind - typing it on top or as a footer -keeping a plan for other chapters in mind	-writing the date of submission everywhere	
<b>Asking for more time</b>	-asking for more time		

NSE participants reported making timelines for themselves and tried to complete the required writing ahead of the schedule. Mary provided an interesting explanation:

Inevitably, you do have assignments kind of take you to the edge and it's just a matter of you've got to keep doing it you've got to hand it on Tuesday, therefore, you don't have a choice. You've just to put everything aside and concentrate on this. But I don't think I've ever, maybe I just work from my mind, I don't think ever kind of sit up all night and still doing the assignment that needs to be handed in. It's done the day before or even the day before that.

If they come to the end of the deadline, Sally and Chris reported “rushing at the end but never working at night.” Chris also mentioned “asking for more time.”

Aidan who has “never been the one to submit work late,” reported that his “master’s thesis was about a month early.” In order to meet deadlines he uses the strategy of self-management in terms of understanding how to successfully complete a task, organisational planning and setting goals as he illustrates: “I plan out what I am going to write and I keep it in my mind—the submission date—in fact, sometimes I even type it on top or sometimes I put it as a footer on the document, submission date is... to remind myself.”

However, Mary’s successful self-management strategy failed only at the editing stage as she describes:

I even got the writing more than finished on time. To be honest, editing has taken so much longer than I am anticipated. I thought the editing could be done in three to four months and when it's about a year and it is still ongoing so that has been quite surprised me how long this process has taken.

#### **6.12.1. Motives for Adopting Particular Strategies to Meet Deadlines**

NNSE participants used to work under pressure, studying “day and night” as they had to memorise things before their exams. Moreover, they “do better under pressure” as Laila explains: “I can find words that express my ideas in the exam better than if I have a lot of time.” They do not tend to start writing until a few days before the deadline as they need to read extensively as they need to “familiarise” themselves with the topic. A lack of L2 proficiency “doubles the time allocated for the writing task.”

In contrast, NSE participants attempt not to get too close to deadlines since they are aware that they do not “produce well under pressure.” Mary related that to school and time-management as:

I try not to get close to deadlines. Because I’m not very good at kind of continuously working, I’m not one of those people who can sit there all night and finish and submit and handed it at nine o’clock in the morning. I learnt that very quickly when I was at school. I needed to deal with assignments in time so I wasn’t under kind of pressure.

**Table 6.26: Reasons for Strategies Employed to Meet Deadlines**

Issue	NSE	NNSE	
	British	Libyans	Chinese
<b>Time-management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-being not good at continuously working</li> <li>-unable to sit down all night and finish to submit the work in the morning</li> <li>-working under pressure won’t work</li> <li>-stress makes writing difficult</li> <li>-not producing my best under pressure</li> <li>-trying to allocate more time to editing</li> <li>-having a time scale in my mind</li> </ul>		
<b>Overburden</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-I used to do well in exams</li> <li>-I can find words to express my ideas in the exam better than if I have a lot of time</li> <li>-to manage submission on time</li> <li>-lacking proficiency in writing in English</li> <li>-revising grammatical mistakes</li> <li>-keep on revising doubles the time allocated for the writing task</li> </ul>	
<b>Individual reasons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-being a calm person</li> <li>-being an organised person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-having children</li> </ul>	

Sally rationalised it by saying that “If I try to work all day then I couldn’t think any more, my mind just felt as it couldn’t cope with the ideas.” Aidan

remembered “the odd time when I felt a little bit pressurized ... I know that it wouldn’t work, I have to go back to it and do it again. So, I don’t write well under pressure.” Chris also does not work under pressure because “I don’t produce my best so, I tend to organize it.”

### **6.13. CENTRAL PHENOMENON**

Within Grounded Theory the central phenomenon is chosen from one category, a starting point from which to link the other categories. In this study the category chosen was “academic writing is difficult, stressful and traumatic for HE students whether they are NSE or NNSE; males or females.” This category provides the key information from the three groups and was chosen because it appears to be the central category that connects to all other categories. This category was mentioned with high frequency and was well connected to other categories. All the other categories and sub-categories were just ways to deal with its difficulty and complexity. Consequently, it was safe to adopt it as the core category.

As mentioned in the Methodology Chapter, the blending of quantitative and qualitative approaches did not occur during either data generation or analysis. Rather, these approaches were blended at the level of interpretation, merging findings from each technique to derive a conclusion. Hence, the result of the quantitative and qualitative analysis process can subsequently be transformed into appropriate guidelines, conclusions and recommendations. These will be presented in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS**

#### **7.1. INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter Five the results of various statistical procedures on the relationship between English academic writing strategies use and higher education (HE) students' nativeness, nationality and gender were described. In Chapter Six the qualitative data analysis and results were provided. This chapter presents an interpretation and discussion of the findings recorded in Chapters Five and Six. The focus of the interpretation will be on:

- Blending the quantitative and qualitative findings;
- Relating the findings to the original research questions; and
- Relating the findings to the existing literature and research studies.

#### **7.2. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS IN RELATION TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

The aim of the research is to determine patterns and variations in academic writing strategies use employed by native speakers of English (NSE) and non-native speakers of English (NNSE) students with reference to their nationality and gender. It also aims to find possible explanations for the findings. Hence, the quantitative phase of the research was mainly concerned with discovering the patterns and variations among these participants. The qualitative phase set out to explain how and why these patterns and/or variations exist. The next section discusses the quantitative findings and uses the qualitative findings to explain them.

The questions that the research aimed to answer are:

- Do native and non-native students use similar or different academic writing strategies, and if so, what are they?
- What is the relationship, if any, between the writing strategies used by HE students and their nationalities?
- What is the relationship, if any, between the writing strategies used by HE students and their gender?



### **7.2.1. Research Question One**

#### **Do native and non-native students use similar or different academic writing strategies, and if so, what are they?**

The first research question seeks to establish the differences and similarities between NSE and NNSE academic writing strategies use. Regarding this question, both similarities and differences were found between the two groups of participants. In the main their behaviour was similar and therefore the focus of the discussion will be on the more interesting cases in which differences occurred.

##### **7.2.1.1. Planning and preparation stage**

According to Banda (2003), writing coherently in academia is as much about what happens during the actual writing as the strategies the writer adopts before engaging in the actual writing process. In order to master the composing process, participants in the study, regardless of their nativeness, reported using a range of planning strategies. The quantitative results reflect a general tendency towards using similar planning and preparation strategies. Out of the three strategies in the planning and preparation process — organisation strategy, content strategy and feedback strategy — that were identified from the quantitative analysis only one was found to be significantly different between NSE and NNSE students. This was the organisation strategies where NSE students used the strategies more than NNSE students did. This can be inferred as writing being taught as a process for NSE and as product for NNSE.

Making a timetable for the writing process emerged as one of the themes during the interview stage. Also the item '*I make a timetable for the writing process*' was one of the items that occurred in the planning and preparation organisation strategies. From the quantitative analysis NSE used this strategy significantly more than NNSE (see Figure 5.5). Participants in the former category said that they learned to meet deadlines in school. The qualitative findings (see Table 6.1) support the quantitative one in that NSE tend to have a timetable for the required piece of writing; a strategy which was not mentioned by any of the NNSE participants. This lack of organisation

culminates in pressure and stress on NNSE to meet deadlines. This can be traced in the way NNSE were educated as they are more familiar with traditional exams than writing assignments. In addition, the absence of this aspect—having a timetable for the writing task—in the literature of L2 writing is yet another indication that NNSE are not familiar with it.

Items that related to outlining in the quantitative questionnaire were '*I make an outline in my native language*' and '*I make an outline in English*'. Both of these items featured in planning and preparation organisation strategies. There were differences in the strategies as found in the quantitative analysis, which were confirmed during the interviews. NSE and NNSE both used the outlining strategies but in different ways. While NSE stated they used outlining to generate ideas, NNSE use it to frame their ideas. This can be explained either by the intensive research conducted by NNSE at this stage of writing to familiarise themselves with the topic or their uncertainty about what content should be included and about how it should be organised. This was quite surprising given the fact that they are HE students and their score in IELTS averaged 6.0.

The themes that came out from the interview under resourcing constituted items under planning and preparation content strategies. These include items such as '*I consult references for more information about my topic*', '*I think of the relevance of the ideas*', '*I consider the purpose of the topic*' and '*I brainstorm to generate ideas*'. The quantitative analysis found that there was no difference in the use of planning and preparation content strategies between NSE and NNSE students. This is also in agreement with the interviews as very few categories came out from resourcing, and the few categories that came out are closely related, as shown in Table 6.1.

The themes that came out from the interview under getting feedback constituted two of the items under the planning and preparation feedback strategies, namely '*discussion with supervisors*' and '*asking tutors and classmates*'. Although, NSE tend to use their supervisors, while NNSE also tend to use their tutors and classmates, the quantitative analysis found that

there is no difference in use of the planning and preparation feedback strategies. This complements the qualitative interview as both NSE and NNSE both rely on feedback, albeit using different sources with the NNSE taking advantage of feedback from as many sources as possible. The point to be made here is that NNSE have more support networks, which is not the case with NSE who are more familiar with the education system and therefore worry less about not understanding what their work is expected to look like.

Quantitative findings show that both groups take the opportunity of examining a model written by a proficient writer. Although, there is no mention of this strategy during the interview stage by NSE, it appears to be a popular strategy among NNSE students. This is justified by NNSE students trying to make use of the layout and format of others' work, adopt a similar plan and check the sources used. Participants in the interviews who are doing their masters' degree reported looking for students who passed the same module in order to ask for their assignments for use as a model. This raises concerns that these students might model their assignments on those who barely passed their module.

Both NSE and NNSE took advantage of the opportunity to negotiate with their tutors, classmates and friends when planning their writing. Again the qualitative findings indicated dissimilar approaches. NNSE tend to discuss the writing topic with classmates or friends first; they resort to their supervisors merely for clarification in order to ensure that they understood the topic. Negotiating with their supervisors, however, is the first step NSE make to check if they are on the right track. The qualitative analysis again confirms the quantitative findings in that both NSE and NNSE use the feedback strategy but with two different approaches. While NNSE ask for clarification, NSE check if they are on the right track. A possible explanation for the limited degree of similarity in seeking feedback from others may be seen in relation to the concept of ownership. As elicited from their response to the interviews, NSE try not to discuss their work with others unless it is group work in order to avoid collusion.

Planning via their L1 is a strategy reported by NNSE. This finding is similar to Friedlander (1990) whose participants' planning via their L1 resulted in longer and more detailed plans and drafts, as well as in better outcomes. However, participants who try to avoid their L1 when planning expressed fears of making translation mistakes. They are also aware that translation is time consuming, which is consistent with the findings of Akyel (1994). Although studies such as Wang (2003) and Wang and Wen (2002) show that low proficiency L2 writers frequently resort to their L1 text planning, whereas higher proficiency writers are more likely to generate their text directly in their L2, one can argue this is not the case here as the participants of this study are HE students doing their masters or PhD degrees at UK universities. Moreover, even NSE participants who write in their L1 acknowledge resorting to spoken English when thinking and planning assignments that demand higher levels of critical thinking (Elbow, 2010). Despite the fact that language learners are often encouraged to think in English, there is evidence which suggests that combined use of languages assists complex cognitive tasks (Belcher & Connor, 2001; Dong, 1998; Woodall, 2002). Thus, the integration of both languages into the process of planning appears reasonable.

Therefore in the planning and preparation stage, NNSE were busy reading about the topic, looking at models, conferring with classmates/friends and supervisors in order not to divert from the topic; however this was not the case with NSE who set their own deadlines, generated ideas and checked them with supervisors. This seems to give an indication that NSE devote more time and effort to the planning stage.

#### **7.2.1.2. The writing process stage**

For all the five strategies under the writing process — content strategy, language strategy, organisation strategy, feedback strategy, and mechanics strategy — the quantitative analysis found no significant difference in their use between NSE and NNSE. This finding is in harmony with Zamel's (1983) study which indicated that L2 writers, both skilled and unskilled, write in a similar way to their L1 counterparts and that composing competence rather than the L2 language proficiency differentiated skilled and unskilled L2 writers. However,

several behavioural characteristics that could not be captured in the quantitative analysis came out from the qualitative analysis, the details of which are shown on Table 6.2. A detailed examination shows that both NSE and NNSE students used the same techniques but their approaches were different. Most of the themes that emerged from the interviews were also items in the quantitative survey. It can therefore be concluded that the findings from the quantitative and qualitative analysis complements each other in terms of strategy use.

As stated previously, the quantitative findings reveal a tendency towards adopting similar drafting strategies. This finding can be interpreted as differences between writing in L1 in the case of the British students and writing in the L2 in the case of the Mainland Chinese and Libyans which might be found in planning and revising strategies employed but for the formulation process both NSE and NNSE use a variety of strategies to cope with the writing task. It can be argued that pouring words on to paper in order to catch ideas is a real concern for both NSE and NNSE as it “is the only non-optional component of writing” (De Larios et al, 1999:14). The quality of the written product may be affected if there is inadequate planning or revising but, if the writer fails to commit thoughts to paper, there will be no written product at all.

Although the qualitative findings support the quantitative ones in terms of the strategies used by NSE and NNSE, the qualitative findings revealed differences on how and why these strategies were employed. In an attempt to look more deeply into the formulation of ideas in both L1 and L2, participants were asked to describe their behaviour when they actually write—the strategies used in text generation. As in studies by Clachar (1999) and Manchon et al (2000), the drawing on resources (words, phrases) from both L1 and L2 together for various strategic purposes while composing was acknowledged by Mainland Chinese and Libyans. Both referred to the need to reason initially in their own language before translating into English. The effect of this, as argued in Swain’s (1995) Output Hypothesis, is that the context of writing (particularly the time available for reflection and revision, the goal of instantiating ideas or communicating in formal text, and the necessity of

assessing hypotheses about the language before putting them down as a text) presents an optimal context to learn to use the forms of the second language, offering practice that may prompt people to convert their acquired competence in a second language into controlled, skilful performance (Swain and Lapkin 1995; Weissberg, 2000). Also, this is in line with Krapels (1990) who reported similar results in that L1 use in L2 writing has a number of facilitative functions.

Judging from their responses to the interview questions, NSE tend to initially pour their own ideas on to paper, while delaying thinking of language, structure and readers. They use the 'sink strategy' in which they put everything in the sink and later dispense with what is not needed. With the subject matter in mind they just put down whatever comes into their heads. This finding supports Elbow's (2010) suggestion that exploratory writing helps writers to come up with interesting ideas.

Instead of writing down their ideas promptly, NNSE are more concerned about surface errors and form (Spack, 1997). Flower (1985) and Elbow (2010) recommend that these matters of correctness and form need to be addressed at the revision and editing stage. NNSE also dedicate much attention while they write to the language structure, finding appropriate words and summarising and paraphrasing articles. This, according to Qin (1998) and Roca de Larios et al (2001), may hinder their attention to formulating complex ideas and impede their capacity function in situations of high knowledge demands. This excessive concern with form while writing is considered to be premature editing which indicates NNSE students' failure to apply a crucial composing process strategy that of delaying editing.

From the interview responses, the study also found that both NSE and NNSE writing is a non-linear, exploratory and generative process which is consistent with Zamel's (1983), as well as Flower and Hays' (1981) claim about the L1 writing process.

### **7.2.1.3. The revision process strategies**

Out of the five strategies under the revision process — Content Strategy, Mechanics Strategy, Language Strategy, Feedback Strategy and Organisation

Strategy — that were identified from the quantitative analysis, two were found to be significantly different between NSE and NNSE students. These are the revision content strategies and the revision mechanics strategies; in both cases NSE students used the strategies more than NNSE students. From the qualitative data analysis, one of the themes that emerged was linguistic aspects where NSE student mention things such as spelling, grammar, construction of sentences, breaking down long sentences, punctuation, and using synonyms. NNSE students mentioned spelling, grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, semantics and coherence (Table 6.17). Most of these items related to the revision language strategies in which the quantitative analysis found no difference between NSE and NNSE students. Again careful examination of the themes used in the qualitative analysis shows that both NSE and NNSE students are using the same strategies. Again the qualitative and quantitative analyses complement each other.

Another theme that emerged from the qualitative analysis is content where NSE students mentioned ideas, getting the flow, simplicity and clarity while NNSE students mentioned development of ideas, clear ideas and getting the flow. This seems to indicate that NSE students focused more on content than did NNSE students. As already mentioned, the quantitative analysis show a difference in the use of revision content strategies where NSE students used it more than NNSE students. This again complements the qualitative analysis which, however, highlights that NSE tend to use content revising in which their main concern is the subject content and the depth of what is written. NNSE, on the other hand, tend to use what the researcher terms peripheral revising in which they focus on surface structures. This is the result of former practice and teaching.

### **7.2.2 Research Question Two**

The second question is: What is the relationship between the writing strategies used by HE students and their nationalities?

### **7.2.2.1. Planning and preparation stage**

For all the three strategies under the planning and preparation process — organisation strategy, content strategy and feedback strategy —, the quantitative analysis found no significant difference in their use between the three nationalities. It seems that all the three groups are aware of the need for sufficient planning before they write, as a plan helps these students know where they are. Themes emerged from the qualitative analysis which confirm the quantitative findings of using similar strategies in general. It seems that all the groups are engaged in what Hayes and Nash call abstract planning. This is a type of planning that “leads to production of ideas, notes, and outlines that need to be expanded greatly to produce a finished text” (1996:43). However, in spite of these patterns in strategy use, the qualitative findings indicate different approaches on how and why these strategies are used. These are discussed below.

#### **7.2.2.1.1. Having timetable**

As mentioned previously only the British students tend to set deadlines for the writing task and negotiate them with their supervisors; a strategy which they learnt in schools. There is no reference to having a timetable by either Mainland Chinese or Libyans students. This can be justified by the way Mainland Chinese and Libyans were educated. For example, a written assignment is not a part of Libyan educational assessment which relies mostly on exams where the timetables and deadlines are set for rather than by the students.

#### **7.2.2.1.2. Outlining strategy**

Although the three groups use the outlining strategy, they approach it differently. British use it to generate ideas, Mainland Chinese to structure their ideas, while Libyans to frame their ideas (see Table 6.4 for more details). The reasons for adhering to these different approaches are likely to be that the British students use outlining to write their own ideas and to obtain the big picture of the assignment; Mainland Chinese use it for clarity and not to be diverted from the main focus of the research, while for Libyans it is to help understand the requirements of the research. It appears that Mainland



Chinese and Libyans are both aware that writing an academic assignment demands the integration of significant volumes of diverse information, hence they use the outlining strategy to help them focus and not to stray from the requirements. However, understanding the requirements is a real concern for Mainland Chinese students. They converse with classmates and tutors to make sure that they are on the right track. For the British writing an academic assignment requires a complex analysis and sometimes different interpretations of data, therefore they use the outlining strategy to generate ideas and focus on what is expected.

#### **7.2.2.1.3. Imitating strategy**

Another theme that emerges from the qualitative data is the use of the imitating strategy. This strategy is only used by Mainland Chinese and Libyans. Mainland Chinese look at models written by proficient writers for two reasons: to help them improve their own plans, as well as to familiarise themselves with academic conventions. Libyans on the other hand, rely on papers as models of organisation and as sources of content, as well as to make use of the references these writers use, since they are not familiar with finding appropriate references. They also look at submitted assignments written by those who passed the module to have an idea of the required standards. This seems again due to the fact that writing academic assignments is not in the Libyan students' culture; they are more familiar with exams.

#### **7.2.2.1.4. Reading strategy**

Another strategy which is used by all the groups is resourcing—reading around the topic. Although this strategy is widely used by the three groups, again the approaches are different. British read the background about the subject in order to find gaps and to justify their support or rejection of what is written in the literature. Libyans read extensively to obtain relevant information. However, instead of copying ideas directly from the relevant sources, they collect information, paraphrase it and write summaries from articles they read to avoid plagiarism. In other words, they use what Collins (1994) refer to as 'Read-Think-Summarize-Interpret' strategy. A strategy associated with

successful writers according to Collins (1994) as it promotes critical thinking. Mainland Chinese consult references in order to understand the topic and to acquire more of the written language. This later aspect is in line with studies of Myles (2002), Swales (1990) and Raimes (1991, 1998) who believe that exposure to a variety of genres of writing improves students' writing. They also use this reading strategy to generate ideas which according to Y-O Lee, Krashen, and Gribbons (1996); S-Y Lee and Krashen (1996); S-Y Lee (2001) is considered to be a cognitive strategy. Thus, the extensive reading strategy is the most regularly used strategy reported by the three different nationalities, although each group of participants resorts to it for different motives.

#### **7.2.2.1.5. Feedback strategy**

Although the quantitative analysis revealed a tendency to adopt similar feedback strategies, the qualitative data highlighted different reasons for adopting the strategy. It became evident in the interviews that the British and Mainland Chinese students take the opportunity to discuss their writing plans with others. While British resort only to their study team to discuss plans and share views with them, Mainland Chinese choose to discuss their plans with classmates or friends first, then tutors. This favoured use of social strategy by Mainland Chinese is also reported in many studies (Wharton, 2000; Yang, 1993). In contrast, Libyans tend not to negotiate their writing plans at this stage. A possible explanation for not collaborating and communicating with others is that writing is taught in Libya as a product rather than a process. This account is in line with Hong-Nam and Leavell who state that "culturally-specific strategy use may be a by-product of instructional approaches favoured by specific cultural groups as opposed to inherent predispositions based on nationality ... of the individual" (2006:3).

#### **7.2.2.1.6. The use of L1 and spoken English**

When planning a text or a part of it, Libyans draw on their knowledge of the topic, which seems to be developed through the activation of lexical access and retrieval processes concurrent with the generation of ideas. According to Cohen and Brooks-Carson (2001), Wang (2003), Wang and Wen (2002), Wolfersberger (2003) and Woodall (2002), it is precisely when generating

ideas that the L1 is found to be used most, as it appears to give faster access to the ideas stored in long term memory, producing richer associations between them. As in Friedlander (1990), Cohen and Brooks-Carson (2001), Wang (2003), Wang and Wen, (2002), and Woodall's (2002), Libyans also use Arabic when planning the organisation of texts by writing the outline in Arabic. According to the Libyan students, planning via L1 resulted in longer and more detailed plans and drafts as well as better products.

While Libyans reported writing the outline in Arabic (their L1), Mainland Chinese avoid writing in Chinese. The use of mother-tongue-avoidance strategy is consistent with Wen and Johnson's (1991) findings. Mainland Chinese approach the writing task by reading the topic, then thinking about it in Chinese which they find a major aid to help evaluate the need for writing. This awareness indicates the use of a metacognitive strategy by the Mainland Chinese group when planning. British use spoken English as they find it more spontaneous to transfer their thought directly into words. In contrast the L2 students are more likely to hesitate before transferring the thoughts into writing. This may have the advantage of making the statements easier for revision.

Thus, the variations in qualitative findings suggest that it is not the volume of planning strategies employed rather it is the quality of planning done that distinguishes the three groups of writers.

#### **7.2.2.2. The writing process stage**

Out of the five strategies under the writing process — content strategy, language strategy, organisation strategy, feedback strategy, and mechanics strategy — that were identified from the quantitative analysis, only the content strategy was found to be significantly different between the three nationalities. The content strategy includes items like clarity of meaning, logical content, use of examples, and remaining focused on the subject. The result indicates that the difference was significant between Libyan and Chinese students, while the difference in usage between Libyan and the British students and between the British and Chinese students was not significant. As no significant difference was found between the three groups on language, organisation, feedback and

mechanics strategies in the writing process stage, it may be said that the students recognised their supervisors' and tutors' academic demands as well as their perceptions of good academic writing.

From the qualitative data analysis, six themes emerged in relation to the writing process—pouring ideas, resourcing, the use of spoken English and L1, audience awareness, and number of drafts. These are discussed below.

#### **7.2.2.2.1. *Pouring ideas***

Despite their difficulties in the planning stage, the main struggle for the three groups seems to be in the writing process. During this process the formulation, translation and transcription of ideas take place. Thus, students attempt to put their ideas into a linear form through the selection of appropriate words from the mental lexicon by means of syntactic, ideational, or rhetorical constraints. In this element, all students experience difficulties.

When writing their own ideas, Mainland Chinese participants were concerned about the words used which have to be put together in grammatically correct and pragmatically appropriate ways. This means that they need to have large and easily accessible repertoires of L2 words and phrases in order to get their message across. In order to produce a text in an accepted way and have native-like usage, they try to make use of what Li (2009), Cortes (2004) and Wray (2002) call formulaic multi-word sequences. Coxhead and Byrd (2007) and Hyland (2008) considered these formulaic sequences as central to the creation of academic texts. The absence of such formulaic sequences may indicate the lack of mastery by a novice writer in a specific disciplinary community (Haswell, 1991; Hyland, 2008). As Mainland Chinese students appear to be aware that lacking of formulaic sequences is one factor in making their writing feel non-native and in order to appear to be competent at using these conventional sequences, they note down the formulaic sequence used by their NSE tutors, NSE classmates and other written academic examples. This exposure to academic discourse helps them use these formulaic sequences appropriately. However, a concern raised by Milton (1998) and Li (2009) is that a list of idiomatic expressions may lead Chinese L2 writers to overuse or fail to contextualise them. Exposure to academic written discourse

is what Milton (1998) and Li (2009) call for to help L2 writers understand the precise meanings, pragmatic functions, and structural qualities of such sequences within any particular discourse community. Instead of writing down their ideas quickly without delay, Mainland Chinese are concerned about surface errors and forms (see Appendix L). Flower (1985) argues that these kind of corrections needs to be left for the revision and editing.

Unlike Mainland Chinese, Libyans write down their own ideas whether in their L1 or in their L2. To make the piece of writing look native they either add the formulaic sequences or give it to proofreaders. For Libyans recognising a lack of lexical resources compared to NSE was felt to be a significant handicap leading to the hindering of the formulation of what is in their minds. This is specifically experienced when performing a complex rhetorical task (Perez-Llantada et al, 2010). In order to solve lexical problems when composing at advanced levels of L2 proficiency, Libyans (Lila and Ahmad, for example) resort to translation as a writing strategy in which they write the first draft in Arabic and then translate it into English by themselves. Consistent with Perez-Llantada et al (2010), a number of Libyans justify using this strategy by arguing that having ideas and sentences ready in their L1 and translating their writing from Arabic into English is less time-consuming than struggling to write those ideas directly into English. Because they are writing at the HE level, they use their time to generate ideas to meet deadlines. In contrast, those who write in English directly and try to avoid writing in L1 are aware of the negative effects of translating which may result in lack of readability and a poor command of English.

After planning, The British students start their first draft with a sense of urgency paying little attention to details or accuracy; a strategy which according to White (1988) is associated with good writers. They use what one of the British participants calls 'sink strategy' where they put down whatever comes in their heads about the topic then they pick the relevant ideas and dispose of the irrelevant ones. This strategy according to Elbow (2010) can serve as an efficient and convenient manner to finalise written production. The British students also face lexical problems when materialising their thoughts.

They tend to commit their spoken grammar to the page. When there is a need to improve their lexical options they tend to resort to a thesaurus to help find the right word. Therefore, it can be concluded that lexical problems are common to both L1 and L2 writing as similar results in previous studies were found. This suggests that a fundamental feature of all three nationalities' academic writing is the need to access and choose the necessary lexical items in order to express the writer's intended meaning in language and for the task demands to be fulfilled.

The qualitative findings again complement the quantitative ones. The difference in use between Libyans and Mainland Chinese participants exists when they formulate their ideas. Mainland Chinese students still read for information and look for formulaic sequences whilst Libyans either pour their own ideas on to the page in English or in Arabic and then translate to English.

#### ***7.2.2.2. The use of spoken English and L1***

Since writing in L1 is often claimed to be easier, quicker and allows more nuanced expression, L2 writers are considered to be at a linguistic disadvantage relative to NSE students. Interestingly, British interviewees in this study felt the same linguistic disadvantage relative to NNSE students as they do not have "a clean slate as the mind of one who has never spoken English before." The influence of spoken English is problematic for British participants. According to Mauranen, "academic English is not anyone's L1" (2010:185). This notion is also highlighted by Elbow who claims that when it comes to academic writing it is no one's mother tongue (2010). He further argues that writers "can begin with linguistic confidence and postponed any required alterations (2010). Thus, one can thus expect that advanced NSE students will resort to spoken English to help them when they have problems formulating ideas and feel linguistic restrictions. Importantly, the tendency to use spoken English found in this study has not been reported in previous studies.

In text-generation, finding lexical items in the L2 to express their meanings is one of the crucial problems non-native writers face, for reasons related to the availability and accessibility of relevant linguistic knowledge. However, L2

writers have a resource at their disposal: their mother tongue. This study supports Zamel's findings that "certain composing problems transcend language factors and are shared by both native and non-native speakers of English" (1983:168). Libyans reported using their L1 (Arabic) when writing in English. The qualitative data analysis reveals the use of three L1-based problem-solving strategies. First, to assess their lexical choices, they back-translate (Cumming, 1990) the problem item from English to Arabic. This behaviour was also observed in Wolfersberger's study in which participants resort to back-translations to "verify whether their text production in the L2 was in accordance with their intended meaning in their L1" (2003:361). Second, while engaged in text generation processes, they resort to backtracking strategy as a way of accessing the lexical items needed to express their intended meaning (Wolfersberger, 2003; Manchon et al. 2000). Third, to check appropriacy of meaning, they use resourcing strategy such as reference books, dictionaries and thesauri (McDonough, 2001:237).

The British students also use the backtracking strategy but for a different purpose. It is used to generate more text as well as to check back on the success of the match between expression and intended meaning (Cumming, 1990; Manchon, Roca de Larios & Murphy, 2000; Wang, 2003; Wang & Wen, 2002; Wolfersberger, 2003).

In order "to retrieve a better L2 word" (Waing & Wen, 2002:238) advanced Chinese students resort to their L1 at this stage of formulating text (Cumming, 1989; Lay, 1982; Qi, 1998; Wang, 2003; Whalen & Menard, 1995; Woodall, 2002). This use of strategy "contributes to better wording" (Wang & Wen, 2002:241). In other words, the most advanced students were still having recourse to their L1 for lexical concerns. The reason for resorting to their L1 could be that both the ideas and lexical items are available in Chinese but not in English. Moreover, they sometimes have the items available but are doubtful as to the correctness or appropriateness of these items due to lack of confidence in the L2 knowledge (see Table 6.6)

In line with findings from recent studies on language switching in L2 writing (Murphy & Roca de Larios, 2010; Ortega & Carson, 2010) which show that the mother tongue is relatively ever-present in L2 writing, the findings of this study reveal that, as far as lexical searching is concerned, even HE learners who supposedly at an advanced level of L2 proficiency resort to their L1 at different stages of the writing process.

#### **7.2.2.2.3. Considering the reader**

According to Flower and Hayes (1994) good writers constantly redefine their audiences and assignments while composing. Good writers also consider their goals and how they wish to affect the audience. This varies according to nationalities and individuals, since writers approach writing in a variety of ways. For example, despite the British students' awareness of their readers, they are only likely to consider them at the revising stage in which they rewrite in order to make sure the paper makes sense to readers. Libyans also tend to consider their readers at the final stage before submission. Nevertheless, the need to consider the perspective of the reader remains undefined as Libyan participants question the need for their writing to be explicit. Therefore, Libyan participants might assume and expect the reader to make the connection. This might be a sign of reader responsibility inherited from writing in Arabic (Uysal, 2008). Writers in Arabic tend to use an implicit style that allows different interpretations from readers. Although Mainland Chinese students consider the requirements of the intended readers, who are often the supervisors and tutors, when writing, they often pay no attention to the general readers as they are concerned with their own writing problems.

#### **7.2.2.2.4. Resourcing**

Unlike the British students, Libyan and Mainland Chinese resort to different sources to help them with their writing performance. This can be partly justified by their limited knowledge of vocabulary, language structure and content (Myles, 2002), as well as to gain inspiration from up-to-date information and language usage. This result is consistent with other studies (e.g. S-Y Lee, 2001; Krashen, 2001; Takeuchi, 2003) which claim that those who read more acquire more of the written language.



#### **7.2.2.2.5. Reading aloud**

Only Libyans reported reading aloud their written texts to remind themselves where they are and to look at their texts from another point of view. Reading aloud is likely to give them a feeling of an outsider who can read critically in order to discover mistakes and detect weaknesses that might be caused by L1 interference. This cognitive strategy is encouraged by Elbow (2010) who claims that reading aloud helps improving weaknesses in longer passages, as well as in organisation.

#### **7.2.2.2.6. Drafting**

After the first draft British re-write their assignments. British participants reported that they sometimes have up to 12 drafts of a chapter or assignment depending on the complexity of the task and the quality and quantity of feedback received. They also re-write in order to meet their readers' expectations (Flowers and Hayes, 1981). Writing subsequent drafts confirm Maimon et al's assertion that, "successful papers are not written; they are rewritten" (1982:61). By writing many drafts, the British students try to improve their cognitive structures; thus they adopt a strategy of constant refinement. As re-writing can aid thinking and problem-solving (Krashen, 2001), the number of drafts written by British shows their awareness of the contribution of writing to writing competence (see Table 6.13).

The tendency for writing not as many drafts as British do can be justified by the attention devoted to every sentence and paragraph by Mainland Chinese. The qualitative analysis shows that Libyans have the least number of drafts compared to British and Mainland Chinese (see Appendix L). Laila, for example, writes only one draft, a strategy which according to the literature is not associated with a good language learner. Flower (1988) and Hayes and Flower (1986), for example, consider writing as a complex cognitive activity which often cannot be successfully managed in one hurried draft. As perfection cannot be achieved by an initial draft (Boice, 1997; Rose, 1980), good writers are willing to revise. They consider their early drafts to be tentative, and understand that as they move from draft to draft they come up

with new ideas. In addition, writing an initial draft resulting into a writer's block, an issue discussed in section 7.6.1.

### **7.2.2.3. The revision process strategies**

Out of the five strategies under the revision and editing process that were identified from the quantitative analysis — Content Strategy, Mechanics Strategy, Language Strategy, Feedback Strategy and Organisation Strategy —, four were found to be significantly different between the three groups. These four are the revision content strategy, the revision mechanics strategy, the revision language strategy and the revision organisation strategy. For the revision feedback strategy no significant difference was seen between the three groups.

Content and mechanics strategies are used most by British followed by Libyans then Mainland Chinese. In contrast, language and organisation strategies are used by Libyans, British and Mainland Chinese in that order though the difference is significant only between Libyans and Mainland Chinese. It is worth mentioning that whenever variations do occur between the three groups, no significant differences are found between British and Libyans; the differences are always between either British and Mainland Chinese or Libyans and Mainland Chinese at this stage of writing. A careful examination of the themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis shows that both Libyans and British tend to use similar strategies. Again the qualitative and quantitative analyses complement each other.

From the qualitative data analysis, one of the themes that emerged was central revising (see Table 6.17) which contains items related to the content. The British students mentioned looking at subject content by checking the depth of what's written, logic, checking for missing things, re-reading and looking for ways to improve the text. Libyans also check the content, read it aloud and try to read it from another point of view, whereas Mainland Chinese concerned more on what the researcher terms peripheral revising in that they focus on the appropriateness of words, order of paragraphs and sentence form instead of ideas.

Despite mentioning that they revise for ideas, Libyans tend to revise their work at a superficial level focusing mainly on word use and grammatical corrections (Silva, 1993). They also revise little beyond changes in mechanics; Crowley (1977) found this type of revising associated with inexperienced writers.

British delay editing. They concern themselves with the formal correctness only after they are satisfied with the ideas they put on the page. The British students use a crucial composing process strategy, delaying editing; a strategy which is connected to good writers. The use of delaying editing strategy prevents them losing their train of thought. Although changes in mechanics are considered a premature editing, British reported more mechanics strategy use than the other groups.

A mechanical and surface level revising technique is reported by both Mainland Chinese and Libyans, although deep level changes are not mentioned. The only metacognitive strategy used in the revising stage is 'checking the product of writing'. Libyans reported reading their writing as readers not as writers (metacognitive strategy). Revising (editing) by reading aloud is more about clarity of wording than working out the thinking as it helps recognise if the repetition of words is effective or ineffective (Elbow, 2010). According to him, it also helps to detect weaknesses in longer texts as well as their organisation (Elbow, 2010).

As indicated by the quantitative findings, the main concern guiding Libyans' revision behaviour is vocabulary and language level which is consistent with Stevenson et al. (2006). These findings support research evidence on the most common errors marked by teachers when providing feedback on their students' compositions (Ferris, 2002).

As in Sommers' (1980) and Alaswad's, (2002) studies, revising does occur at different stages in the writing process. The three groups tend to revise at both micro and macro level. It seems that revising is a continuous cycle for the three groups. According to British, revising in parts helps with developing ideas and to ensure that these ideas are fully explained; detecting mistakes is much easier when revising at a micro level. Libyans revise parts to maintain

the flow, find gaps, detect L1 interference and to connect ideas. Mainland Chinese resort to micro level revising to help them correct spelling mistakes, check the logic, clarify ideas and to make sure of the appropriateness of expressions use.

Interestingly, the only reason Libyans provided in the interviews for using macro level revising is to check the overall organisation which is consistent with the quantitative findings. It is in this stage of writing when Libyans pay more attention to the organisation of their output (see Table 6.18). The British students revise the whole in order to avoid confusion, make sense and check for legibility, as well as to ensure no lose of context. Although Mainland Chinese tend to adopt micro level revising in general, they use macro level revising in order not to forget what to write next, to have a feeling for the whole assignment and again to check for mistakes. It can be concluded that the three groups use both modest and extensive revisions.

The causes of Mainland Chinese and Libyans' strong tendency to address mainly surface issues in their revision may be a result of three factors. First, it could have arisen from a transfer of their L1 revision strategies, which might be overwhelmingly concerned with low-level issues. Second, it might have stemmed from their imperfect command of English and the high probability of surface errors, as Mainland Chinese emphasise they do not have problems with ideas, their main problem is with expressions. Third, it might have resulted from L2 writing instruction in China and Libya which had emphasised grammatical correctness and diction.

The qualitative findings about the use of revising strategies by the three groups revealed in fact a more complex picture. British revised for content, Libyans revised content, lexical and grammatical elements while mainland Chinese revised mostly lexical and grammatical elements rather than discourse structure.

In fact, the findings of this research is in line with Porte's (1996, 1997), Hall's (1990), Whalen and Menard's (1995), Stevenson, Schoonen, and De Gloppe's (2006) studies which suggest that L2 writers' main concerns during

the revision process tend to be lexical in nature. In the case of planning and formulating, resorting to the mother tongue is a major aid helping with producing and evaluating what has been written. Conversely, there is no mention of the mother tongue in the revising stage.

#### **7.2.2.3.1. Reading aloud**

Only Libyans reported reading aloud to increase audience awareness. Elbow (2010) suggests that the use of this strategy helps to look at the product as if it is read by someone else. This strategy preference can be viewed at least partially influenced by the culture background of the writer, the writing instructions and the intended audience. Reading aloud is one of the features of teaching reading and writing; after producing their texts in Arabic, Libyan pupils are asked to read them aloud to the class.

Zhu (2004) suggests that one of the major differences between the skilled and unskilled writer may lie in their respective approaches to revision. The British students reported greater awareness of variables such as audience, topic and organisation, and are more likely to make revisions affecting the global aspects of their writing. According to Zamel (1982, 1983), these behaviours are coupled with skilled writers. However, Libyans and Mainland Chinese tend to make changes which affect the surface grammatical structure of compositions, usually at the level of the word, rather than addressing the deeper issues of content and organisation. This kind of surface revising was found in Pianko's (1979) and Hall's (1987) unskilled writers. The variations in revising stage can be justified by insufficient planning and time management, as well as procrastination because academic writing is difficult.

However, it was difficult to draw a line between writing, revising and editing as some individuals pour their own ideas, reread them before continuing to write, reorder, substitute and delete material and perform editorial operations while composing. This merging of writing, re-writing and editing again reveals the non-linear nature of the composing process.

### **7.2.3. Research Question Three**

What is the relationship between the writing strategies used by HE students and their gender?

Despite some variations (namely, organisation strategy and language strategy), the quantitative analysis of the differences in strategy use according to gender showed a general tendency for both genders to adopt similar writing strategies. However, in line with previous studies (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Kaylani, 1996; Watanabe, 1990; Wang, 2002; Sy, 1994; McMullen, 2009; Green & Oxford, 1995) when differences in strategy use do occur, female students in general reported using certain strategies more frequently than did their male counterparts.

#### **7.2.3.1. Planning and preparation stage**

For the three strategies under the planning and preparation process that were identified from the quantitative analysis, female students used them more than male students. However, only for organisation strategy was there a significant difference. For the other two strategies, (content strategy and feedback strategy), no significant difference was seen between male students and female students. This gives the indication that female students tend to be more organised than male students. Interestingly, this use of self-regulation strategy is the one that distinguished advanced and gifted students from regular students in Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1986, 1990) cross-sectional developmental studies which involved American students from schools for gifted students and students from regular schools.

Although there is no significant difference between females and males on content and feedback strategies in the planning stage, females emphasise the planning stage more than males. They also tend to take advantage of the opportunity to have a discussion with their tutors or classmates/friends more than their male counterparts do. In a British female PhD student's words: "After drafting the plan (few lines, few bullet points), I usually check it with supervisors for any missing aspects, expanding the plan then redrafting it. I like to share thoughts and views with supervisors, I don't like feeling lonely".

The interaction effect between gender and nationality reveals that British female students tend to use the organisation strategy more than Chinese female students, and this trend is the same for British and Chinese male students. Furthermore, Table 5.31 shows that Chinese male students use this strategy more than Libyan male students; while Chinese female students use it less than Libyan female students. Compared with British female students, lack of organisation strategies when planning for academic writing can be interpreted by writing not being within Libyan female students' general practice.

Libyan female students tend to use the content strategy more than Libyan male students. But this trend is reversed for Chinese students where the males have a higher score than females. There is strong evidence to suggest the interaction effect is significant.

Though not significant, there is an interaction effect between nationality and gender which shows that Libyan female students tend to use the feedback strategy more than Libyan male students, a finding which mirrors Toubas' (1992) observations in that Egyptian female university students use more communicative strategies than males. However, again this trend is reversed for Chinese students where the males have a higher score than females which is in contrast with Yang (1993) that Chinese females use more social strategies than males.

#### **7.2.3.2. The writing process stage**

For all five strategies under the writing process — content strategy, language strategy, organisation strategy, feedback strategy, and mechanics strategy —, female students use them more than male students. However, particularly for language strategy during the writing process, the analysis indicates that for language strategy difference is significant. Libyan female students tend to use language strategy more than Libyan male students. This trend is also true for British and Chinese students where the females use it more than males. This finding matches a tendency which already exists in many Western countries in that girls are manifested for their language and literacy skills than boys

(Cameron, 2009). These findings are in agreement with previous studies in that the comparison between male and female on language strategy use in general yielded inconclusive results. When the 302 participants were considered together, female superiority was observed. However, this slight advantage did not hold when participants were examined in their interviews. It is also important to note that, besides the common patterns found in the qualitative analysis, many exceptions and individual preferences were also found.

Female Libyan students use feedback strategy significantly more than Libyan male students. However, this trend is reversed for the British and Mainland Chinese students where the females used the strategy less than the males.

While there was some variability between male and female participants' scores for writing strategy use, no clear pattern emerged from the interviews. Moreover, those instances where female participants discerned better use of strategy such as delaying thinking of the reader until the revising stage, were subject to age, study areas and exposure effects. Hence, the study concurred with previous inconclusive findings of gender effects on language strategy use in general and writing strategy use in particular.

#### **7.2.3.3. The revision process strategies**

The findings of this stage of writing supports the popular belief that females are better language learners and provides evidence that in academic writing strategy use females are more competent than males. For all five strategies, female students use them more than male students. However, only for organisation strategy is the use significantly different (see Figure.5:6). Female students used the organisation strategy more than male students across the three nationalities. Gender was not found to be an important factor in using the content, mechanics, language, and feedback strategies, although female students used the content, mechanics, and language strategies more than their male counterparts for all three nationalities. This gender tendency in the revising stage reveals female students mirroring the pattern for good writers not weak writers.



However, while British female students used the feedback strategy more than British male students, this trend is reversed for the Libyans and Mainland Chinese where the females used the feedback strategy less than their male counterparts. This makes the point that it is not females do not always operate in better ways than males. The Mainland Chinese and Libyan males superior use of the feedback strategy is likely to be attributable to social and cultural factors, rather than cognitive or linguistic differences. For example, regardless their gender, Libyan students are not familiar with negotiating their writing with others, as a result of writing being taught as a product and teachers being authoritative figures. In particular, Libyan females would feel reticent about approaching male colleagues for advice or feedback. This finding, is very interesting, considering previous studies showing that social strategies (feedback strategy) are employed more by women than by men (Oxford, Nyikos, & Ehrman, 1988).

The results presented in Chapter 5 offer convincing evidence that different strategies are employed by male and female HE students. The difference in strategy use by the genders that emerges from comparisons within the whole sample was that females tended to make greater use of organisation and language strategies than males. Thus, female participants' superiority was consistent across all the three nationality groups, but except for the three strategies, the differences were not significant. Therefore, the findings of the study confirmed the hypothesis that gender differences do exist in the three strategies mentioned above. Thus, female NSE and NNSE learners are likely to be better users of academic writing strategies than are male NSE and NNSE learners.

However, a slightly different picture emerged from the qualitative analysis. Gender differences favouring females were found in relation to revising processes, number of drafts, apprehension, and self-concept, as well as on self-efficacy for self-regulation. What is more, the tendency to adopt different strategies identified from the qualitative analysis was less than might be predicted by pure chance as individual differences occurred between females amongst the nationalities. It would seem that individual variations concerning

writing are more significant than the actual differences in writing by males or females.

Regarding the gender effect on the academic writing strategy use, the finding of this study partly confirmed long-established and well-documented findings on gender differences. Females in this study reported a higher frequency of strategy use. They outscored males significantly on three strategies in the three different stages of writing process. One possible explanation for females paying more attention to organisation and language strategies is that females spend considerably more time than males on reading and writing (Unlusoy et al., 2010). In addition, not all gender and academic writing strategy use was found to be statistically significant, indicating that females and males followed, at least partly, parallel patterns. Thus, the quantitative findings confirm the stereotyped beliefs that females are good at language.

Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative analyses suggest that where gender differences exist on the writing strategy use, it is female students, not male students, who might be viewed as making more mature choices concerning the employment of writing strategies. From the quantitative and qualitative analysis, one can conclude that although females used more strategies which are associated with good language learners, the difference in use may have very little to do with gender itself. Rather, the writing self-efficacy and their value of academic writing might account for the difference.

### **7.3. THEMES EMERGED FROM THE QUALITATIVE DATA**

#### **7.3.1 Problems in Writing**

According to Zamel, writing for NNSE should not be considered a special problem as “certain composing problems transcend language factors and are shared by both native and non-native speakers of English” (1983:186). This is supported by the qualitative analysis which reveals that participants in the three groups find academic writing traumatic. A number of problems associated with academic writing are shared by the three groups. For example, transferring thoughts into writing is a concern for all participants as is finding the appropriate words to match their thoughts. However, a number of

problems are associated with certain nationalities. In contrast to British and Libyans, Mainland Chinese did not report any difficulties concerning grammar. This finding coincides with Dong's (1998) study in which NSE reported having more difficulties with grammar and mechanics than NNSE. This may be because grammatical errors in spoken English may be replicated in writing. It would also appear that Libyan and Chinese students spent more time than the British students studying English grammar.

For the British students, writing still presents a challenge. As Elbow (2010) argues, knowing how to do it does not imply it is easy. The British students referred to problems in editing, committing ideas to paper, thinking of the end message, reducing the number of words, writing in depth, referencing, adjusting new ideas in the plan, keeping the train of thought, and expressing results in an understandable way. See Appendix F for an exhaustive list of writing difficulties.

Mainland Chinese reported having problems in finding appropriate resources, understanding the topic, writing like natives, style, referencing, choosing proper words, forming sentences, structuring, and expressing themselves clearly. These writing difficulties are identical to those identified in Dong's (1998) study. Compared to the British, it is clear that they have difficulty with mechanics and vocabulary rather than content, which justified their extensive use of surface level revising and pre-mature editing.

Libyans also experienced problems in expressing their ideas, argument, redundancy, vocabulary, mechanics and grammar. Difficulty in writing an argument can be explained by a different rhetorical structure in their L1 Arabic which according to Kamel (2000), El-Seidi (2000) and Bacha (2010) tends to be more descriptive and subjective. Redundancy, a feature of Arabic writing, is a problem resulting from L1 intervention. Though not common in Libyan culture, they ask professionals in academic writing to proofread their texts. They also resort to the imitation strategy to learn about the organisation of arguments in English academic writing. A plausible explanation for such problems is the one given by Swales (2004) and Bitchener and Bastrukmen,

(2006), which is a result of insufficient knowledge of the distinguished features of the genre.

Because of the different problems experienced in writing, it is likely that the three groups employ different problem-solving behaviours. For example, writing too many words is a problem mentioned only by British, consequently, a reduction strategy is used only by them. The use of formulaic sequences is justified by the Mainland Chinese eagerness to write like NSE. Quantitatively speaking, British reported having more problems in academic writing and employed more strategies to address them. British seem to try to seek perfection while the other two groups try to produce the best they can in the time allocated.

### **7.3.2. Writing Block**

Like everybody else, participants in this research experience writers' block on occasions. Writer's block is defined as "an inability to begin or continue writing for reasons other than a lack of basic skill or commitment" (Rose, 1984:3). The qualitative data reveals that blocking can be caused by two sets of factors, namely individual and external factors. Individual factors are related to writing continuously, feeling stressed, finding the appropriate word, confused by the amount of literature, and writing big chunks. The external factors are related to interruptions, noise and having other demands.

To avoid blocking, British leave their texts for a time and undertake displacement activity. In order to start afresh, Libyans also stop writing and do something interesting. This strategy associated with good writers who understand the importance of short breaks that encourage incubation, new ideas and solutions to problems that emerge when writers leave their writing and give their minds a rest (Krashen, 2001). Though high blockers, Mainland Chinese try not to stop writing for fear of losing their place in writing. To avoid distraction and stay focused, Chinese use the library, the British work at home, while Libyans reported no strategy to avoid noise and distraction.

These results are consistent with the hypothesis that blocking is in fact related to a failure to apply strategies to the composing process. This is clear in the

case of premature editing and the failure to adopt a 'binge writing' strategy (Boice, 1994) or what Murray (2006) calls a "writing snacks" strategy in which writers write a modest amount each day.

### **7.3.3. Meeting Deadlines**

Meeting deadlines is a time management strategy which is expected from HE students. Failure to meet deadlines, according to Krashen (2001), result from the failure to write regularly. Students who undertake MScs and MAs sometimes had to hand in three or four assignments simultaneously resulting in significant pressure. Concerning the issue of meeting deadlines, the difference in strategy use between NSE and NNSE students is interesting. All NNSE participants reported working day and night to meet deadlines; however, none of the NSE participants mentioned this strategy. As mentioned earlier, NSE reported making timetables for the writing task to help them complete the required writing ahead of schedule. They seem to be aware that they do not produce their best under pressure. They appear to have learnt how to successfully complete a task, organisational planning and setting goals at school.

Libyans on the other hand, are used to work under pressure, studying day and night as they had to memorise things before their exams. Moreover, they believe that they work better under pressure. Chinese do not start writing until a few days before the deadline as they need to read extensively so as to familiarise themselves with the topic. A lack of L2 proficiency doubles the time allocated for the writing task. Interestingly, only as they go too close to deadlines do Mainland Chinese ignore linguistic distractions and concentrate only on ideas.

## **7.4. CONCLUSION**

The results of this study support many earlier research findings of both patterns and variations in language strategy use in general and academic writing strategy use in particular. Significantly, it provides an interesting picture of how and why different preferences of strategy use occur.

One of the findings that emerged from this study was the difficulty and complexity of academic writing experienced by HE students regardless of if they are NSE or NNSE. This indicates that L2 proficiency was not found to be an important reason

for adopting certain strategies. These participants were fairly proficient in L2 as they currently study in masters and doctoral programmes in the UK and generally have a good grasp of the English language. The majority have a 6.5 score in IELTS which is considered by many universities to be indicative of a proficiency level. Moreover, even the NSE reported having problems in academic writing and resort to different types of strategies to help them overcome academic writing challenges. The data also reveal that all writers, in spite of their advanced level of L2 competence, nativeness and gender had to work hard at some point in their writing to find the words with which they could express their intended meanings.

When revising their written texts, NNSE are more concerned with sentence construction than idea generation which indicates that writing in L2, particularly generating ideas might be the most difficult of all writing activities. This finding has already been discovered in previous studies of L2 composing process (e.g., Roca et al., 2001; Silva 1993; Whalen & Menard, 1995).

The L1 may affect L2 composing process. Previous findings such as Roca et al. (1999) have revealed extensive use of L1 at linguistic, textual, and ideational processing levels. The present study also revealed that L1 occurrence varies with individual composing activities. The use of L1 is reported in both planning and preparation process and idea generation but it did not occur in the revising stage.

In terms of the relationship between the common preferences and gender, strong and direct connections were found for a number of categories, but for the others the connections were not salient, as various other factors were influential in the writing strategy use. For example, setting deadlines and use of overall organisation were directly linked to writing education in both L1 and L2 writing classes. Despite a number of strategy preferences similar to those stereotyped in the literature, it is also important to note that, besides these common patterns, many exceptions and individual preferences were also found.

In the next chapter, conclusions, limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research are presented and discussed.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

#### **8.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is divided into six sections. The first one summarises what was involved in the study. The second section presents a summary of the main findings. The contribution of the current study to the academic field is stated in section three. Section four is devoted to pedagogical implications. The research implications are presented in section five where the difficulties experienced during this research and the limitations of the study are acknowledged. This section is also dedicated to suggestions for further research, and in section six the final conclusion is given.

#### **8.2. SUMMARY OF WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study was to compare native and non-native learners' academic writing strategies in higher education (HE). This comparison was made in order to determine similarities/differences in strategies employed by both groups as well as to provide possible explanations for the findings. The study also aimed to explore possible further effects, namely nationality and gender. The study was divided into two phases. The first phase, mostly quantitative in nature, was designed to determine 1) similarities and/or variations in academic writing strategy use between NSE and NNSE; 2) whether there is a relationship between the strategies used and the students' nationalities; and 3) whether there is a relationship between gender and the employment of certain strategies. The second phase was designed to dig more deeply into the critical issues identified in Phase I as well as to find out why and how similarities and differences in strategies use occurred. Thus, to answer the above questions, I used a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques including structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. In this chapter a summary of the findings for the research questions is provided followed by both pedagogical implications and implications for L2 writing theory, and areas for further research.

### **8.3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

In the first question I examined the similarities and differences between NSE and NNSE in academic writing strategy use. I found that out of the thirteen strategies identified from the quantitative analysis, three were found to be significantly different, namely, organisation strategy at the planning stage; and content strategy and mechanics strategy at the revising and editing stage. These findings indicate the general tendency of adopting similar strategies by both NSE and NNSE which is in agreement with Zamel (1976) and Taylor (1981). Although the qualitative findings confirm the quantitative ones, they reveal a more complex picture by indicating that even on occasions when NSE and NNSE use a similar strategy, they tend to approach it differently. I suggest that these differences in strategy use between NSE and NNSE are accompanied by different educational and cultural experiences and this factor needs further study.

In the second research question I examined the relationship between nationality and the writing strategies choice. The findings of the quantitative data are evidence that differences do exist: out of the thirteen strategies identified in the quantitative analysis, five strategies were found to be significantly different among the three nationalities. Nevertheless, the qualitative findings demonstrate that a number of other aspects such as educational background and L2 writing instruction and feedback also seem to play a role.

For example, having a timetable allows the British students to meet deadlines. It is also necessary to give them sufficient time to do the next piece of writing. Compared with the British students, lack of organisation strategies when planning for academic writing can be interpreted by writing not being within Libyan students' general practice. Hence, it is advised that EAP teachers can aid students in the awareness and development of this crucial writing strategy which may influence HE students' approach to their own writing.

The qualitative findings show that writing particularly in PhD level can be lonely and usually difficult to have a critical friend to perform as a proof-reader



since everyone is doing something different. Moreover, sometimes the subject is very complicated to be given to anyone. Nevertheless, the British and Mainland Chinese students take the opportunity to discuss at least their writing plans with others. In contrast, Libyans tend not to negotiate their writing plans at this stage. A possible explanation for not collaborating and communicating with others is that writing is taught in Libya as a product rather than a process. Moreover, some participants think peer work is a type of cheating as they are not familiar with peer and group work. Considering the educational benefits of students working cooperatively in groups, Libyan student need to be encouraged and aided on how to use these strategies effectively.

British use spoken English as they find it more spontaneous to transfer their thought directly into words. In contrast Libyans and Mainland Chinese students are more likely to hesitate before transferring the thoughts into writing. This may have the advantage of making the statements easier for revision. One can thus expect that advanced NSE students will resort to spoken English to help them when they have problems formulating ideas and feel linguistic restrictions. Importantly, the tendency to use spoken English found in this study has not been reported in previous studies.

However, Libyans and Mainland Chinese tend to make changes which affect the surface grammatical structure of compositions, usually at the level of the word, rather than addressing the deeper issues of content and organisation. The variations in revising stage can be justified by insufficient planning and time management, as well as procrastination because academic writing is difficult.

The British students start their first draft with a sense of urgency paying little attention to details or accuracy. Libyan participants question the need for their writing to be explicit. Therefore, Libyan participants might assume and expect the reader to make the connection. This might be a sign of reader responsibility inherited from writing in Arabic. Writers in Arabic tend to use an implicit style that allows different interpretations from readers. Although

Mainland Chinese students consider the requirements of the intended readers, who are often the supervisors and tutors, when writing, they often pay no attention to the general readers as they are concerned with their own writing problems.

The tendency for writing not as many drafts as British do can be justified by the attention devoted to every sentence and paragraph by Mainland Chinese. Libyans have the least number of drafts compared to British and Mainland Chinese.

The British students use a crucial composing process strategy, delaying editing; a strategy which is connected to good writers. The use of delaying editing strategy prevents them losing their train of thought. As indicated by the quantitative findings, the main concern guiding Libyans and Mainland Chinese' revision behaviour is vocabulary and language level. This might have resulted from L2 writing instruction in China and Libya which had emphasised grammatical correctness and diction.

The third research question examined differences in reported frequency of writing strategy according to gender; differences were found to be significant in two strategy types. The findings were in harmony with the overall findings in literature; that is, female students employ more learning strategies and/or employ strategies more effectively. However, not all gender and academic writing strategy use was found to be statistically significant, indicating that females and males followed, at least partly, parallel patterns, with only three items out of thirteen being statistically significant different. Although the quantitative findings confirm the stereotyped beliefs that females are good at language, it is important to note that apart from gender, a number of social, cultural, contextual, educational and individual factors can be responsible for the variations of the writing strategies employed.

The British female students tend to resort more frequently to the feedback strategy which, in fact, reflects a general practice of the educational system within the UK. This trend is reversed for the Libyans and Mainland Chinese where the females used the feedback strategy less than their male

counterparts. The Mainland Chinese and Libyan males' superior use of the feedback strategy is likely to be attributable to social and cultural factors, rather than cognitive or linguistic differences. For example, regardless their gender, Libyan students are not familiar with negotiating their writing with others, as a result of writing being taught as a product and teachers being authoritative figures. In particular, Libyan females would feel reticent about approaching male colleagues for advice or feedback. This finding is very interesting, considering previous studies showing that social strategies (feedback strategy) are employed more by women than by men.

The qualitative analysis reveals a slightly different picture. Gender variations favouring females were found in relation to revising processes, number of drafts, apprehension, and self-concept, as well as on self-efficacy for self-regulation. What is more, the tendency to adopt different strategies identified from the qualitative analysis was less than might be predicted by pure chance as individual differences occurred between females amongst the nationalities. It would seem that individual variations concerning writing are more significant than the actual differences in writing by males or females.

Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative analyses suggest that where gender differences exist on the writing strategy use, it is female students, not male students, who might be viewed as making more mature choices concerning the employment of writing strategies. From the quantitative and qualitative analysis, one can conclude that although females used more strategies which are associated with good language learners, the difference in use may have very little to do with gender itself. Rather, the writing self-efficacy, their value of academic writing and cultural background might account for the difference.

#### **8.4. CONTRIBUTION OF THE CURRENT STUDY**

While there is still much to be learned about academic writing strategy use, the study makes several contributions. A significant contribution is to the body of knowledge in the field of patterns and variations in academic writing strategies employed by both NSE and NNSE HE students.

The study adds value by contributing to the issue of how little, in relative terms, is known about many of the mentioned strategies. Although there is a substantial body of research available on writing strategies, little attention has been devoted to how and why certain strategies are deployed. The study provides an insight into the little debated area of gender differences in language use.

The study confirms and expands on previous research on the effect of nationality on the choice of writing strategies by confirming that cultural and educational background account for the differences between the British, Mainland Chinese and Libyan students rather than their nationalities. In terms of the research arena in Libya, the study is one of the first to identify academic writing strategy use of Libyan students studying in a western context.

Finally, the results and recommendations of the study may provide teachers with an insight into the untaught strategies used by both NSE and NNSE. This is the practical value of the research to the pedagogy.

### **8.5. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The first pedagogical implication of this study pertains to the way students are taught to write academically. The qualitative findings show that all the participants did not learn how to write academically in a formal setting; academic writing is something they pick up from the amount of exposure to journal articles and professional papers. This study shows the need for changes in writing instruction.

This project may benefit the UK universities teaching postgraduates, particularly for doctorates, from any social or national background by determining what strategies HE students use in order to survive and succeed in the academic community, as well as how and why certain strategies were favoured. Knowledge gained from this study emphasises that there are clear lessons to be learnt about the informal and unguided way that most participants seem to learn how to write. It is noticeable that improving academic writing can result from a variety of sources. These may include other students' assignments as a model, but samples of a range of varying

standards would help to differentiate between good and bad writing. Efficient academic writing must not be assumed. There needs to be a concerted effort by EAP teachers to improve their methods of promoting more effective writing. I suggest that current methods are inadequate.

Consequently, the following two approaches of teaching academic writing which can form the basis of ways of training students in a more integrated or holistic method are suggested. These approaches are aimed to reduce the prevarication with regard to writing and are referred to as the 'sink' approach and the 'shuttling' approach.

The 'sink' approach involves pouring down whatever thoughts come to mind. Some of these will be included in the final version, while others may be discarded (down the sink)! With the 'sink' approach, the students tend to write down their own ideas on to pages, thereby delaying thinking about language, structure and the readers until the revision stage. I propose that this is an efficient approach as it incorporates all thoughts (in any language, spoken or academic) which result from all forms of research.

Given the heavy use of reading as a strategy to help overcome a number of writing problems by all groups, it is clear that reading and writing are not separate and a read-to-write approach should be strongly encouraged to make use of this strategy when instructing. This 'Shuttling' approach entails using a variety of sources in any language; it is a useful method of assimilating information. The 'Shuttling' approach may take place after the commencement of writing either to learn about academic writing or where more inspiration is required. Conversely, 'shuttling' could take place before the commencement of writing where general information is needed. Thus, writers involve in continual process of moving backwards and forwards until they are satisfied. I, therefore, suggest that this 'shuttling' approach i.e. the integration of reading and writing is strongly recommended.

A second major pedagogical implication of this study is related to the need for training all writing instructors whether they are teaching NSE or NNSE. As

indicated in Chapter 7, all participants believe that academic writing was not sufficiently taught. Therefore, there is an urgent need to address this concern by providing in-depth academic writing teaching in order to familiarise students with its conventions.

Academic writing courses for NNSE students are considered by many to be inadequate. According to NNSE participants, the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses did not meet their needs when it comes to writing as they maintain that professional conventions are not explicitly taught. This suggests that EAP tutors require further training with regard to the needs of NNSE students who come to the UK expecting to improve their writing skills in particular.

As can be deduced from the interviews, neither NSE nor NNSE students received proper tuition in English academic writing. NSE students were only taught how to approach writing in terms of an introduction and a conclusion. In schools, NNSE students are alienated from the process of writing. What is really needed is student involvement with writing; moreover, teacher involvement with their students' writing is also vital.

## **8.6. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS**

Following the conclusions of the current study, the following areas of concern are recommended for future research.

This study emphasises the importance of not relying on using a single research method, i.e. the use of triangulation as a research method when similarities/differences in writing strategy use are assessed. Although the quantitative data utilised in the first stage of this study did help to answer the research questions, it was only the information gathered via the 12 interviews during the second stage that gave a more complete picture on how and why certain strategies were employed. Indeed, without the qualitative information, the dimensions of the patterns and variations would not have been possible to explore. In this research I attempted to provide the reader with an emic perspective in an effort to provide an insider's view.

There is a need to broaden the scope of research in academic writing to include the vast body of strategies that a writer uses when successfully completing the activity of writing. In this sense, focus should not only be on one stage of the writing process or a particular type of strategies; instead, a more holistic approach is required as the recursive nature of writing does not make it easy to separate the strategies employed in a certain stage.

This research takes writing as a whole so that a complete picture can be seen. It is hoped that this holistic approach allows the participants' experience to be described in terms of academic strategy use.

#### **8.6.1. Difficulties Experienced During Research**

Despite its benefits to the research, the methodology adopted did not come without challenges. The first challenge was distributing, collecting and analysing the EAWSQ. I would have benefited from being more persistent when asking people to complete my questionnaires. I was not always sure about their reasons for refusing. Reasons for refusing could include indifference, pressure of their own work or the fact that I am obviously a Muslim female. Accessing the Libyan group was not that difficult compared to Mainland Chinese and the British; however, chasing the Libyan students who agreed to take part in the study to return the questionnaire was the most time-consuming. As a result, my study was delayed due to the extra time needed to acquire the necessary number of completed questionnaires. In addition, the quantitative data analysis was not a comfortable place to be in as I am not a statistician.

My second challenge was conducting the interviews. Finding a good place that would be convenient, comfortable and quiet for participant was not always easy. Although I offered to pay the travel expenses for participants from Durham and Newcastle to come to Sunderland where a quiet room to conduct my interviews was provided by the University, they suggested conducting the interviews in their homes. Consequently, I had to travel to Durham and Newcastle alone to meet participants which was another challenge for me as a foreigner.

Moreover, the transcription process was laborious and took much more time than I anticipated because of the difficulty in understanding local English dialects and Chinese students' pronunciation. Nevertheless, transcribing the tapes allowed me to start the analysis at an early stage by becoming aware of the patterns and variations I wanted to explore in further interviews.

Sometimes collecting well-propped, in-depth information could be rather messy as it is unwieldy. There were quite a lot of jumbled up themes as some students bring ideas in a multi stranded way. However, I systematically searched for those threads and organised them. It did take time as it was a slow process but it proved to be rewarding.

When identifying themes and sub-themes, I eventually learnt that the trick was not to generate 500 sub-themes because that is unmanageable, i.e. labels of themes and sub-themes needed to be just a little bit above the empirical details otherwise one jotted down too many themes and sub-themes as was my case initially. To overcome this problem, I looked at themes, went back to my research questions, interview guide and the emergent themes, and I ended up with 46 themes which are very hard to work with. If they are sorted into high order themes or headings and then sub-themes under that heading, it is much easier when applying the framework. For example, the broad theme they are talking and then the sub-themes to which they refer.

The field study I did was puzzling (sampling in particular), and it has made me think a lot about how important a choice it seems to be. It has also highlighted some issues with researching experiences. Not everything in the process was within my control, and this was very frustrating. For the quantitative data collection, I had intended to conduct a random sample, but this was not possible due to data protection issues. I then decided to use participants with whom I was in contact, which converted my sampling design into convenience sampling. As for the qualitative data, I had intended to have follow-up interviews with the respondents in whose questionnaires I found interesting or critical issues that need to be explored in the interview, i.e. purposive sampling. But in reality, some participants did not provide their contact details



for taking part in the interview and the questionnaire was anonymous, therefore, I ended up with a snowball sampling.

The Grounded Theory approach was another challenge. Although I was working bottom up—starting with the data to see what was there and gradually developing concepts—I did not start with a blank mind. I did have assumptions, I did learn things from the literature, and I did have concepts in which I was interested. However, Grounded Theory proposes that theories should be born entirely out of data and as such no literature review should be performed; this was not so in my case as I had reviewed some literature before I started.

### **8.6.2. Limitations of the Study**

The following limitations became evident during the research study:

- The quantitative findings presented here cannot be assumed to be generalisable to other students or contexts. This is due to the samples not being as random as originally intended.
- The length of the questionnaire was considered by some participants to be too long. This could have contributed to a lower response rate.
- It is also important to keep in mind that the student participants diverged in a number of ways other than the factors I foreground here (nativeness, nationality, gender). Perhaps most important for this study, the age, qualifications, subject areas, length of residence in the UK and IELTS score of the student participants varied noticeably. These differences make a straightforward comparison of the students difficult.

### **8.6.3. Recommendations for Further Research**

Despite the limitations, the present study suggests several directions for future research. The findings of this study have brought to light a number of issues that future research could usefully investigate:

- Further research on Arabic culture writing patterns should investigate whether the academic writing problems encountered by Libyan participants and the strategies they use to overcome them are common among HE students from other Arab countries.

- Longitudinal case studies investigating writing strategies employed by NNSE when they first enter the UK and after two or three years of residence to see the impact of the change in instructions and exposure to academic writing discourse so that the effect of length of residence can be assessed.
- The study reveals that qualifications do affect the strategy choice. The quantitative analysis indicated a number of interesting variations among students with different qualifications. For example, undergraduate students used the feedback strategy significantly more than postgraduate students whilst the latter used the language strategy significantly more than PhD students. Further study on this topic would be advantageous. See Table 5.86 for more details.
- The study also indicates that subject areas affect students' use of writing strategies. Science students, for example, used the mechanics strategy more than arts students. However, compared with science students, arts students used the organisation strategy more. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that this use of both strategies is significantly different. Furthermore, the qualitative analysis revealed that science students were more concerned about their experiments and results than language. Again this could be investigated further.
- There was relatively little similarity in the strategy use according to age. The study showed that young learners tended to use feedback strategies more than other types, including discussion and asking assistance from others. Students older than 25 years used the organisation, content and language strategies more. This provides yet another opportunity for further study.
- A significant difference in usage was observed only in the organisation strategy where students with IELTS score  $\geq 6.5$  make more use of the strategy than those with IELTS score  $< 6.5$ . A significant difference in use was observed in the content and mechanics strategies where students with IELTS score  $\geq 6.5$  made more use of the strategy than those with IELTS score  $< 6.5$ . Once again this could be further explored and could form the basis for another research.
- The first research question found a limited degree of differences between NSE and NNSE writing strategy use. In the absence of other studies of

paired perceptions, further research is needed to investigate the extent to which this is a widespread phenomenon and why it exists.

- As NNSE students reported looking at papers and assignments to use as a model, there is a concern that they are obviously not familiar with academic writing as a genre since they do not even know the steps followed in academic writing. Moreover, looking at assignments of others who pass the same module might raise a concern that those assignments may not be up to the standard required. I would suggest that allowing students to read a variety of assignments of differing standards would be beneficial. Guidance by lecturers would also be of assistance.
- Although the data collected for the present study revealed reasons about NNSE adhering to a surface level revision, these findings do not permit settling on a definite explanation. Further research is needed to identify the causes of the participants' strong tendency to address mainly surface issues in their revision.
- Although the study confirms the existence of gender differences established in the literature and related them to learners' social context, the topic remains open for much further research. This is required to determine the extent to which these distinctions remain consistent across cultural lines.
- The study would need to be extended to validate its findings with different groups of students. For example, those with similar educational background and culture, in particular from western countries, to confirm the similarities and/or the differences between NSE and NNSE academic writing strategy use.

## **6.7. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the study makes a meaningful contribution to theories about patterns and variations between NSE and NNSE as well as the relationships between nationalities, gender and academic writing strategies employed by HE students.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A: ACADEMIC WRITING STRATEGIES QUESTIONNAIRE**

The questionnaire should take approximately twenty minutes. The researcher would like to thank you for your time and effort. Would you please complete the questionnaire and return it by Thursday/1/ 1/2008.

#### **Purpose of the questionnaire**

The purpose of the questionnaire is to compare native and non-native learners' academic writing strategies in higher education. This comparison is made in order to determine similarities/differences in strategies employed by both groups.

"**Strategies**" here refer to the methods and techniques that you use to make your writing process easier, more efficient and more effective.

The information gained will be used as a part of a PhD thesis in the School of Education and Lifelong Learning at the University of Sunderland and will be treated with complete confidentiality.

It is hoped that the information will help to provide a greater understanding of how native and non-native students write in English. This information will provide a valuable insight into how students cope with academic writing and may help design better instructions.

#### **Background Information**

This information will help the analysis of the results. You do not need to give your name; all information will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

#### **Structure of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire is divided into three main parts: a) planning and preparation, b) the writing process, and c) the revision.

**This list of strategies is not a comprehensive one, so if there is anything you do that is not included here, please feel free to note it down in the spaces provided.**

**There are no right or wrong answers. The questionnaire is an attempt to discover what students actually do when writing academically.**



## APPENDIX B: ENGLISH ACADEMIC WRITING QUESTIONNAIRE

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- a) Please tick the appropriate information in items 1 to 5
- b) And provide the information requested in items 6 to 12
- c) The information you provide will not be passed on to anyone else.

1. Gender:  Female  Male
2. Age:  18-25  26-30  31-35  36-40  41-50  51 and above
3. Nationality:  British  Mainland Chinese  Libyan
4. Native language:  English  Chinese  Arabic  Other
5. Qualification for which you are studying:  
 BA  BSc  MA  MSc  MED  MPhil  PhD  Other
6. Subject area: \_\_\_\_\_
7. The year of study that you have just finished:  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Is English your 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> or additional language? \_\_\_\_\_  
(If English is your first language please go straight to the questions on the next page).
9. In what language were you educated before coming to a UK university:  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. How long have you been studying English as a second/foreign language in a formal setting (school and university)? \_\_\_\_\_
11. What is your score for writing? IELTS: \_\_\_\_\_ TOEFL: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Length of residence in the UK: \_\_\_\_\_

## ACADEMIC WRITING STRATEGIES QUESTIONNAIRE

### A. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Please tick the appropriate response [from 1 to 5].

	<b>Before start writing in English, ...</b>	never true 1	rarely true 2	sometimes true 3	usually true 4	always true 5
1	I make a timetable for the writing process.					
2	I read the requirements of the writing activity.					
3	I look at a model written by a proficient writer.					
4	I analyse the topic of the writing activity.					
5	I consider the purpose of the topic.					
6	I brainstorm to generate ideas.					
7	I write without a written plan.					
8	I plan out the organisation in advance.					
9	I plan out the organisation as I go.					
10	I make an outline in my native language. (if you are a non-native speaker of English)					
11	I make an outline in English.					
12	I depend on what I already know to find things to write.					
13	I think of the suitability of expressions I know.					
14	I consult references for more information about my topic.					
15	I think of the relevance of the ideas.					
16	I think of the ideas in my native language. (if you are a non-native speaker of English)					
17	I read my tutors' feedback on my previous writing and try to learn from my mistakes.					
18	I discuss my topic with my friends.					
19	I discuss my topic with my tutors.					
20	I ask my classmates about the strategies they use in their writing activity that may help me.					
21	I choose a relaxing environment when writing.					

a) Please note below any other strategies you use, before you start writing or to prepare yourself for writing, that are not covered here.

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## B. THE WRITING PROCESS

Please tick the appropriate response [from 1 to 5].

	When writing in English, ...	never true 1	rarely true 2	sometimes true 3	often true 4	always true 5
22	I write the introduction first.					
23	I leave the introduction to the end.					
24	I think only in English. (if you are a non-native speaker of English)					
25	I think of a sentence in my native language first and then translate it into English. (if you are a non-native speaker of English)					
26	I use some familiar expressions in order not to make mistakes.					
27	I use some examples to explain the meaning when I cannot find the exact expressions.					
28	I highlight sentences that I want to check later.					
29	I discuss various points of view in my writing.					
30	I stop writing when I do not know what to write.					
31	I periodically check whether I am keeping to my topic.					
32	I periodically check whether my writing is making sense to me.					
33	I stick to the organisation I chose initially.					
34	I change the organisation I chose initially.					
35	I confer with my tutors when I have writing problems.					
36	I confer with my classmates.					
37	I handwrite a draft copy first.					
38	I produce a first, rough draft by computer.					
39	I produce subsequent drafts.					
40	I use a dictionary to make sure of my wording and usage.					
41	I use a bilingual dictionary. (if you are a non-native speaker of English)					
42	I use a monolingual dictionary.					
43	I use electronic/online dictionaries.					
44	I consult a thesaurus to assist me with vocabulary.					
45	I use spell-checkers.					
46	I use grammar checkers.					

b) Please note below any other strategies you use, when you are writing, that are not covered here.

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## C. REVISION

Please tick the appropriate response [from 1 to 5].

	<b>When editing, proof-reading and revising,..</b>	never true 1	rarely true 2	sometimes true 3	often true 4	always true 5
47	I check whether I have written everything I wanted to say.					
48	I check whether the content is logical.					
49	I make changes in the content.					
50	I revise the draft to clarify the meaning.					
51	I check whether more examples are needed.					
52	I check whether more explanation is needed.					
53	I check whether the organisation of my writing is clear.					
54	I check whether there is any deviation from the main idea.					
55	I check my sentence structure.					
56	I check whether the sentences in the paragraph are connected.					
57	I connect shorter sentences into longer, complex sentences.					
58	I break down sentences that are too long into shorter, simpler ones.					
59	I check whether the main ideas are referred to in the conclusion.					
60	I check whether the citations used are appropriate to my argument.					
61	I check my punctuation.					
62	I check my spelling.					
63	I check whether I have used academic English conventions, e.g., formality and referencing.					
64	I read the text aloud to see if it sounds right.					
65	I edit the draft myself.					
66	I edit the draft collaboratively.					
67	I give the draft to a classmate for proofreading.					
68	I give my draft to a native speaker to check. (if you are a non-native speaker of English)					
69	I check whether it is easy for the reader to understand.					
70	I leave the text for a while and then read it again later.					
71	I prepare a final, polished draft.					
72	I check to make sure that I have met the requirements of the writing activity.					

c) Please note below any other strategies you use, when revising or editing, that are not covered here.

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d) Please add below any other comments you may have:

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If you would be prepared to be interviewed, please add your name and contact telephone number or email address:

Name:

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Phone:

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Email:

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**Thank you for your valuable help.**

Seham Abdul Rahman, PhD student,  
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University of Sunderland.  
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## **APPENDIX B: EAP TEACHERS' FEEDBACK ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **Some quotations from EAP teachers' feedback:**

"All my suggestions for amendments are minor ones – the 'draft' could well be used without any 'tinkering' from myself."

"I would say that number 8 is already answered in number 4. You have a restricted range of nationalities. Is this intentional? You say the first part looks at their writing background, but really only asks one question about their score in IELTS/TOEFL. People can be 'hothouse'd' for these exams."

"The questionnaire seems very well produced to me and I couldn't see any major problems. I have made a small number of comments for you using 'track changes'."

"Thank you for allowing me to peruse your questionnaire – it seems very comprehensive."

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE

### PARTICIPANTS' ACADEMIC WRITING STRATEGIES INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Thank you very much for taking part in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to investigate the writing strategies you use when writing academically. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the interview questions. So, please answer the questions as frankly as you can based on what you really do, not on how you think you should answer. The aim is to find out what problems you have and how you solve those problems when writing academically. Your individual responses will remain anonymous and all information will be treated in the strictest confidence. The interview should take approximately 40 minutes.

Participant no: .....

Date: .....

Gender: .....

Nationality: .....

Level: .....

Age: .....

Length of residence in the UK: .....

Subject area: .....

IELTS/TOEFL in writing and general: .....

University .....

1. Tell me about your educational background as far as writing academic assignments in English is concerned.
2. How did you learn to write an academic assignment in English?

**When you are given an academic assignment in English to write up:**

3. Could you please tell me about the strategies you use to plan for that writing assignment?
4. A) How do you use Chinese and English when thinking and writing?  
  
B) How do you use Arabic and English when thinking and writing?  
  
C) How do you use English when thinking and writing?
5. Do you pay attention to the readers when writing in English? For example, do you leave anything vague and would like the reader to figure it out? If yes, how and why?
6. How many drafts do you usually write? Why?
7. Could you please tell me if you have any problems in academic writing in English? If yes, what strategies do you use to overcome them? And why do you use those strategies?
8. What might stop you when you are writing? What do you do in such situations?
9. When you are under pressure to meet a deadline, what strategies do you use to manage finishing the assignment?
10. When do you revise your writing? Why and how?
11. Do you edit the draft yourself or with other people's help? Why?
12. What aspects of language are you looking at when you revise? Why?
13. Would you like to add anything to this interview?

**Thank you for your time and help**



**APPENDIX D: PRELIMINARY NOTES ON ACADEMIC WRITING  
STRATEGY USE**

<p>Interview 3</p> <p>British, male, PhD</p>	
<p><b>Well, let's go back to your educational background. Can you please tell me, when did you learn how to write academically?</b></p> <p>“Well I mean I went through the normal schooling sort of junior school, secondary school. Err... I left school and went to, well; it wasn't a 6<sup>th</sup> form college I didn't get a higher mark to go to a grammar school as it was in those days. So, I chose to go to a technical college but, the department of education because I very rapidly found out that why a lot of my peer group were err... going into engineering, into the ship yards, which we had in those days of course, which is another subject entirely, elm.. I found out I didn't have much adaptation for working with the hands err... am not an art design like that. I went to college to get GCE as it was then and elm... I got four 'O' levels and one 'A' level. I was fortunate when I was out of college, elm... there's a local writer who unfortunately, has since died that has written widely for television in the err... sort of 60s and the late 50s and early 60s, a man called James Mitchell, who wrote a number of books about a secret service agent called Callen which was produced into television series and really a piece of grand breaking television elm... 'When the Boyd comes in' which is very much about the North East, one North East family from the First World War. But, <b>he was something of a mentor to me and it was from him I got the love of and start to get the grasp of academic life</b> because he wanted me to do English Literature at 'A' levels and go on to the University but, I never did. And I had a variety of jobs, left college basically because a number of my peers were earning money and I wasn't. I didn't like that. So, I became a very junior bank clerk and I move up to be a cashier in the bank and then I went from there to the local well, the national as it was then, the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance now known as the DSS, Department of Social Services, and I worked up there at Denton and Newcastle, which is or was then one of the largest site in the country. There was up to 12,000 people that worked up there and I worked there for a couple of years elm... but, I have always fancied joining the police</p>	<p><b>* Grasping academic writing from others</b></p>

<p>service so, when I was 19 and a half, I joined and did nothing else until 1994 when I retired”.</p> <p><b>“When was the first time you started to write academically? Did you write papers or assignments”?</b></p> <p><b>“did a little bit when I was at college but nothing serious</b> I mean, and if you like, <b>I am a fairly late academic developer</b> as you can tell from the age (Laughs). I started ehn... When I actually tired because you can retire from the police service after 30 years service. Of course, like I told you, I decided to stay with the organization as a member of support or police staff. Err... and it was round about the time err... it was after a couple of years, the government produce a white paper err... to the effect that anybody who taught in further or adult education had to have a CertEd. So, I figured education, and that was actually the start, the late 1990s was when I first came into contact with academas at the University of Northumbria. My employers allow a day in a week to go for the former input and I achieved the CertEd and was persuaded, I don’t know if it was against my better judgment, but I was persuaded by Joyce Charlton,, a lovely lady elm.. to do just another 2 years err nearly another near 2 years and go on to do the BA in education, in further education “.</p> <p><b>So, you don’t have formal .....</b></p> <p>no! no! never never had, <b>I just picked it up</b>. Really elm... the style of writing obviously came not as a shock to me, because I mean as I said <b>in ‘A’ level English language, I know how to construct a sentence I know how to construct a paragraph</b>. I do know how to write already. Academic writing for me, if you like, is an ‘essential’ band. My first attempt err... some of the first assignments I must have re-written, re-written long into the night just to try and get hold of the style of academic writing. But, <b>no particular form of training”</b></p> <p><b>Interesting!</b></p> <p>as I said there was never or there was <b>very little formal input</b>, certainly on the certificate of education or on the</p>	<p><b>*nothing serious about academic writing at college</b></p> <p><b>* just picked it up</b></p> <p><b>* knowing how to construct a sentence, a paragraph</b></p> <p><b>*No formal training</b></p> <p><b>*little formal input</b></p>
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<p>diploma of education to give it its full title; but, everybody called it CertEd. Elm... which became or which is now a pre-requisite for anyone who wants to teach adults in this country. Which is why I was actually in training, and I was delivery training, which is why I had to do it. The rest that comes after that was really a matter of choice for me because I then moved on to do BA honours and then I did my masters degree. And when I had finished the masters degree, I swore that I was never going to do anymore I walked off the stage after graduation, my wife said to me, so, when are you starting your doctorate? Like she knows me better than myself. But elm...err... I chose to go into Criminology. Basically, because I have had enough of education, quite honestly, because I was still at that time in training up onto till recently we still over there in training. The job am doing now is fairly recent but I still; I have done a lot of training delivery, a lot of learning delivery. Elm...and I still do to date, I still do visiting lecture on the BA criminology. But, <b>for academic writing err... one or two classes that I have attended during my post graduate work</b> err... elm... I was fortunate. You probably had been to some of the... where you at the generic core courses eh?”</p> <p><b>Yes!</b></p> <p>Did you go to Caroline session?”</p> <p><b>Yes, I did</b></p> <p>“Well, Caroline was my mentor for my masters degree”</p> <p><b>Oh, I see!</b></p> <p>“And I have a fabulous relationship with Caroline and she has err... I have a great admiration for her mind. She really is superb and <b>a lot of what I know now of academic writing, well it was not always with Caroline in a formal sense as such, we did have a number of sessions in the evenings, it was more like guidance, rather than, this is how you write academically</b> and I hope am not a disappointment to you in that respect because it’s something that <b>I have just picked up from a few formal sessions and the amount of writing that I do”</b></p> <p><b>“Yea!”</b></p> <p>elm... So, that’s, if you like, the background to that.</p>	<p><b>* attending one or two classes on AW</b></p> <p><b>* learning to write academically from supervisors and evening AW sessions</b></p> <p><b>*just guidance</b></p> <p><b>*just picked up from a few formal sessions and amount of writing being done</b></p>
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<p><b>That's where, if you like, where am lacking now, that's where my learning curve is. To get that basis,</b> that philosophical basis and apply that into the writing and err... I have spent my last two years is been gathering the data. I have done 4 hours 2 hours plus interviews and I have travelled the whole country to get those and my transcriber is in the process of transcribing those. So, am having a break now. I have written my literature review and which will probably be re-written before submission no doubt and am busy working on the methodology which is where am starting to tie the philosophical and sociological aspects and all of those. For that, I mean if you can call that a plan,”</p>	<p><b>*lacking AW basics</b></p>
<p>“Yea!”</p> <p>“Then that's <b>my developed academic writing plus one of two former sessions we've had here.</b>”</p>	<p><b>*developing Aw from 2sessions</b></p>
<p><b>When you are given an academic assignment, tell me about the strategy you use to plan for that academic task?</b></p>	
<p>Yea! Elm... <b>I usually discuss it with the team first of all</b></p>	<p><b>*discussing it with the team</b></p>
<p><b>Do you mean your supervisors?”</b></p> <p>Yes, my supervisors yes. We talk around it then <b>look at methodology, the methodology of writing the whole thing</b>, the methodology of research and then look at <b>the standard text</b> err... on <b>how we are going to approach</b>. Don't ask me to quote any text because I have read that many books that I can just remember them all. But, there are a number of standard texts for writing which I have looked at methodology, to look at the methodology of writing. Elm.... And <b>reading rules and reading the backgrounds and looking for reasons why I have chosen the methodology I have used, justification</b>, plainly and simply. And on the other side of the coin, the <b>rejection</b> of other methodologies why I didn't do it that way, <b>why I chose this</b>. For example, the semi-structured format for interviews used, which is probably what you are using yourself, err... is what I found, what I did with my subject, I send them, if you like, a list of subject areas, not the questions, just the subject areas, well, for example</p>	<p><b>*looking at the methodology of writing the whole thing</b></p> <p><b>*reading text books for writing</b></p> <p><b>*finding ways to approach it</b></p> <p><b>*reading rules</b></p> <p><b>*reading backgrounds</b></p> <p><b>*justifying (accepting /rejecting)</b></p>

right around the continuum, because I have a number of survey populations, they all got the same with one or two differences because of age and year of service and different ranks in the police service. So, there were differences there. But, the subject topics were basically the same looking at nature of changes in the police service in this country, the Scamming report, police and criminal act, the various pieces of legislation which had quite impact effect on the way the country is placed, the McPherson report is a more recent one and the murder of Stephen Lawrence, other things like that. Looking at those, sorting out from there, the things, that's the area I want to focus on looking at that particular question. So, that when we come to the interview stage, I know that why they don't know the question, they will be tuned in to the subject area and it maximizes the interview time for both the interviewer and the interviewee which is why I like the semi-structured. We each have our own agenda within that interview, as you and I have, but we know where we are going with it; we have some idea of what we are going to be asking, which I have had today."

**(Laughs)**

So, that's what I have found and I like that methodology. I like that semi-structured interview and certainly with chief constables, very busy and to sit with them for two hours, and I sat in Wheatfield headquarters for Yorkshire police and my appointment was for half past three and I finally got to see him at six o'clock. I had taken the day off anyway. Well, even if he was very apologetic and actually cancelled an early even appointment in order that I could have, he said I will cancel this other, he said I have held you up, there is nothing else I could do. So, that's the methodology semi-structured interview that I like and I like been, probably because I have been in disciplined service all my life and that semi-structured provide some discipline to it. I will love to do pre-informed interviews and just let it go wherever it goes, but, I don't have the time and try to analyze that is when you come under somebody you like. So, that's the strategy for the interviews and that then provides, **I have this wonderful massive data, what am gonna do with it? This is the strategy am looking at to write. I got an idea of where am going with it. I wouldn't like I said call it a strategy yet, because is deciding,** do I present it because there

**\*dealing with data**

**\*finding interesting ways to preset data**

<p>are four survey population to represent a chapter on one survey population a chapter on the next but then you are just repeating, but with different people and imagine anything more boring for the reader, reading that four times, I mean, that will send them to sleep. Yea! Honestly, so, am concern about that, <b>am really am concern about that the best way of presenting. So, when talking about strategy, I don't know if I have a strategy yet</b>". I have for the interview but, it's going to be the presentation and this is what am going to do over the summer. I have got a bit more <b>background reading</b>, quite a lot of background reading to do, criminology been a new subject, I mean, I have read now most introductory texts on criminology and the compendium the hand book of criminology which are obviously a compilation of authors. So, <b>I have a good basic background now in the criminology side of it, applying that is the next stage, is working out the strategy to apply that to identify the sociological strands within</b>, which I have said the main theme is this vocabularism mood, why do people say what they say? Which is a little bit like condensation analysis, is it because they are reacting to the situation? Or are they saying the things I want to hear? There are all these strategies; people have learnt their own strategies within those interviews. What am</p> <p>looking at, what I have called the main strategy is, what I have termed the content specific referic, in other words, are they just spouting out the usual public stuff? But, if they say something that is at variance with that in the public domain, then I know it isn't referic, then I know am getting something closer perhaps their own views, I wouldn't say is nearer the truth but, is nearer their own views, then yes perhaps, it could be nearer the truth."</p> <p><b>Do you usually have a time plan for that task to finish the methodology chapter or the literature review chapter?</b></p> <p>err... elm....well the literature review I had to have one. There wasn't a lot of choice that had to be done by the end of the first year as part of the <b>ground plan</b>. Now, I mean, I plan to have thesis finished. Originally, it was three and a half years, working part time, I don't think am gonna head back, I certainly don't want to be more than four years because like I said before, I am not getting any younger. Well, I can still maintain my health and enthusiasm, it doesn't really matter but, <b>I don't want it</b></p>	<p><b>*Concerning about having a presentation strategy</b></p> <p><b>* background reading</b></p> <p><b>*Applying the background reading</b></p> <p><b>* Having a ground plan</b></p>
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<p><b>dragging on</b>, am sure you can understand <b>that because the longer it's left, the worse it will get</b>. So, the literature review had to be done in my first year's academic review anyway. Now, they ask for, I think it was at least 6,000 words, yes! They got 12,000 from me (laughs). So, <b>that's where my strategy fails Seham, because I do then to, that has been cut down"</b></p>	<p><b>*Don't want it dragging on</b></p> <p><b>*Cutting down strategy</b></p>
<p><b>What do you do for reduction?</b></p> <p>Yea! That was what I was going to say, I now need a reduction strategy. <b>I have never had any trouble with word count, the only trouble I have is cutting them down</b>. And once I sit down, I get locked there, am sitting and sitting, <b>I refine and refine and refine, go away and have some coffee</b> and come back and just say oh that's rubbish and just <b>delete the whole thing</b>. You know, <b>a bit of perfectionist</b> like that.</p>	<p><b>*never having trouble with word count</b></p> <p><b>*Having trouble with cutting down</b></p> <p><b>*refining and refining</b></p> <p><b>*getting away from it/ having some coffee</b></p> <p><b>*deleting the whole thing</b></p> <p><b>*seeking perfection</b></p>
<p><b>Do you type whatever is in your mind?</b></p> <p>Yes. I think earlier on , one of the groups I had done, I think you were at this one, err... there was a doctor, a medical doctor who was completing his doctorate and he used what he termed <b>I think I have what it's called, the sink' methodology?</b> Excuse me, you <b>just put everything in the sink</b>.</p>	<p><b>*using the sink methodology</b></p> <p><b>*putting everything in the sink</b></p> <p><b>*putting down whatever comes into your head</b></p>
<p><b>The sink?</b></p> <p>Yea! <b>Whatever comes into your head</b>. And sometimes that's what I do; I just sit down, obviously with the subject matter in mind and just put it down. <b>It is better to write rubbish than write nothing</b> at all because <b>there may be a few nuggets in that draught that you can actually use."</b></p>	<p><b>*better to write rubbish than write nothing</b></p> <p><b>*finding nuggets that can be used</b></p>
<p><b>Interesting! Do you read before you start writing?</b></p> <p>All the time." I <b>very rarely stop reading even at work during my lunch break, there's always a book open</b>.</p>	<p><b>*rarely stop reading</b></p>

<p>When I go home, at night if my wife is watching television, I can tune it up. If something particularly, should I say err.... Dense, then I will <b>go upstairs and read where there are no interruptions</b>. Because when I really <b>need to concentrate</b>, then I cannot work it out.</p> <p><b>Interesting! Should we come back to your planning strategies?</b></p> <p>Yes, Yes, by all means.</p> <p><b>Ok, let's summarize, the plan you usually do for the writing task.</b></p> <p><b>Forming the ideas, read the background, see how it applies to my work</b> and we sit down. I <b>don't physically write anything</b> because to start with I got a little bit of arthritis in my hands and can't hold the pen for very long, and that's just an excuse because my writing is terrible.</p> <p><b>So what do you do?</b></p> <p>Yea! Sometimes when am sitting, if something really occur to me, at work and you know yourself <b>you could be doing something totally different, it's like 3. o clock in the morning suddenly you kick the note out of the bed</b>, I mean <b>at work quite often something will strike me</b> so, I mean, I just <b>keep a separate folder on my own machine at work and whatever the thought, I just put it down</b> and at the end of the day, <b>two or three days even if there have not been that many, I will gather up the whole document and email it to my home email</b>. And when I sit down to write, I will think, what did I and of course, that's what am getting there, <b>it's from this I get the strategy. It's the basic, the bone of something, and I put that down and I see where does that fit</b>, then I start to <b>develop</b> and look at, <b>look for different views</b> of what they have said about the subject, both sides of the question and I <b>start to formulate my particular idea</b>, my particular stand or view. That's it, it sounds like a strategy doesn't it? (laughs) never, haven't sit down to formalize you see and we tend to overlook what we are doing ourselves."</p> <p><b>Huh?</b></p> <p>There's a whole lot of things, particularly when am at work it could just be that somebody said something, someone in the office or <b>someone I am talking to, then I see a</b></p>	<p><b>*reading everywhere</b></p> <p><b>*avoiding interruptions</b></p> <p><b>*need to concentrate</b></p> <p><b>*forming ideas</b></p> <p><b>*reading the background</b></p> <p><b>*applying it to my work</b></p> <p><b>*not physically writing</b></p> <p><b>*ideas occurring anytime anywhere</b></p> <p><b>*pouring ideas into separate folder on an audio-machine</b></p> <p><b>*gathering the documents and email them</b></p> <p><b>*getting the basic/bone of writing</b></p> <p><b>*seeing where they fit</b></p> <p><b>*developing them</b></p> <p><b>*looking for different views</b></p> <p><b>*Starting formulating</b></p>
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<p>connection with my evaluation or matching something then I think, I might just be able to use that so, as soon as I can and if I am up and about and I can't get to a computer, I use the same computer they use in the Olympics and I just open a new folder on that and I just pour the thoughts into it."</p> <p><b>You just go straight to record your thoughts?</b></p> <p>Yes! If am not near a <b>computer</b> which is some of the stations that I go to, is <b>not always easy to get on to one and if something occurs to me, even sitting in an office where the machine is and I'll just dictate into it and will email it as a file to my home</b> computer because I have the software at home as well.</p> <p><b>Well elm.... do you pay attention to the readers when you write?</b></p> <p>Always aware, <b>always aware of the audience</b>. Who is going to read this? Probably err...if you know yourself in your darker moments <b>nobody is going to read this rubbish anyway</b>, you know?</p> <p><b>Interesting?</b></p> <p>Well, <b>only the internal and external examiners!</b> And quite often I think, am sure you go through the same as well yourself, <b>this is rubbish, who wants to read this?</b> But majority of times <b>I am very conscious of my audience</b> and again, something that Catherine pointed out at this year's review, something she is also very conscious of as well as <b>being an inside researcher</b> and you got to b careful. <b>I have not had to think about my readers but I have got to think about been too subjective, been bias because of my position as an inside researcher</b>. There's quite a lot of research on that, Cortland, Brown I think those are the main ones who talked about being an inside researcher. So, yes I think I am probably more conscious of the reader because of that because I am an inside researcher. So, I always think about that and <b>try to balance</b>, I really got to balance everything and don't discount things that I don't like because it doesn't control. Yes! I always think about who is going to read this and the people who write on the police have been doing this a lot longer than I have. So, I</p>	<p>my particular ideas</p> <p>*making use of what someone said</p> <p>*pouring the thoughts into the machine (Olympics) when can't get a computer</p> <p>*dictating thoughts into the machine and email it home</p> <p>*always aware of the audience</p> <p>*who is going to read this rubbish (attitude)</p> <p>*internal and external examiners are the only readers</p> <p>*thinking of being inside researcher rather than thinking of readers</p> <p>*trying to balance everything</p>
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<p>got to be aware of that.</p> <p><b>And why do you do that?</b></p> <p>In order that I provide a subjective view as possible, that I <b>present both sides of the argument</b>. I <b>present a case on its merits</b> and then <b>present both sides and then my view</b>.</p> <p><b>I see!</b></p> <p>Yes, it's more constructive, it's <b>better for someone, I feel anyway, reading something properly thought out and argued</b> and <b>someone with a little bit of subject knowledge</b>, so, I also have to make sure my facts are right as well for an <b>expert advisory</b>, an expert who is reading it and a criminologist who will have a knowledge of that. So, yes, I always, <b>always think about the reader</b> who will be reading this at the same time I do <b>try to make it interesting enough for someone who may not know the subject who will pick it and say ah! I know what he is talking about</b>.</p> <p><b>Could you please tell me about the number of drafts you write before submitting the final work?</b></p> <p>Laughs! With this I don't know because I don't even have a first draft yet. I think I probably, I think err.... <b>probably about 4 or 5</b> I would think because <b>the first one was far too short and the second one was far too long. We have to meet in the middle</b> you know. (Interviewer laughs). I know it sounds silly doesn't it?</p> <p><b>No, it's quite interesting!</b></p> <p>The first one is... I really <b>don't know what I was thinking about</b> to be quite honest with I think.... But you got to stop somewhere, haven't you? And there was <b>a lot of writings on police views</b>, a number of different authors, some of whom are in favour some of whom are not.</p> <p><b>Could you please tell me if you have experienced any problems in writing?</b></p> <p><b>Finding the time</b> isn't it (Laughs). Elm.... I think like everybody else, I do <b>get writers block now and again</b>. I think <b>I am mature enough to just leave it, just to go</b></p>	<p><b>*presenting both sides of the argument</b></p> <p><b>*presenting own view</b></p> <p><b>*better to read something properly thought out and argued</b></p> <p><b>*Thinking of general readers</b></p> <p><b>*thinking of experts</b></p> <p><b>*making it interesting</b></p> <p><b>*writing 4 or 5 drafts</b></p> <p><b>*being too short/being too long</b></p> <p><b>*not knowing what I was thinking about</b></p> <p><b>*lots of writing on the subject area</b></p> <p><b>*finding the time</b></p> <p><b>*getting writing</b></p>
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<p><b>away from it, do some displacement activity or leave it all alone.</b> The old time I err... I was... when I was looking at that and I got myself in a loop in a right mix up about this critical imperatives and it's hypothetical imperatives, I didn't just know where I was honestly I just see what I have done and switch the machine off and went out for a walk. I just couldn't, you know, so, occasionally, and yes! I do get blocked. Yea! Sometimes <b>difficulty in expressing</b> and I get very frustrated and sometimes, like today when I have been talking, you sometime <b>search for the right word</b> and you keep talking hoping that it will come to you. So, writing is the same. <b>Like you are typing something and usually it will come and if it doesn't, then it is time to walk away.</b> But it is.. . and I wasn't been.... When I said <b>finding the time</b> because it is difficult for me because there are <b>other demands</b> at home as well of course, my mother in-law is here every night, she lives on her own. My wife is there quite a lot and there are other demands, there's another house to deal with. My wife cousin died earlier this year and her sister is there to deal with. My son is doing, err.... I mean, he is 35 this year and he is doing a degree in complimentary therapies so, what you going to do, <b>because he has no idea at all about academic writing, so, I do., he does the work, but I keep him right on....</b>"</p>	<p><b>blocks</b></p> <p><b>*going away from writing</b></p> <p><b>*doing some displacement activity</b></p> <p><b>*Difficulty in expressing</b></p> <p><b>*Searching for the right word</b></p> <p><b>*keep typing until the word comes</b></p> <p><b>*finding the time</b></p> <p><b>*having other demands</b></p> <p><b>* proof reading others' work</b></p>
<p><b>Like proof reading?</b></p> <p>Yea. And, ..... Well, <b>more than proof read. You know yourself the academic way of doing things which is how we started off,</b> you and I. he has less idea than I had, so, it was getting him on the way, and he is getting into it. He just started his second year and I can see an improvement in his work and the way he presents it and he is starting to grasp it. I am not saying it's all done. So, I have got that as well which take claims on my time (both laughs).</p>	<p><b>*AW is more than proof reading</b></p>
<p><b>Do you write under pressure?</b></p> <p>I would rather not. Elm.... I have <b>never been one to submit work late.</b> I think my master's thesis was about a month early, which is as bad as been a month late in some people's eyes. I <b>don't write under pressure because I feel I don't produce my best</b> so, <b>I tend to organize it that it doesn't happen like that</b> and I must</p>	<p><b>*never submitting work late</b></p> <p><b>*not writing under pressure</b></p> <p><b>*not producing the</b></p>

<p>say, I don't know if I should be proud of it or whether I should even say this to anyone else but err... I don't think I have ever submitted an assignment late and this is since 1997, I have never ever been late with an assignment.</p> <p><b>So, what do you do to meet deadlines?</b></p> <p>just what I have gone through with you. <b>I plan out what I am going to write and I keep it in my mind, the submission date</b>, in fact, sometimes I even <b>type it on top or sometimes I put it has a footer on the document submission date is...</b> to remind myself because I don't, I feel <b>I don't produce well under pressure</b> and the old time when I felt a little bit pressurized because of the demand on my client and I know that work, <b>I have to go back to and do it again. So, I don't write well under pressure.</b></p> <p><b>So, elm... when do you revise your work?</b></p> <p>All the time. <b>Constantly revising, from one day to the next, I can go back to it and say, not like that, do it again.</b> So, just constant revision and sometimes, probably to the extent even when I had let it go, I think, I <b>could have put that differently</b> (laughs), which is a bit crazy isn't? You know as well as I do that there comes a time when you say, it's time to cut the ....And get rid of it.</p> <p><b>And why do you do that?</b></p> <p>Again <b>thinking about the reader, thinking about own development, thinking about, have I explained that fully?</b> Just that <b>constant need to ensure that that's the best I can produce at that time.</b></p> <p><b>Right! And how do you revise?</b></p> <p><b>Reading it, re-reading</b> it and then <b>how can this be better expressed. Delete</b> it or <b>cut and paste</b> is wonderful isn't? cut and paste greatest thing since slice spread. That sentence doesn't look right there, highlight, dragged it in there, much better. I think <b>word processing</b> is a gift, I really do</p> <p><b>By the way, do you hand-write your work or you just</b></p>	<p><b>best under pressure</b></p> <p><b>*organizing it</b></p> <p><b>*planning out what to write</b></p> <p><b>*keeping the submission date in mind</b></p> <p><b>*writing the submission date on top or as a footer on the document</b></p> <p><b>*not producing well under pressure</b></p> <p><b>*having to go back and do the work again when pressurized</b></p> <p><b>*constant revising</b></p> <p><b>*putting it differently</b></p> <p><b>*thinking about the reader</b></p> <p><b>*thinking of own development</b></p> <p><b>*explaining it fully</b></p> <p><b>*producing the best</b></p> <p><b>*reading and rereading</b></p> <p><b>*presenting it in a</b></p>
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<p><b>type it?</b></p> <p><b>Can't really remember the last time I actually hand-write a piece of work because my writing is shocking</b> (Interviewer laughs!), and that's a confession. Err... I think that started when I was at college and it never got any better and I really, must confess, I didn't make any attempt to make it any better. Elm... I can make it legible but I do find nowadays actually the physical art of holding a pen for, a long time, actually hurts my hands. Yes, that is, I mean, I sat in a session yesterday, I did pre-training or pre-implementation focus group and I sat in on the training session, I was taking notes, and I had problems deciphering them this morning.</p> <p><b>When it comes to editing, could you please tell me, whether you edit your draft yourself or with other people's help?"</b></p> <p>Usually, elm..... second or third draft if I get to that stage, I let it go to the study team, if I really, they look at it and suggest, it might better this way. <b>At least I will have a couple of go at it before I bring someone else to look at it</b> which insist on <b>putting 'Zs' where there are 'Ss', that is the idiosyncrasies of America and England.</b> 'Two people divided by a common language' who was it that said? Was it Roosevelt or Churchill, somebody like that anyway 'two people divided by a common language'? Yes! <b>Construction, grammar, paragraph, and sentences far too long, you know?</b> When a good idea comes, you just want to keep writing it and writing it then you realize that the sentences are far too long and you got to <b>break it down to pieces.</b> Paragraphs and <b>ideas,</b> Per-paragraphs if you like with a flow to lead on to it, the same as chapters and the last chapter, you will look for <b>further implication to lead on to.., just to get the flow.</b></p> <p><b>Interesting.</b></p> <p>Occasionally. I had someone certainly after my masters degree, no, it was during my bachelor's degree, I work with somebody he was doing the same course, so, we did for each other, sort of <b>critical friend</b> for each other. During my maters, there wasn't there was nobody in the group to perform that sort of relationship with and certainly during this research. I have <b>talked to the group that I started with you know? Elm.... We started a session every week or every month</b> before we left..... Err.... you always come back to it, where do you go to? Anyway, <b>we had a post-graduate meeting and we used</b></p>	<p><b>better way</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>*deleting</b></li> <li><b>*cutting and pasting</b></li> <li><b>*using word processing</b></li> <li><b>*not hand-writing</b></li> <li><b>*having a couple of go at it before bringing someone else to look at it</b></li> <li><b>*Checking for American verses British English</b></li> <li><b>*putting Zz where there are Ss</b></li> <li><b>*constructing, paragraph, grammar</b></li> <li><b>*braking down long sentences</b></li> <li><b>*ideas</b></li> <li><b>*getting the flow</b></li> <li><b>*having a critical friend to proof read work</b></li> <li><b>*joining a writing group</b></li> </ul>
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<p><b>to talk about writing</b>, this was when the doctor came up with the 'sink', the writing sink you know. So, usually ploughing the lawn for him and <b>once it's somewhere near presentable, then I will go to the team or I either email them both and say like, what do you think of this?</b> And of course, the danger of saying that is what you get .... Well, that's what you want to hear?"</p> <p><b>Yea!</b></p> <p>You want to know if it is rubbish, <b>I want to know if it is rubbish. Good quality feed backs I get.</b> Again, I have been very very fortunate in the choice of team, very serendipitous, really is. I am very pleased that, mean, <b>they are as different as 'chalks and cheese' and you get an interesting mix you know.</b></p> <p><b>So, you have said everything in this interview, what do you do when you write academically that I didn't ask you about?</b></p> <p>Hummm..... I think I mentioned before about <b>helping my son, it also helps me because I am in a position, a different position with him because I am then acting as his mentor which again has helped to hold my writing skills</b>, helping him out, looking at someone else's work, rather than looking at my own all the time. And I think I would like, I mean I do visiting lecturer on the second year, I think next year, am going to look for a little of involvement in so far to be involved in the seminars that follows the lectures and possibly even mark some of the assignments.</p> <p><b>Oh great!</b></p> <p>Yea! Other than that I think we have covered everything.</p> <p><b>Yes, thank you very much.</b></p> <p>It was my pleasure.</p>	<p><b>*sending it to study team when near presentable</b></p> <p><b>*getting feedback</b></p> <p><b>*getting an interesting mix of feedback</b></p> <p><b>*acting as a mentor of my son's AW</b></p> <p><b>*looking at someone else's work helps to hold writing skills</b></p>
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## APPENDIX E: FIRST STEP IN IDENTIFYING RANGE OF RESPONSES

### PLANNING STRATEGIES

1. Chinese (Female) – figuring requirements, consulting references, surfing the Internet
2. Chinese (Female) – writing plan, looking at a model
3. Chinese (Male) – reading the title, understanding the area, finding a way of writing, looking at a model, asking tutors and classmates
4. Chinese (Male) – reading requirement, finding sufficient materials, generating ideas, looking at a model

### How do you use them?

1. Chinese (Female) – Check what tutors really want
2. Chinese (Female) – thinking of number of paragraphs, content, the purpose of sequence, transitional words
3. Chinese (Male) – making an outline, writing the title, introduction, stopping and thinking
4. Chinese (Male) – reading the requirement very carefully word by word and line by line, writing the structure of my ideas down

### Why do you use them?

1. Chinese (Female) – not going sideways
2. Chinese (Female) – because other things interrupt you so you need to plan
3. Chinese (Male) – writing is a way of thinking
4. Chinese (Male) – making myself clear

### Using L1

- 1- Chinese (Female) – thinking and writing in English
- 2- Chinese (Female) – Yes, It is very natural. Never writing in Chinese first. Wasting time
- 3- Chinese (Male) – Thinking in Chinese most of the time, writing in English most of the time

- 4- Chinese (Male) – Thinking in Chinese and English equally, writing in English most of the time

### **How?**

1. Trying to avoid Chinese
2. Having the ideas and sentences in my mind not written.
3. Chinese (Male) – 60% thinking in Chinese and 40% thinking in English. Translating from Chinese to English makes writing not fluent
4. Chinese (Male) – Thinking in Chinese first and then translate it to English. But writing purely in English. Relying too much on materials writing in English

### **Why?**

1. Chinese (Female) – wasting time,
2. Chinese (Female) – Having no time, It is natural to think in Chinese
3. Chinese (Male) – Thinking in Chinese naturally, lacking English competence
4. Chinese (Male) – Having limited time. Translating every sentence into Chinese is a waste of time. Thinking and writing in English makes writing understandable

## **DRAFTING**

Chinese (Female) – using sources

Chinese (Female) – writing my own ideas and making use of expressions used by natives

Chinese (Male) – reading and writing

Chinese (Male) – writing my own ideas

### **Thinking of readers**

1. Chinese (Female) – Think of supervisors who check our assignments as the only readers.
2. Chinese (Female) – thinking of readers in general
3. Chinese (Male) – thinking of tutors as readers
4. Chinese (Male) – rarely thinking of readers.



### **How?**

1. Chinese (Female) – Taking supervisors ideas into account when writing academic things.
2. Chinese (Female) – using correct grammar, good sentence structure
3. Chinese (Male) – using academic English
4. Chinese (Male) – Just thinking of myself and my understanding and my experience

### **Why?**

1. Chinese (Female) – Being very careful about the choice of words the style of writing.
2. Chinese (Female) – Delivering understandable message
3. Chinese (Male) – to please supervisors
4. Chinese (Male) – Being not confident in English

### **NUMBER OF DRAFTS**

1. Chinese (Female) – 3 or 4 drafts
2. Chinese (Female) – 6 drafts
3. Chinese (Male) – 1 draft
4. Chinese (Male) – 3 drafts

### **How?**

1. Chinese (Female) – Modifying regularly
2. Chinese (Female) – Reading and modifying again and again
3. Chinese (Male) – writing a draft first then modifying it
4. Chinese (Male) – Completing the first draft and revising twice

### **Why?**

1. Chinese (Female) – Having a rough idea at the beginning, getting some new ideas to activate later, realizing previous ideas are not appropriate, changing it completely
2. Chinese (Female) – detecting mistakes

3. Chinese (Male) – improving the first one
4. Chinese (Male) – Checking for spoken English, correcting sentences, changing the structure but not ideas

### **Problems in writing**

1. Chinese (Female) – Finding appropriate resources, understanding which part is important, referencing, reasoning, style, structuring and ordering of paragraphs
2. Chinese (Female) – Choosing proper words, forming sentences, writing like natives
3. Chinese (Male) – Understanding the topic, getting information from texts, writing conclusion
4. Chinese (Male) – Expressing myself clearly

### **How to overcome them?**

1. Chinese (Female) – Checking requirements, sticking to standards, reading, using models, leaving the text, having breaks, having breaks
2. Chinese (Female) – Copying natives for writing only not ideas, copying and thinking why they use this sentence form; if I write it myself what kind of words and sentences I use
3. Chinese (Male) – Trying to understand the topic, asking for help from teachers, finding similar information from books, writing conclusions in different ways, using software for synonyms
4. Chinese (Male) – Reading my tutors' feedback carefully, negotiating my writing with tutors, comparing their understanding with mine, making notes especially for phrases or lexicons

### **Why?**

1. Chinese (Female) – Not sticking to the standards results in getting lower marks
2. Chinese (Female) – Copying natives and comparing their writing with mine is very important to improve.
3. Chinese (Male) – Being not native, lacking words
4. Chinese (Male) – delivering clear message

## **WRITING BLOCK**

1. Chinese (Female) – Not comprehending the assignment question, conflicting ideas, finding appropriate words
2. Chinese (Female) – noise, music, being not in the mood
3. Chinese (Male) – writing long assignments, roommates, noise
4. Chinese (Male) – Avoiding stopping

## **Strategies used**

1. Chinese (Female) – Figuring the question with tutors and other classmates, referring to some references, reconsidering ideas, modify them, making them coherent
2. Chinese (Female) – avoiding distraction
3. Chinese (Male) – Using university library, dividing the task
4. Chinese (Male) – writing day and night without sleeping

## **Why?**

1. Chinese (Female) – using variety of words,
2. Chinese (Female) – seeking peace to concentrate
3. Chinese (Male) – staying focus
4. Chinese (Male) – Getting the mood for writing again is difficult, needing

## **Meeting deadlines**

1. Chinese (Female) – Overworking, asking experts
2. Chinese (Female) – writing continuously
3. Chinese (Male) – Writing continuously
4. Chinese (Male) – working day and night, neglecting grammar points, concentrating on ideas

## **Revising**

### **When?**

1. Chinese (Female) – Through the whole process and in the end
2. Chinese (Female) – After finishing the whole task

3. Chinese (Male) – revising at the end
4. Chinese (Male) – revising every time

### **Why?**

1. Chinese (Female) – noticing and correcting spelling mistakes, checking for logic, and checking the whole for mistakes
2. Chinese (Female) – revising at the end provides an overall view, local revising makes you forget what to write next – focusing on writing first
3. Chinese (Male) – having a whole feeling of the assignment
4. Chinese (Male) – revising the clarity of each idea – though ideas are clear in my mind, I'm not sure of my expressions

### **How?**

1. Chinese (Female) – using Microsoft word for spelling, conferring with peers for other mistakes
2. Chinese (Female) – revising the order of paragraphs, sentence form, spelling mistakes, appropriateness of words
3. Chinese (Male) – discussing ideas with peers
4. Chinese (Male) – asking native speaker to check for clarity

### **Editing**

1. Chinese (Female) – editing by myself mostly, seeking help from peers or supervisors when getting stuck
2. Chinese (Female) – editing by myself mostly, seeking help from proper person
3. Chinese (Male) – editing by myself
4. Chinese (Male) – editing by myself, giving parts not all of it to native speakers

### **Why?**

1. Chinese (Female) – being not confident in academic writing
2. Chinese (Female) – improving by feedback
3. Chinese (Male) – preferring editing by own

4. Chinese (Male) – being not sure of proper words

#### **What aspect of language?**

1. Chinese (Female) – All, especially grammatical mistakes
2. Chinese (Female) – All, spelling, grammar, sentence structure
3. Chinese (Male) – Spelling, grammar, structure, the flow
4. Chinese (Male) – sentences, structure, semantics

#### **Why?**

1. Chinese (Female) – grammatical mistakes cannot be tested by Microsoft, eliminating mistakes hated by supervisors
2. Chinese (Female) – spelling mistakes give bad impression about your language ability, grammatical mistakes prevent readers understanding the message, good sentence structure ensuring delivering the message in the right way
3. Chinese (Male) – ensuring everything is correct
4. Chinese (Male) – being not confident in these aspects

#### **Final comments**

1. Chinese (Female) – never learnt how to write academically before coming to the UK
2. Chinese (Female) – paying attention to writing style, practicing writing is a must
3. Chinese (Male) – avoiding Internet – not academic
4. Chinese (Male) – being a teacher, I'm confident in spelling and ideas but not vocabulary.

## **PLANNING STRATEGIES**

1. British (Female) – Using web diagram, having a time table
2. British (Female) –writing a draft structure, having lots of books and journal articles around, setting deadlines for myself, outlining
3. British (Male) – doing a table of contents, filling in titles, having timetable in mind, setting deadline with supervisors,
4. British (Male) – forming ideas, reading the background, applying what is read to the writing task, discussing the plan with supervisors

### **How do you use them?**

1. British (Female) – I have a core of what a chapter is, then arms of different ideas, then comes what included within those ideas. Allocating authors' ideas onto this web as I read things. By the end finding what the chapter needs to be. Using chapter block, having headings and what to include within them. Having a time table according to when the assignment has to be in with the Masters. Having an overall timetable with PhD. Being not neurotic about completely.
2. British (Female) – looking at the criteria, listing different elements to talk about – a foundation of structure, starting reading, incorporating pieces into relevant structure, discussing ideas, drafting the plan (few lines, few bullet points), checking with supervisors for any missing aspects, expanding the plan, redrafting the plan.
3. British (Male) –seeing any holes to be filled, checking stuff to be taken out.
4. British (Male) – looking at the methodology of writing the whole thing, finding ways to approach the chapter, consulting books on standard writing, writing not physically, using a machine.

### **Why do you use them?**

1. British (Female) – Writing my own ideas, knowing what to say. Getting that done by then giving you long time to do next piece. Getting mad without timetable,
2. British (Female) – meeting what's expected, lacking confidence, lacking experience, sharing thoughts and views with supervisors, feeling lonely
3. British (Male) – getting a big picture, Creating pressure to meet deadlines

4. British (Male) – pouring thoughts and striking ideas when away

### **Thinking in spoken English**

1. British (Female) – thinking in colloquial not academic English
2. British (Female) – when I write something I just thinking aloud
3. British (Male) – difficulty in writing academically normally thinking in spoken English
4. British (Male) – thinking in spoken

### **How?**

1. British (Female) – thinking as speaking or reading first. Formulating the diagram first then describing and rationalising afterwards – very rarely with the other way round
2. British (Female) – writing is a way of thinking, so the thoughts represented in spoken form
3. British (Male) – easier to think and write in spoken English
4. British (Male) – thinking comes first

### **Why?**

1. British (Female) – thinking first then describing
2. British (Female) – What we put on the page is just thoughts
3. British (Male) – not having a slate clean as the mind of one who never speaks English before
4. British (Male) – I tend to think in spoken rather than academic which is reflected on my writing

### **DRAFTING**

1. British (Female) – translating ideas into writing
2. British (Female) – writing my own ideas
3. British (Male) – sink strategy
4. British (Male) – presenting results

### **Thinking of readers**

1. British (Female) – not at this stage – at the editing

2. British (Female) – yes, to some extent,
3. British (Male) – thinking of readers takes me forever to write anything,
4. British (Male) – always aware of readers, thinking of examiners, thinking of readers, being cognizance of audience

### **How?**

1. British (Female) – delaying thinking of readers to the editing stage
2. British (Female) – rereading written paragraphs checking if they sound right, readdressing what written, checking for missing things,
3. British (Male) – writing the first draft without thinking of readers, then reading over and over, going back checking for missing words, explaining things, handing it to a proof-reader. Constantly being corrected for readers
4. British (Male) – thinking about being too subjective, being bias, getting balance, constructing my writing, making writing interesting

### **Why?**

1. British (Female) – focusing on what to say, focusing on how to say it, finding a way to express ideas
2. British (Female) – always aware of people who will read and criticise it, getting the message cross the reader, making sense to readers
3. British (Male) – focusing on what to say first, checking for making sense, to be acceptable for readers to understand
4. British (Male) – providing a subjective view, presenting a case on its merits, presenting both sides, presenting own view

### **NUMBER OF DRAFTS**

1. British (Female) – 12 drafts
2. British (Female) – 8 drafts
3. British (Male) – 6 draft
4. British (Male) – 5 drafts



## **How?**

1. British (Female) – 2 drafts before giving to someone else to read and getting feedback, then keep going and going, adapting feedback, then redoing, going back and forward, cycling,
2. British (Female) – writing several drafts, learning to improve from each draft, adapting feedback, correcting structure, expanding ideas, deleting some sentences, resubmitting, rewriting
3. British (Male) – giving to supervisors and proofreaders to check and giving feedback, adjusting feedback
4. British (Male) – being too short, too long, trying to meet in the middle

## **Why?**

1. British (Female) – depending on complicity, bouncing, checking the argument, checking for evidence to support the argument, revisiting literature review chapter, balancing, being not happy of what was written, getting new ideas
2. British (Female) – seeking perfection, reaching high standard of writing
3. British (Male) – trusting others to find mistakes, getting the point very quickly
4. British (Male) – not knowing what to think about, sheer amount of literature, different views, trying to be succinct

## **Problems in writing**

1. British (Female) – academic writing is not easy, editing is extremely difficult, – thinking in colloquial not academic English thinking in a different way, rearranging what is written, thinking of the end message, not noticing spelling mistakes, getting typo errors, getting grammatical errors, being not conscious of these errors, committing ideas to paper not enjoyable, developing a system to do the task, reducing the number of words,
2. British (Female) – writing in depth, referencing, wandering away from writing, structuring, overwriting, getting the right stuff in the right section, not confident in writing in a PhD level, thinking critically, adjusting new ideas in the plan,
3. British (Male) – can't write more than an hour, keeping the train of thoughts, expressing results in an understandable way, explaining what I've showed, referencing

4. British (Male) – finding time, getting in a loop, mixing up, expressing myself, searching for the right word, number of words

### **How to overcome them?**

1. British (Female) – arranging writing task systematically as I go, thinking consciously of what is it I try to say, Reduction Strategy: looking at every sentence, saving words that can be taken out, looking at the next sentence and seeing if that really need to be there, finding sentences that actually saying the same thing, taking pits out, asking somebody else to read it, no solution – just kept going
2. British (Female) – mentioning it to supervisors, asking PhD colleagues, having courses and workshops
3. British (Male) – checking the flow, trying to reflect, checking the fluency, telling the story instead of giving facts, making sense, asking for feedback from supervisors, using endnote for referencing is ideal
4. British (Male) – learning from other's experience, knowing where one has gone wrong, discuss with study team, keeping a plan for other chapters in mind, leaving a task for a while, doing some displacement activity, switching the machine off, getting out for a walk, keeping talking or writing till the word comes, reducing words

### **Why?**

1. British (Female) – not enjoying doing the task, being not easy task, putting so much time and effort, being dyslexic, not having faith in my power to do it, getting undermined, difficult to change the way you think
2. British (Female) – getting inspired by some articles, refreshing mind
3. British (Male) – feeling stress making writing difficult, referencing is the most boring thing to do
4. British (Male) – having other demands, word limit

### **WRITING BLOCK**

1. British (Female) – being easily distracted, interruption, writing continuously,
2. British (Female) – not having a clear idea, working for a long time, noise,
3. British (Male) – noise preventing me from thinking clearly

4. British (Male) – getting block occasionally, not knowing where I was

### **Strategies used**

1. British (Female) – getting the flow makes me going on, having good morning writing then having a break then coming back to it results in having a more productive period (writing snacks), if the interruption just a phone call – going back reread what have written and going back into it. Thinking you don't want to write is a signal to go and do something else and then going back to it, reading around the subject, playing with a diagram, getting away from writing
2. British (Female) – stop and think about it, walk away and come back more focused, highlighting relevant things from books and journal articles to find them easily, not like doing pits and pieces, writing at home, working in the garden
3. British (Male) – walking, seeing a friend, taking time out, sleeping and leaving the task to the next day
4. British (Male) – walking away

### **Why?**

1. British (Female) – couldn't cope with the ideas, lots of ideas and ways to say them came when doing something else
2. British (Female) – avoiding distraction,
3. British (Male) – refreshing mind, not sitting on computer till finish
4. British (Male) – getting frustrated, being mature enough to leave it

### **Meeting deadlines**

1. British (Female) – trying not getting close to deadline, learning to meet deadlines at school, finishing writing on time
2. British (Female) – trying not to leave things to deadline
3. British (Male) – trying not getting close to deadline
4. British (Male) – never submitting work late, not writing well under pressure

## **Why?**

1. British (Female) – being not good at continuously working, inability to sitting down all night and finish submit the work in the morning, working under pressure won't work, allocating more time to editing
2. British (Female) – being organised person, being calm, having a time scale in my mind
3. British (Male) – avoiding working at night, stress makes writing difficult
4. British (Male) – not producing my best under pressure

## **What to do?**

1. British (Female) – dealing with assignments in time, keeping doing it, putting everything aside and concentrate on it, avoiding working under pressure,
2. British (Female) – basically write down everything I want to do, trying not to panic about things, trying to do my best
3. British (Male) – asking for more time, rushing at the end
4. British (Male) – being organising, planning, keeping submission date in mind, typing it on top or as a footer

## **Revising**

### **When?**

1. British (Female) – revising is a continuous cycle, revising the bits, revising the whole
2. British (Female) – waiting till chapter is done – till the end
3. British (Male) – pits revising, whole revising
4. British (Male) – revising constantly

### **Why?**

1. British (Female) – giving the draft to my husband to revise was useful to know where is the difficulty, revising pits makes supervisors forget the context, proof reading the pits is expensive, sending the done thesis for proof reading
2. British (Female) – making sense, checking for legibility,

3. British (Male) – working for me, if only at the end there will be so much mistakes to correct so you don't know where to start
4. British (Male) – thinking about readers, thinking of own development, fully explaining, producing the best, putting it differently

### **How?**

1. British (Female) – revising by myself, revising by supervisors, revising by my husband
2. British (Female) – getting it done first then checking for missing things
3. British (Male) – relying on software for grammar and spelling
4. British (Male) – rereading, looking for ways to improve the text, deleting, cutting and pasting, highlighting,

### **Editing**

1. British (Female) – editing by myself, giving it to study team, husband
2. British (Female) – editing by myself, supervisors
3. British (Male) – By myself, an expert
4. British (Male) – editing by myself, giving it to study team, proofreaders, joining a writing group

### **Why?**

1. British (Female) – not noticing spelling , being more dyslexic, difficulty rethinking,
2. British (Female) – having to be in control of my work
3. British (Male) – my subject is very complicated to give to any one, proofreaders don't know the context of my topic
4. British (Male) – checking for “Zs” and “Ss”, having different feedback

### **What aspect of language?**

1. British (Female) – spelling, grammar, simplicity, clarity, reducing, using synonyms,
2. British (Female) – grammar, spelling errors, punctuation, quotations, italics, references
3. British (Male) – content, then grammar and spelling

1. British (Male) – construction, grammar, paragraph, breaking down long sentences, ideas, getting the flow

### **Why?**

1. British (Female) – reducing without losing the argument , taking out certain examples for the word limit, avoiding using the same words, making sense to readers
2. British (Female) – avoiding massive big chunks, paragraphs are tidy, looking nice to read, easy to read and understand, making sure I did it in the best way I feel I can, having peace of mind at the end
3. British (Female) – ensuring everything is correct
4. British (Male) – content is what interests me, content is what makes me start writing, content is the most important one others (spelling, grammar, structure) are just tools to do it. To make it understandable, I look for spelling and grammar mistakes
5. British (Male) – checking for good quality,

### **Final comments**

1. British (Female) – developing a style should be more directly addressed , my style is difficult for someone to read but I don't know why they find it difficult, I write negatively, it must be the way I've made the connection. It is difficult to change the way you think.
2. British (Female) – being not aware of strategies I do, I don't logically think of how I do them
3. British (Male) – getting data is more problem for me as a scientist
4. British (Male) – acting as a monitor enhancing holding writing skills, looking at someone else's work helps developing your own writing strategies

### **PLANNING STRATEGIES**

1. Libyan (Female) – brainstorming, writing the key words in my mind,
2. Libyan (Female) – outlining,
3. Libyan (Male) – outlining, analysing the topic, collecting relevant materials
4. Libyan (Male) – looking for similar assignment, adopting and adjusting a similar plan, using prior knowledge, consulting

colleagues, collecting information in mind, writing headlines, dividing the assignment into stages

### **How do you use them?**

1. Libyan (Female) – thinking and writing the main frame in Arabic, translating to English
5. Libyan (Female) – deciding the main idea of argument, collecting information, reading and paraphrasing, writing summaries from articles,
2. Libyan (Male) – asking for supplemental material from previous students, looking for submitted assignments, looking for a model
3. Libyan (Male) – writing the headings, deciding what comes under each heading,

### **Why do you use them?**

1. Libyan (Female) – having problem – thinking in Arabic
2. Libyan (Female) – avoiding plagiarism, keeping parts from articles and books read
3. Libyan (Male) – looking through what others did to gather information, to have a sense of varieties, knowing what's exactly required, being not acquainted to find references and sources easily I need to check the references they used
4. Libyan (Male) – trying to make use of the strategies used by others, activating what I know about the topic

### **Using L1**

1. Libyan (Female) – always thinking in Arabic
2. Libyan (Female) – thinking in Arabic sometimes, trying to avoid using Arabic
3. Libyan (Male) – transferring language, transferring ideas,
4. Libyan (Male) – thinking in Arabic first then transferring it to English

## How?

1. Libyan (Female) – picturing the assignment in mind in Arabic, translating, adding English expressions
2. Libyan (Female) – It is a habit to think in Arabic first then translate the ideas into English
3. Libyan (Male) – writing my ideas and then giving the assignment to a proofreaders to see if they understand it or not, omitting vague pieces , rewriting it again
4. Libyan (Male) – having the ideas in my mind, transferring them to English if I fail, I use a dictionary or ask a colleague, drawing in my imagination what I want to write in Arabic first then translate it to English

## Why?

1. Libyan (Female) – it is easier to think in Arabic as it is my first language, thinking properly and in a more complicated way
2. Libyan (Female) – it is easier to formulate my idea in Arabic first but translating those ideas into English always problematic, sometimes they don't make sense to my supervisors
3. Libyan (Male) – being aware of L1 interference, the way I express my idea in English is difficult for native speaker to understand
4. Libyan (Male) – I'd like to think in English while writing in English but I can't escape from my native language. The idea of getting rid of your L1 is impossible,

## DRAFTING

1. Libyan (Female) – thinking of ideas in Arabic, linking them in Arabic, translating them to English, adding some English fuse about them , developing main ideas into difficult complicated ones
2. Libyan (Female) – writing sentences and connecting them, writing paragraphs and connecting them, having the basis – introduction, body, conclusion
3. Libyan (Male) – pouring ideas as they are, giving them to proof readers to check for making sense



4. Libyan (Male) – dividing the assignment to stages, analysing each stage, writing everything about each idea

### **Thinking of readers**

1. Libyan (Female) –trying to think of readers, thinking a little bit of readers
2. Libyan (Female) – thinking of the readers all the time
3. Libyan (Male) – thinking of readers but not from the beginning
4. Libyan (Male) – considering readers

### **How?**

1. Libyan (Female) – making ideas flow easily,
2. Libyan (Female) – writing and reading and checking of making sense and clarifying ideas for each paragraph. That's why I'm late, thinking of readers slow down my writing process
3. Libyan (Male) – just writing my ideas first, the proofreaders deciding whether the message is clear or not
4. Libyan (Male) – simplifying the language, reading the task from another point of view, being neutral, asking for feedback from others

### **Why?**

1. Libyan (Female) – they are not expert in the subject area, I wrote my project for pharmacist and supposed they knew everything about the project. I've learnt in the UK that I can read lots of topic which are different, they can be scientific and geographic and I can still understand them because they were not written for specific readers
2. Libyan (Female) – writing for non-specialists , making the message very clear
3. Libyan (Male) – you have to think of readers before submitting your work as there must be someone to read the piece of information you've written
4. Libyan (Male) – trying to be clear, seeking understandable language for non-expert readers

### **NUMBER OF DRAFTS**

1. Libyan (Female) – maximum 2 drafts

2. Libyan (Female) – 4 drafts
3. Libyan (Male) – 2 drafts
4. Libyan (Male) – maximum 3 drafts

### **How?**

1. Libyan (Female) – handwriting ideas first, adding ideas on the same draft, typing the final draft
2. Libyan (Female) – correcting spelling and grammatical mistakes, clarifying ideas, giving more examples, adapting feedback
3. Libyan (Male) – writing an outline then pouring ideas immediately, going through each idea and checking it, moving to the next, submitting it to a proof-reader, adapting feedback, submitted to tutors
4. Libyan (Male) – facing many difficulties when writing the first draft, discovering grammatical and semantic mistakes when revising it, deciding to rewrite it for the second time, writing the third draft to add or change ideas

### **Why?**

1. Libyan (Female) – feeling more comfortable when handwriting, Finding gaps when reading handwriting, on computer everything sounds OK.
2. Libyan (Female) – every time I read my writing I discover some mistakes, something not clear, some L1 interference which makes my writing not clear
3. Libyan (Male) – focusing on my ideas first and leaving the clarity to proofreaders to detect any L1 interference and to ensure the message is clear
4. Libyan (Male) – it helps to develop writing skills, the more you write, the better improvement you will have, being never satisfied about my writing, committing mistakes, caring about everything even handwriting

### **Problems in writing**

1. Libyan (Female) –not having enough words to express my ideas, writing in a complicated style

2. Libyan (Female) – redundancy, connection, coherence, punctuation, articles “the”
3. Libyan (Male) – critical writing, finding a starting point
4. Libyan (Male) – committing silly mistakes (commas, capital letters), failing to give the exact word, , inability to judge myself

### **How to overcome them?**

1. Libyan (Female) – I keep thinking and thinking then I give up, finding simple words, translating them into Arabic then English and see if the match or not
2. Libyan (Female) – reading in the field of my study, learning from proficient writers by noting some expressions and adapting them in my writing, comparing what I’ve written to others’ writing
3. Libyan (Male) – intensive reading strategy, looking for different arguments, picking up ideas from literature, building up information
4. Libyan (Male) – reading a lot, suspending thinking in Arabic, reading my assignment critically, being careful to the negative meaning of some words usage within a certain context

### **Why?**

1. Libyan (Female) – Using the first language is useful as long as it doesn’t take a long of time, avoiding complicated writing to be understandable
2. Libyan (Female) – looking for a model helps me to improve
3. Libyan (Male) – instead of just listing authors’ point of views I need to be critique, intensive reading will improve my ability write critically
4. Libyan (Male) – to see beyond the lines, some English words have more than one meaning so you use a certain word to mean something but for the reader it means something completely different

### **WRITING BLOCK**

1. Libyan (Female) – noise, having other demands, writing for a long time

2. Libyan (Female) – unrelated ideas, getting confused by the amount of literature, getting upset for being unable to write up to the standard required for a PhD
3. Libyan (Male) – getting stressed, exhausted, having family demands
4. Libyan (Male) – stress, not achieving what you want to say, my writing doesn't reflect what is imaginative in my mind

### **Strategies used**

1. Libyan (Female) – leaving the task for a while, watching TV, surfing the web
2. Libyan (Female) – trying to write each idea and developing it in a separate paragraph then putting the related paragraphs in certain order to make sense, focusing on the recent publications, stop writing and doing something else
3. Libyan (Male) – having a cup of tea, walking down street
4. Libyan (Male) – leaving the task, relax, going out, changing my mood, writing again

### **Why?**

1. Libyan (Female) – unable to write in the same efficiency when writing for a long time, to start fresh,
2. Libyan (Female) – I have to write at a high standard required by university, when getting stuck walking away from writing is the only sensible thing to do
3. Libyan (Male) – no point trying to write once I'm exhausted or stressed as I'm sure it won't satisfy me or my tutors
4. Libyan (Male) – many ideas come to my mind when I am relaxed so I just hurried to my pen and write them down, being in a good mood helps me thinking deeply

### **Meeting deadlines**

1. Libyan (Female) – working better under pressure
2. Libyan (Female) – working under pressure all the time
3. Libyan (Male) – working day and night,
4. Libyan (Male) – suffering for meeting deadline

## Why?

1. Libyan (Female) – I used to do well in exams, I can find words to express my ideas in the exam better than if I have a lot of time
2. Libyan (Female) – having children, lacking proficiency in writing in English, keep on revising, doubles the time allocated for the writing task
3. Libyan (Male) – to manage submission on time
4. Libyan (Male) – the writing process takes more time than expected, pressure makes it worse, revising grammatical mistakes

## What to do?

1. Libyan (Female) – no sleeping, writing continuously, making use of every minute, ignoring other demands, giving writing priority
2. Libyan (Female) – working day and night, trying to finish, concentrating on ideas, ignoring other aspects of language
3. Libyan (Male) – stopping social life, switching TV, stopping browsing the Internet, focusing on assignment, writing the date of submission everywhere
4. Libyan (Male) – having no choice, putting myself in a very hard situation, working hard, spending hours and hours

## Revising

### When?

1. Libyan (Female) – preferring to revise after finishing, revising after being stopped
2. Libyan (Female) – after each paragraph and the whole assignment
3. Libyan (Male) – revising section by section, revising at the end
4. Libyan (Male) – revising systematically after each page, revising the whole before submission,

### Why?

1. Libyan (Female) – finding gaps, looking for the overall organisation,
2. Libyan (Female) – having problems in connecting ideas, L1 interference

3. Libyan (Male) – not watching every single word of a lengthy assignment, eliminating mistakes,
4. Libyan (Male) – avoiding silly mistakes,

### **How?**

1. Libyan (Female) – if interrupted I revise to remind myself about the point where I stopped by reading it again to get the flow
2. Libyan (Female) – checking the content, reading it aloud, checking for making sense,
3. Libyan (Male) – after finishing the first section I go back through it revising and editing it, having software to check it, amending the whole task at the end
4. Libyan (Male) – after finishing the first page I revise it then the second page, revising the whole assignment at least three times before submission, not going deeper in revising (superficial revising), trying to read it from another point of view

### **Editing**

1. Libyan (Female) – asking help from experts only – not classmates, not any native speaker
2. Libyan (Female) – used to edit by myself, having no idea about proofreading before, starting using proofreaders
3. Libyan (Male) – editing it by own first, then giving it to a native speaker, emailing it to a friend, negotiating my writing with others
4. Libyan (Male) – by myself, willing to get help from others

### **Why?**

1. Libyan (Female) – I am not professional in academic writing, I am more a scientific writer, not every native speaker is good at writing
2. Libyan (Female) – In my educational culture, giving your work to a proof-reader to check is considered to be illegal – you have to do the job by yourself. Having a proof-reader to check my work is of great help to me as a second language learner, to make sure the message is clear
3. Libyan (Male) – checking for understanding, getting feedback, being non-native

4. Libyan (Male) – sharing ideas with others helps me to improve, worrying about my writing

### **What aspect of language?**

1. Libyan (Female) – grammar, cohesion, coherence, linking, organisation, development of ideas
2. Libyan (Female) – content, punctuation
3. Libyan (Male) – punctuation, grammar, content
4. Libyan (Male) – structure, grammar, semantics, clear ideas, suitable ideas that match my intention of writing

### **Why?**

1. Libyan (Female) – giving the impression of trustworthy
2. Libyan (Female) – to make sure the message is there in an understandable way
3. Libyan (Male) – breaking down long sentences, amending translated ideas and language, seeking understandable language
4. Libyan (Male) – being not native speaker I have to look at the language, committing silly mistakes, writing in English while thinking in Arabic

### **Final comments**

1. Libyan (Female) – negotiating writing with experts is needed for improvement
2. Libyan (Female) –
3. Libyan (Male) – focusing on academic writing at university level in Libya
4. Libyan (Male) – though aware of writing process requirement– a plan, knowledge, cognitive, metacognitive – in reality you just do what you used to do. We can't get rid of what we've learnt when we were young, it lies dormant in our minds. Whenever we attempt to do a piece of writing, all what you have learnt before comes to you in practical situation.

Trying to learn how native speakers think and imitating them is the only way to overcome our problem.

## APPENDIX F: DEVISING A SUMMARY CHART

### Devising a summary chart: sorting and classifying elements, combining into categories

#### QUESTION 1: PLANNING STRATEGIES

<p>What do you do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• figuring requirements</li> <li>• consulting references</li> <li>• writing plan</li> <li>• looking at a model</li> <li>• understanding the area</li> <li>• finding a way of writing</li> <li>• asking tutors and classmates</li> <li>• generating ideas</li> </ul> <p>How do you use them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check what tutors really want</li> <li>• thinking of number of paragraphs</li> <li>• thinking of content</li> <li>• thinking of purpose of sequence</li> <li>• thinking of transitional words</li> <li>• writing the title</li> <li>• structuring my ideas</li> <li>• reading the requirement word by word and line by line</li> </ul> <p>Why do you use them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not going sideways</li> <li>• other things interruption</li> <li>• writing is a way of thinking</li> </ul>	<p>What do you do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using web diagram</li> <li>• having a time table</li> <li>• writing a draft structure</li> <li>• setting deadlines for myself</li> <li>• outlining</li> <li>• doing a table of contents</li> <li>• filling in titles</li> <li>• reading the background</li> <li>• discussing the plan with supervisors</li> <li>• using a machine</li> </ul> <p>How do you use them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• having a core of what a chapter is, then arms of different ideas, then comes what included within those ideas</li> <li>• Allocating authors' ideas onto this web as I read things</li> <li>• By the end finding what the chapter needs to be</li> <li>• Having a time table according to when the assignment has to be in</li> <li>• Being not neurotic about the timetable completely</li> <li>• looking at the criteria</li> <li>• listing different elements to talk about</li> <li>• starting reading</li> <li>• incorporating pieces into relevant structure.</li> </ul>	<p>What do you do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorming</li> <li>• Outlining</li> <li>• analysing the topic</li> <li>• collecting relevant materials</li> <li>• looking at similar assignment</li> <li>• adopting and adjusting a similar plan,</li> <li>• writing headings</li> <li>• consulting colleagues</li> <li>• dividing the assignment into stages</li> </ul> <p>How do you use them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• thinking and writing the main frame in Arabic, translating to English</li> <li>• deciding the main idea of argument</li> <li>• collecting information</li> <li>• reading and paraphrasing</li> <li>• writing summaries from articles</li> <li>• asking for supplemental material from previous students</li> <li>• looking for submitted assignments</li> <li>• looking for a model</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• making myself clear</li> </ul>	<p>Why do you use them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing my own ideas</li> <li>• knowing what to say</li> <li>• Getting that done by then giving you long time to do next piece</li> <li>• Getting mad without timetable</li> <li>• meeting what's expected</li> <li>• lacking confidence</li> <li>• lacking experience</li> <li>• sharing thoughts and views with supervisors</li> <li>• getting a big picture</li> <li>• Creating pressure to meet deadlines</li> <li>• pouring thoughts and striking ideas when away</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writing the headings</li> <li>• deciding what comes under each heading</li> </ul> <p>Why do you use them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• having problem – thinking in Arabic</li> <li>• avoiding plagiarism</li> <li>• keeping pits from articles and books read</li> <li>• to have a sense of varieties</li> <li>• knowing what's exactly required</li> <li>• being not acquainted to find references and sources easily I need to check the references they used</li> <li>• trying to make use of the strategies used by others</li> <li>• activating what I know about the topic</li> </ul>
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**QUESTION 2: Using L1 / Using spoken English**

<p>What do you do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trying to avoid Chinese</li> <li>• Thinking in Chinese most of the time</li> <li>• Thinking in Chinese and English equally</li> </ul> <p>How do you use them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• thinking and writing in</li> </ul>	<p>What do you do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• thinking in colloquial not academic English</li> <li>• normally thinking in spoken English</li> </ul> <p>How do you use them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• thinking as speaking or reading first</li> <li>• Formulating the</li> </ul>	<p>What do you do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• always thinking in Arabic</li> <li>• thinking in Arabic sometimes</li> <li>• transferring language</li> <li>• transferring ideas</li> </ul> <p>How do you use them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• picturing the</li> </ul>
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<p>English</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never writing in Chinese</li> <li>• Having the ideas and sentences in my mind not written</li> <li>• 60% thinking in Chinese and 40% thinking in English</li> <li>• Thinking in Chinese first and then translate it to English, but writing purely in English</li> <li>• Relying too much on materials written in English</li> </ul> <p>Why do you use them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wasting time</li> <li>• It is natural to think in Chinese</li> <li>• lacking English competence</li> <li>• Having limited time</li> <li>• Thinking and writing in English makes writing understandable</li> </ul>	<p>diagram first then describing and rationalising afterwards</p> <p>Why do you use them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• thinking first then describing – very rarely with the other way around</li> <li>• easier to think and write in spoken English</li> <li>• not having a slate clean as the mind of one who never speaks English before</li> </ul>	<p>assignment in mind in Arabic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• translating, adding English expressions</li> <li>• thinking in Arabic first then transferring it to English</li> <li>• writing my ideas and then giving the assignment to a proofreaders to see if they understand it or not, omitting vague pieces , rewriting it again</li> </ul> <p>Why do you use them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• it is easier to think in Arabic as it is my first language</li> <li>• thinking properly and in a more complicated way</li> <li>• It is a habit to think in Arabic first then translate the ideas into English</li> <li>• it is easier to formulate my idea in Arabic first but translating those ideas into English always problematic</li> <li>• can't escape from my native language</li> </ul>
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## QUESTION 3: DRAFTING

### Thinking of readers

<p>Who?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinking of supervisors who check our assignments as the only readers</li> <li>• thinking of readers in general</li> <li>• rarely thinking of readers</li> </ul> <p>How?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking supervisors ideas into account when writing academic things</li> <li>• using correct grammar</li> <li>• good sentence structure</li> <li>• using academic English</li> <li>• Just thinking of myself and my understanding and my experience</li> <li>• Being very careful about the choice of words the style of writing.</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to please supervisors</li> <li>• Delivering understandable message</li> <li>• Being not confident in English</li> </ul>	<p>Who?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not at this stage – at the editing</li> <li>• to some extent</li> <li>• often thinking of readers</li> <li>• always aware of readers</li> <li>• thinking of examiners</li> <li>• being cognizance of audience</li> </ul> <p>How?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• delaying thinking of readers to the editing stage</li> <li>• reader is always in the back of my mind</li> <li>• reading what I have written</li> <li>• rereading written paragraphs checking if they sound right</li> <li>• readdressing what written</li> <li>• checking for missing things</li> <li>• writing the first draft without thinking of readers</li> <li>• then reading over and over</li> <li>• going back checking for missing words</li> <li>• explaining things</li> <li>• handing it to a proof-reader</li> <li>• thinking of readers takes me forever to write any thing</li> <li>• getting balance</li> </ul>	<p>Who?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• thinking a little bit of readers</li> <li>• thinking of the readers all the time</li> <li>• thinking of readers but not from the beginning</li> <li>• considering general readers</li> </ul> <p>How?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• making ideas flow easily</li> <li>• writing and reading and checking of making sense</li> <li>• clarifying ideas for each paragraph</li> <li>• just writing my ideas first</li> <li>• the proofreaders deciding whether the message is clear or not</li> <li>• simplifying the language</li> <li>• reading the task from another point of view</li> <li>• being neutral</li> <li>• asking for feedback from other</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• thinking of readers slow down my writing process</li> <li>• thinking of readers as experts</li> <li>• writing for non-specialists</li> <li>• you have to think of readers before submitting your work</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• constructing my writing</li> <li>• making writing interesting</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focusing on what to say first</li> <li>• focusing on how to say it first</li> <li>• finding a way to express ideas</li> <li>• Constantly being corrected for readers</li> <li>• thinking about being too subjective</li> <li>• being bias</li> <li>• making writing interesting</li> <li>• people will read and criticise it</li> <li>• getting the message cross the reader</li> <li>• making sense to readers</li> <li>• to be acceptable for readers to understand</li> <li>• providing a subjective view</li> <li>• presenting a case on its merits</li> <li>• presenting both sides</li> <li>• presenting own view</li> </ul>	<p>as there must be someone to read the piece of information you've written</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• seeking understandable language for non-expert readers</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
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## QUESTION 4: NUMBER OF DRAFTS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 or 4 drafts</li> <li>• 6 drafts</li> <li>• 1 draft</li> <li>• 3 drafts</li> </ul> <p>How?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modifying regularly</li> <li>• writing a draft first then modifying it</li> <li>• Completing the first draft and revising twice</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having a rough idea at the beginning</li> <li>• getting some new ideas to activate later</li> <li>• realizing previous ideas are not appropriate</li> <li>• changing it completely</li> <li>• detecting mistakes</li> <li>• improving the first one</li> <li>• Checking for spoken English</li> <li>• correcting sentences</li> <li>• changing the structure but not ideas</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 drafts</li> <li>• 8 drafts</li> <li>• 6 draft</li> <li>• 5 drafts</li> </ul> <p>How?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 drafts before giving to someone else to read</li> <li>• adapting feedback</li> <li>• redoing</li> <li>• going back and forward, cycling,</li> <li>• writing several drafts</li> <li>• learning to improve from each draft</li> <li>• correcting structure</li> <li>• expanding ideas</li> <li>• deleting some sentences</li> <li>• resubmitting</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bouncing</li> <li>• being too short, too long</li> <li>• trying to meet in the middle</li> <li>• balancing</li> <li>• being not happy</li> <li>• getting new ideas</li> <li>• being not satisfied</li> <li>• seeking perfection</li> <li>• reaching high standard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maximum 2 drafts</li> <li>• 4 drafts</li> <li>• 2 drafts</li> <li>• maximum 3 drafts</li> </ul> <p>How?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• handwriting ideas first</li> <li>• adding ideas on the same draft</li> <li>• typing the final draft</li> <li>• correcting spelling and grammatical mistakes</li> <li>• clarifying ideas</li> <li>• giving more examples</li> <li>• adapting feedback</li> <li>• writing an outline then pouring ideas immediately</li> <li>• going through each idea and checking it</li> <li>• submitting it to a proof-reader</li> <li>• rewrite it for the second time</li> <li>• writing the third draft to add or change ideas</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• feeling more comfortable when handwriting</li> <li>• Finding gaps when reading handwriting</li> <li>• on computer everything sounds OK.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>of writing</li> <li>not knowing what to think about</li> <li>sheer amount of literature</li> <li>trying to be succinct</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>every time I read my writing I discover some mistakes</li> <li>some L1 interference which makes my writing not clear</li> <li>focusing on my ideas first and leaving the clarity to proofreaders</li> </ul>
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### QUESTION 5: Problems in writing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finding appropriate resources</li> <li>understanding which part is important</li> <li>referencing</li> <li>reasoning</li> <li>style</li> <li>structuring and ordering of paragraphs</li> <li>Choosing proper words</li> <li>forming sentences</li> <li>writing like natives</li> <li>Understanding the topic</li> <li>getting information from texts</li> <li>writing conclusion</li> <li>Expressing myself clearly</li> </ul> <p>How to overcome them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Checking requirements</li> <li>sticking to standards</li> <li>reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>academic writing is not easy</li> <li>editing is extremely difficult</li> <li>thinking in colloquial not academic English</li> <li>thinking in a different way</li> <li>rearranging what is written</li> <li>thinking of the end message</li> <li>getting typo errors</li> <li>getting grammatical errors</li> <li>being not conscious of these errors</li> <li>committing ideas to paper</li> <li>developing a system to do the task</li> <li>reducing the number of words</li> <li>writing in depth</li> <li>referencing</li> <li>wandering away from</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not having enough words to express my ideas</li> <li>writing in a complicated style</li> <li>redundancy</li> <li>connection</li> <li>coherence</li> <li>punctuation</li> <li>articles "the"</li> <li>critical writing</li> <li>finding a starting point</li> <li>committing silly mistakes (commas, capital letters)</li> <li>failing to give the exact word</li> <li>inability to judge myself</li> </ul> <p>How to overcome them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>keep thinking and thinking</li> <li>finding simple words</li> <li>translating them into Arabic then English and</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using models</li> <li>• leaving the text</li> <li>• having breaks</li> <li>• Copying natives for writing only not ideas</li> <li>• copying and thinking why they use this sentence form; if I write it myself what kind of words and sentences I use</li> <li>• asking for help from teachers</li> <li>• finding similar information from books</li> <li>• writing conclusions in different ways</li> <li>• using software for synonyms</li> <li>• Reading my tutors' feedback carefully</li> <li>• negotiating my writing with tutors</li> <li>• comparing their understanding with mine</li> <li>• making notes especially for phrases or lexicons</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not sticking to the standards results in getting lower marks</li> <li>• Copying natives and comparing their writing with mine is very important to improve</li> <li>• Being not native</li> <li>• lacking words</li> <li>• delivering clear</li> </ul>	<p>writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• structuring</li> <li>• overwriting</li> <li>• getting the right stuff in the right section</li> <li>• not confident in writing in a PhD level</li> <li>• thinking critically</li> <li>• starting a new chapter</li> <li>• not knowing what to write</li> <li>• putting off writing</li> <li>• adjusting new ideas in the plan</li> <li>• can't write more than an hour</li> <li>• keeping the train of thoughts</li> <li>• expressing results in an understandable way</li> <li>• explaining what I've showed</li> <li>• finding time</li> <li>• getting in a loop</li> <li>• mixing up</li> <li>• expressing myself</li> <li>• searching for the right word</li> <li>• number of words</li> </ul> <p>How to overcome them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• arranging writing task systematically as I go</li> <li>• thinking consciously of what is it I try to say</li> </ul>	<p>see if the match</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reading in the field of my study</li> <li>• learning from proficient writers by noting some expressions and adapting them</li> <li>• comparing what I've written to others'</li> <li>• intensive reading strategy</li> <li>• looking for different arguments</li> <li>• picking up ideas from literature</li> <li>• building up information</li> <li>• suspending thinking in Arabic</li> <li>• reading my assignment critically</li> <li>• being careful to the negative meaning of some words usage within a certain context</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using the first language is useful as long as it doesn't take a long of time</li> <li>• avoiding complicated writing to be understandable</li> <li>• looking for a model helps me to improve</li> <li>• instead of just listing authors' point of views I need to be critique</li> <li>• intensive reading will</li> </ul>
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<p>message</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• looking at every sentence, saving words that can be taken out, looking at the next sentence and seeing if that really need to be there</li> <li>• finding sentences that actually saying the same thing</li> <li>• taking pits out</li> <li>• asking somebody else to read it</li> <li>• no solution – just kept going</li> <li>• mentioning it to supervisors</li> <li>• asking PhD colleagues</li> <li>• having courses and workshops</li> <li>• getting away from office environment</li> <li>• reading some articles</li> <li>• checking the flow</li> <li>• trying to reflect</li> <li>• checking the fluency</li> <li>• telling the story instead of giving facts</li> <li>• asking for feedback from supervisors</li> <li>• using endnote for referencing is ideal</li> <li>• learning from other's experience</li> <li>• knowing where one has gone wrong</li> <li>• discuss with study team</li> </ul>	<p>improve my ability write critically</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to see beyond the lines</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keeping a plan for other chapters in mind</li> <li>• leaving a task for a while</li> <li>• doing some displacement activity</li> <li>• keeping talking or writing till the word comes</li> <li>• reducing words</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• putting so much time and effort</li> <li>• not having faith in my power to do it</li> <li>• being dyslexic</li> <li>• getting undermined</li> <li>• difficult to change the way you think</li> <li>• writing at a high standard by the nature of PhD</li> <li>• not confident</li> <li>• getting inspired by some articles</li> <li>• refreshing mind</li> <li>• feeling stress making writing difficult</li> <li>• referencing is the most boring thing to do</li> </ul>	
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## QUESTION 6: WRITING BLOCK

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not comprehending the assignment question</li> <li>• conflicting ideas</li> <li>• finding appropriate words</li> <li>• noise, music</li> <li>• being not in the mood</li> <li>• writing long assignments</li> <li>• roommates</li> <li>• avoiding stopping</li> </ul> <p>Strategies used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Figuring the question with tutors and other classmates</li> <li>• referring to some references</li> <li>• reconsidering ideas</li> <li>• modify them</li> <li>• making them coherent</li> <li>• avoiding distraction</li> <li>• Using university library</li> <li>• dividing the task</li> <li>• writing day and night without sleeping</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using variety of words</li> <li>• seeking peace to concentrate</li> <li>• staying focus</li> <li>• Getting the mood for writing again is difficult</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being easily distracted</li> <li>• interruption</li> <li>• writing continuously</li> <li>• not having a clear idea</li> <li>• working for a long time</li> <li>• noise</li> <li>• not knowing where I was</li> </ul> <p>Strategies used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• getting the flow makes me going on</li> <li>• having good morning writing then having a break then coming back to it results in having a more productive period (writing snacks)</li> <li>• if the interruption just a phone call – going back reread what have written and going back into it</li> <li>• Thinking you don't want to write is a signal to go and do something else and then going back to it</li> <li>• reading around the subject</li> <li>• playing with a diagram</li> <li>• <u>getting away from writing</u></li> <li>• stop and think about it</li> <li>• walk away and come back more focused</li> <li>• highlighting relevant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• noise</li> <li>• having other demands</li> <li>• writing for a long time</li> <li>• unrelated ideas</li> <li>• getting confused by the amount of literature</li> <li>• getting upset for being unable to write up to the standard required for a PhD</li> <li>• getting stressed</li> <li>• exhausted</li> <li>• not achieving what you want to say</li> <li>• my writing doesn't reflect what is imaginative in my mind</li> </ul> <p>Strategies used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leaving the task for a while</li> <li>• watching TV</li> <li>• surfing the web</li> <li>• trying to write each idea and developing it in a separate paragraph then putting the related paragraphs in certain order to make sense</li> <li>• focusing on the recent publications</li> <li>• stop writing and doing something else</li> <li>• having a cup of tea</li> <li>• walking down street</li> </ul>
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	<p>things from books and journal articles to find them easily</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writing at home</li> <li>• working in the garden</li> <li>• walking</li> <li>• seeing a friend</li> <li>• taking time out</li> <li>• sleeping and leaving the task to the next day</li> <li>• walking away</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• couldn't cope with the ideas</li> <li>• lots of ideas and ways to say them came when doing something else</li> <li>• avoiding distraction</li> <li>• refreshing mind</li> <li>• getting frustrated</li> <li>• being mature enough to leave it</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leaving the task</li> <li>• relax</li> <li>• going out</li> <li>• changing my mood</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unable to write in the same efficiency when writing for a long time</li> <li>• to start fresh</li> <li>• I have to write at a high standard required by university</li> <li>• when getting stuck walking away from writing is the only sensible thing to do</li> <li>• no point trying to write once I'm exhausted or stressed as I'm sure it won't satisfy me or my tutors</li> <li>• many ideas come to my mind when I am relaxed so I just hurried to my pen and write them down</li> <li>• being in a good mood helps me thinking deeply</li> </ul>
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### QUESTION 7: Revising

<p>When?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the whole process and in the end</li> <li>• After finishing the whole task</li> </ul> <p>How?</p>	<p>When?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• revising is a continuous cycle</li> <li>• revising the bits, revising the whole</li> <li>• waiting till chapter is</li> </ul>	<p>When?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• revising after being stopped</li> <li>• after each paragraph and the whole assignment</li> <li>• revising section by</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using Microsoft word for spelling</li> <li>• conferring with peers for other mistakes</li> <li>• revising the order of paragraphs</li> <li>• sentence form</li> <li>• spelling mistakes</li> <li>• appropriateness of words</li> <li>• asking native speaker to check for clarity</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• noticing and correcting spelling mistakes</li> <li>• checking for logic</li> <li>• checking the whole for mistakes</li> <li>• revising at the end provides an overall view</li> <li>• local revising makes you forget what to write next – focusing on writing first</li> <li>• having a whole feeling of the assignment</li> <li>• revising the clarity of each idea – though ideas are clear in my mind, I'm not sure of my expressions</li> </ul>	<p>done</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• as going a long, revising at the end</li> <li>• revising constantly</li> </ul> <p>How?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• revising by myself, revising by supervisors, revising by my husband</li> <li>• getting it done first then checking for missing things</li> <li>• looking at subject content</li> <li>• checking the depth of what's written</li> <li>• logic</li> <li>• relying on software for grammar and spelling</li> <li>• rereading</li> <li>• looking for ways to improve the text</li> <li>• deleting</li> <li>• cutting and pasting</li> <li>• highlighting</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• giving the draft to my husband to revise was useful to know where is the difficulty</li> <li>• revising pits makes supervisors forget the context</li> <li>• proof reading the pits is expensive</li> <li>• revising the whole to avoiding confusion</li> </ul>	<p>section, revising at the end</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• revising systematically after each page, revising the whole before submission</li> </ul> <p>How?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• if interrupted I revise to remind myself about the point where I stopped by reading it again to get the flow</li> <li>• checking the content, reading it aloud</li> <li>• after finishing the first section I go back through it revising and editing it</li> <li>• having software to check it</li> <li>• amending the whole task at the end</li> <li>• after finishing the first page I revise it then the second page</li> <li>• revising the whole assignment at least three times before submission</li> <li>• superficial revising</li> <li>• trying to read it from another point of view</li> </ul> <p>Why</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• finding gaps</li> <li>• looking for the overall organisation</li> <li>• having problems in connecting ideas</li> <li>• L1 interference</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• making sense</li> <li>• checking for legibility</li> <li>• working for me</li> <li>• if only at the end there will be so much mistakes to correct so you don't know where to start</li> <li>• thinking about readers</li> <li>• thinking of own development</li> <li>• fully explaining</li> <li>• producing the best</li> <li>• putting it differently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not watching every single word of a lengthy assignment</li> <li>• eliminating mistakes</li> <li>• avoiding silly mistakes</li> <li>• getting the flow</li> </ul>
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**QUESTION 8: Editing**

<p>How?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• editing by myself mostly</li> <li>• seeking help from peers or supervisors when getting stuck</li> <li>• seeking help from proper person</li> <li>• giving parts not all of it to native speakers</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being not confident in academic writing</li> <li>• improving by feedback</li> <li>• preferring editing by own</li> <li>• being not sure of</li> </ul>	<p>How?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• editing by myself</li> <li>• giving it to study team</li> <li>• husband</li> <li>• an expert</li> <li>• proofreaders</li> <li>• joining a writing group</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not noticing spelling</li> <li>• being more dyslexic</li> <li>• difficulty rethinking</li> <li>• having to be in control of my work</li> <li>• proofreaders don't know the context of my topic</li> </ul>	<p>How?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• asking help from experts only– not classmates, not any native speaker</li> <li>• used to edit by myself</li> <li>• having no idea about proofreading before</li> <li>• editing it by own first</li> <li>• giving it to a native speaker</li> <li>• negotiating my writing with others</li> <li>• willing to get help from others</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not professional in academic writing</li> </ul>
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<p>proper words</p> <p>What aspect of language?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All, especially grammatical mistakes</li> <li>• All, spelling, grammar, sentence structure</li> <li>• the flow</li> <li>• sentences</li> <li>• semantics</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• grammatical mistakes cannot be tested by Microsoft</li> <li>• eliminating mistakes hated by supervisors</li> <li>• spelling mistakes give bad impression about your language ability</li> <li>• grammatical mistakes prevent readers understanding the message</li> <li>• good sentence structure ensuring delivering the message in the right way</li> <li>• ensuring everything is correct</li> <li>• being not confident in these aspects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• checking for “Zs” and “Ss”</li> <li>• having different feedback</li> </ul> <p>What aspect of language?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling</li> <li>• Grammar</li> <li>• simplicity</li> <li>• clarity</li> <li>• reducing</li> <li>• using synonyms</li> <li>• Punctuation</li> <li>• Quotations</li> <li>• Italics</li> <li>• references</li> <li>• construction of sentences</li> <li>• construction</li> <li>• paragraph</li> <li>• breaking down long sentences</li> <li>• ideas</li> <li>• getting the flow</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reducing without losing the argument</li> <li>• making sense to readers</li> <li>• avoiding massive big chunks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being more a scientific writer</li> <li>• not every native speaker is good at writing</li> <li>• giving your work to a proof-reader to check is considered to be illegal</li> <li>• to make sure the message is clear</li> <li>• getting feedback</li> <li>• being non-native</li> <li>• sharing ideas with others helps me to improve</li> <li>• worrying about my writing</li> </ul> <p>What aspect of language?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grammar</li> <li>• Cohesion</li> <li>• Coherence</li> <li>• Linking</li> <li>• Organisation</li> <li>• development of ideas</li> <li>• content</li> <li>• punctuation</li> <li>• structure</li> <li>• semantics</li> <li>• clear ideas</li> <li>• suitable ideas that match my intention of</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• paragraphs are tidy</li> <li>• looking nice to read</li> <li>• easy to read and understand</li> <li>• making sure I did it in the best way I feel I can</li> <li>• having peace of mind at the end</li> <li>• ensuring everything is correct</li> <li>• content is what interests me</li> <li>• (spelling, grammar, structure) are just tools to do it</li> <li>• checking for good quality</li> </ul>	<p>writing</p> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• giving the impression of trustworthy</li> <li>• making sure the message is there in an understandable way</li> <li>• breaking down long sentences</li> <li>• amending translated ideas and language</li> <li>• seeking understandable language</li> <li>• being not native speaker</li> <li>• committing silly mistakes</li> <li>• writing in English while thinking in Arabic</li> </ul>
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**QUESTION 9: Meeting deadlines**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• overworking</li> <li>• writing continuously</li> <li>• working day and night</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not to lose position</li> </ul> <p>What to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• neglecting grammar points</li> <li>• concentrating on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trying not getting close to deadline</li> <li>• learning to meet deadlines at school</li> <li>• finishing writing on time</li> <li>• trying not to leave things to deadline</li> <li>• trying not to come to deadline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• working better under pressure</li> <li>• working under pressure all the time</li> <li>• working day and night</li> <li>• suffering for meeting deadline</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I used to do well in exams</li> </ul>
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<p>ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• asking experts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• never submitting work late</li> </ul> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being not good at continuously working</li> <li>• inability to sitting down all night and finish submit the work in the morning</li> <li>• working under pressure won't work</li> <li>• allocating more time to editing</li> <li>• being organised person</li> <li>• being calm</li> <li>• having a time scale in my mind</li> <li>• avoiding pressure</li> <li>• avoiding working at night</li> <li>• stress makes writing difficult</li> <li>• not producing my best under pressure</li> </ul> <p>What to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dealing with assignments in time</li> <li>• keeping doing it</li> <li>• putting everything aside and concentrate on it</li> <li>• avoiding working under pressure</li> <li>• basically write down</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can find words to express my ideas in the exam better than if I have a lot of time</li> <li>• having children</li> <li>• lacking proficiency in writing in English</li> <li>• keep on revising</li> <li>• doubles the time allocated for the writing task</li> <li>• to manage submission on time</li> <li>• the writing process takes more time than expected</li> <li>• pressure makes it worse</li> <li>• revising grammatical mistakes</li> </ul> <p>What to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no sleeping</li> <li>• writing continuously</li> <li>• making use of every minute</li> <li>• ignoring other demands</li> <li>• giving writing priority</li> <li>• working day and night</li> <li>• trying to finish</li> <li>• concentrating on ideas</li> <li>• ignoring other aspects of language</li> </ul>
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	<p>everything I want to do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trying not to panic about things</li> <li>• trying to do my best</li> <li>• spending more time on the computer</li> <li>• asking for more time</li> <li>• rushing at the end</li> <li>• being organising</li> <li>• planning</li> <li>• keeping submission date in mind</li> <li>• typing it on top or as a footer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stopping social life</li> <li>• switching TV</li> <li>• stopping browsing the Internet</li> <li>• focusing on assignment</li> <li>• writing the date of submission everywhere</li> <li>• having no choice</li> <li>• working hard</li> </ul>
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**APPENDIX G: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION  
BRITISH FEMALE**

**Interview on English academic writing strategy use (BF8)**

Mary	Time: 10.00 am –11.5 am	25/3/2009
Participant' house (Newcastle)	PhD	Education
NA	NA	Age: 56

**Could you please tell me about your educational background as far as academic writing is concerned?**

Participant: I did part of secondary school system and I did English as an A level so I suppose to some extent it's grounded there in language and composing essays and things I then went to teaching certificate where we also produced academic papers and for long time then I given doing academic writing because I actually teaching then I was a mother then I was teaching and being a mother it was till I came back to studying education when I did my masters it was about ten years ago now and it was actually quite difficult when I came back to it to get it back into the mood of academic writing the first assignment I had I found really quite stressful, but when it came back and saw the mark was a reasonable mark I knew that I can be back on the right track after that it wasn't quite such a problem I went through (laughs)but I have to say academic writing is not something I enjoy doing I do because you have to because is that kind of finalisation of process imposing on somebody else but it is not something I'd like to do at all.

**How did you learn to write an academic assignment in English?**

I was never really taught how to do it I was taught how to think about the questions, I was taught how to think about how to edit, and I was taught kind of principles of having an introduction having a middle having an end;

**A process?**

The process but I wasn't really taught how to go about doing it you just did it.

### **Was that in school?**

I don't remember I didn't consciously have listened to that it in particular that way I was just something u gradually picked up and I suppose you picked it up by doing essays and the critique of that essay what need to have this and what needs to have that u gradually make sure incorporate everything needed to be there but it was not something I am conscious of having learnt as such.

### **Do you mean you learnt it by doing not as a subject?**

Yes. Definitely not as a subject.

### **Then how did you learn it?**

Ah, reading must influence you. When you read other people's work, ah, but I think it was more by just by producing essays and looking to critique that came back and adapting it afterwards when I did my master's we were given guidelines for that kind of what needed to be included and sometimes it was as far as kind giving us headings to know the sequence what was expected and that was the masters I did with open university was quite controlled and quit a lot of information about what was required.

### **When you are given an academic assignment in English to write up, could you please tell me about the strategies you use to plan for that writing assignment?**

(Laughs), it is according to, I do tend to particularly the chapter I tend to use web diagrams so I have a core what the chapter is and then arms of what the ideas the different ideas and then comes what included within those ideas what I used to do in masters in particular as I read things I allocated authors ideas onto this web and by the end I actually found I had kind of what this chapter needs to be I did use that process in PhD but not to such an extend because it was more the ideas more came from me I suppose and I knew what I want to say so I didn't need I did kind of chapter block so I get myself headings of what I want to include within that heading it wasn't quite formal as it had been previously.

### **Do you have a timetable for the writing task?**

Yes, with the Masters the time table was very much according to when the assignment has to be in by eh the PhD I did myself a timetable but I wasn't neurotic about it completely. Yes, otherwise I got mad. So, yes I had an overall timetable and I'm trying to so if you get that done by then and that give you long to do that piece.

### **Did you stick to that plan?**

I did quite well until, I even got the writing more has finished on time to be editing has taken so much longer than I am anticipated I thought the editing could be done in three to four months and when it's about a year and it is still ongoing so that has been quite surprised me how long this process has taken.

### **Well, this is writing! What about audience. Do you pay attention to the readers?**

Ah, I think, probably my focus is more on what do I want to say and how can I say it. You have to pay attention to the reader because you have to think how they are going to read that but it is more I think it is more that finding a way for me to express my idea rather what the reader is going to read. Probably part of the editing because I think I have to look at it and think is this going to make sense to the reader and I have to go back and rewrite the pieces.

### **Before talking about editing, how many drafts do you usually write?**

Again it varies on how well the writing is going it varies on what I want to say some of the chapters I've done for my PhD they are now about 11 or 12 drafts and some are about 4 or 5 so usually it would be 1 may be 2 drafts before I gave it to somebody else to read to get a feedback from them but then you can keep going and going because what's their feedback then that makes another draft and then I check whether I can redo it.

### **Do you think it depends on the length of the draft?**

No it depends on complexity I suppose of what you are trying to say. I mean, the drafts have ...the chapter that has with these drafts are bound on report

research findings so that fairly straightforward they come from the research they come from what I try to say, they hold the evidence so they were relatively easy to write because I have worked the evidences I knew what it was I knew what I want to say by that stage I knew what evidence to support what I want to say what evidence my counteracted and was just a bouncing at to make sure the arguments were in and logical there were evidence to support the arguments so those chapters being far or less kind of traumatic than the literature review and the conclusions if you like. But even the conclusions that really being the one that I've revisited and revisited and revisited because every time you revisit the literature review that can have a knock on effect still what you're saying and what you're discussing at the end and what you're discussing come back to the conclusion. And this kind of balancing, going back and forward.

### **Why do you do that?**

Mostly it's been because I wasn't happy with what I had or because another idea came in so for example even when I was doing the research I was in the classroom observing a teacher and on the wall behind there was a diagram for the students about learning process and I thought well that's interesting I made a note of where it came from and then I went and got the book by the author and that led into a whole new range of ideas the A went to the literature review and B was became was an idea as a way of analysing data and then C came in to kind of final discussion and that was the point where I finished with the literature review supposedly so having read that I had to go back to the literature review to make sure where I put it in the literature review balancing with the methodology this going to be a way of analysing and what actually happened. So those kinds of things you have to make another draft and then make another draft and present to your supervisor he can say oh yes but you could do that and that so that can make another draft where you adapt it so by the time you have all these different layers or drafts.

**Could you please tell me if you have experienced any problem in academic writing?**

(laughs) I think 2 main problems of writing one is I don't find it easy I have to arrange it systematically as I go I even the editing I find it extremely difficult to look at it and think what I've written in there that could be taken out or what I've written is not clear kind of written it I find it difficult to rearrange it or to think of it even in a different way I have to consciously think what is it you trying to say do that at the basic one look at this paragraph again and think of what is your end message and I found that really quite difficult ..... that what I wanted to say. In the end what my supervisor suggested is to look at every sentence and save the words that you can take out and then look at the next sentence and see if that really need to be there go to each sentence that you save it ready to be there and see if really needs to be there and in that way I find sentences that actually saying the same thing but just in a different way and I manage to take parts out and manage to reduce the number of words at one point I had 9300 words which way weighting too many I manage to contract them to 8600 so that one process I did with editing which took a very long time because as I say I have difficulty in rethink it I put so much time and effort to thinking how to say it and couldn't rethink it. So that's what one of the problems I have. The other is that I did not notice the spelling I think I'm more dyslexic. I read what I want to read and not what is actually there so I get a lot of kind typo errors I get grammatical errors that I'm not conscious of at all that means I have to ask somebody else to read it – that's what my poor husband doing.

These are the main problems really. When the process of reading for the literature review, I enjoyed that process. The process of gathering ideas, I enjoy. The process of analysing data, I really enjoyed and thinking how can I do this and developing a system to do it. Those parts of process what I enjoyed but it was the committing those ideas to paper this process I did not particularly enjoy and because I didn't enjoy because I didn't find it quite easy I suppose and that made me not have faith in my power to do it as well. It can

undermine you at the end. But I don't really have a solution rather than just I kept going and kept going

**What might stop you when you are writing?**

Anything really (laughs). Uh, I suppose I'm easily distracted, on the other hand, if I get on a piece of writing and it is going well then I'm not. I get a flow. I tend to write that in the mornings and generally in the afternoon I don't think so. But I did find that when I was doing my writing if I had good morning writing and then had a break so that had lunch and perhaps some housework or even sometimes I watch a sort of city afternoon movie on the television. If I then went back to it (writing), I could actually have another period of .... An hour and half that worked really well. If I try to work out all day then I didn't. I just couldn't think any more, my mind just felt as it couldn't cope with the ideas...I wasn't conscious of any difference in performance of writing, whether I wrote in the morning whether I wrote in the afternoon.... I don't come back and think that was a rubbish. The process I found personally more difficult if I tried to do it continuously.

**If you are interrupted, do you stop writing in this case?**

Again it depends on the interruption, if it is just a phone call or something then I would just go back reread what I just being writing and just go back into it. If it was, say, my husband coming saying can we have lunch well that kind of disruption that could take longer.

**What do you do in that case?**

It varied. It depends on what I was writing, how well it had gone. I quickly realised if you really were sitting at the computer thinking I don't want be doing this then that was the signal to go and do something else and then go back to it or even do a bit of reading around the subject or play with a diagram or something else instead of trying to write.

Quite a lot of ideas and ways of saying things came to me when I was actually doing something else sometimes in the bathroom while having a shower I just

hurried and write down the sentences I thought of and the way to say a particular thing. So I think you need to get away from writing as well as a writing time. You need to keep getting away from it.

**When you have a deadline to meet, what strategies do use to meet that deadline?**

I try not to get close to deadlines. Because I'm not very good at kind of continuously working, I'm not one of those people who can sit there all night and finish and submit and handed it at nine o'clock in the morning. I learnt that very quickly when I was at school. I needed to deal with assignments in time so I wasn't under kind of pressure. Inevitably, you do have assignments kind of take you to the edge and it's just a matter of you've got to keep doing it you've got to hand it on Tuesday, therefore, you don't have a choice. You've just to put everything aside and concentrate on this. But I don't think I've ever, maybe I just work from my mind, I don't think ever kind of sit up all night and still doing the assignment that needs to be handed in. It's done the day before or even the day before that.

**Would you like to add anything to this interview?**

That is it really.

**Thank you very much for your time and help.**

It was my pleasure.



**APPENDIX H: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION LIBYAN  
MALE**

**Interview on English academic writing strategy use (LM3)**

Ahmad	Time: 1.07 – 1.57 pm	26/2/2009
Forster Building, Room 15	PhD	TESOL
IELTS: ???	Residence in the UK: 1 year	Age: 46

**Tell me about your educational background as far as writing academic assignments in English is concerned.**

Well you know I graduated a long time ago; it's about 24 years ago. I start writing English as small pieces I mean in short paragraphs. As far as I remember when I started writing I didn't write according to a certain plan I just write how it comes, write and then revise it and give it to sometimes my teachers or my colleagues just to correct it and that's it. Then when I join the post graduate academy to do my MA things had been changed. I've start to think deeply before I do anything. First when I'm asked by my tutors to write a piece of writing academically I first start thing about the topic that I'm going to write, just to activate my brain knowledge. I usually take my time about that and then I jot down some of headlines if you like just to guide my writing. But the problem is my habit it could be a bad habit. I don't like to revise my writing. I usually ask somebody to look at my writing and even if he gives some feedback sometimes I do not follow his instruction, I just do what I have in my mind. And this habit still exists with me until now; when I write something I don't like to revise it. I'm starting to change myself just to give myself some more time. When I write something academically I just give myself a piece of time, one hour, two hours and come back again just to make some sort of improvement. But in the past I didn't use such things.

**Do you think this related to the way you've learnt how to write?**

Exactly, when you think in Arabic sometimes you just start writing. When I was at school, in the Arabic subjects they taught us to have to put a draft for your writing before you start writing your actual thing that you are going to hand in to your teacher. We were asked just to put a draft of what we try to write then to try to correct any mistakes which could be either grammatical or semantic mistakes. I was asked to do that when I was a student but in fact I didn't. I just write directly hurried just to finish and go out and that is it.

**Well this leads us to another thing, how did you learn to write to academically in English?**

This is a good question. I can't limit myself to a certain stage, you know, writing is an accumulated skill every day I learn something new so I can't give a particular time and say at this stage I've learnt how to write academically. I think it's a process of accumulation; it comes by time; every day you learn something new and even now I've learnt a lot.

**And how did you learn it?**

Sometimes I write a piece of writing and give it to my supervisor and according to his feedback I keep asking myself : I know this but I didn't do it so why I should do it from the beginning? And whenever I read anything now, I try to pick some structures some phrases that seem good for me and try to apply these into my writing.

**When you are given an academic assignment in English to write up: could you please tell me about the strategies you use to plan for that writing assignment?**

My strategies have been changed a lot. I try to find something which is very similar to my assignment and try to follow the strategies the writer used, I mean the plan. I try to put a similar plan for that and try to employ my plan. If I asked to write about smoking for example I usually try to revise what I know about as I told you to activate my knowledge about the topic just remember

everything related to that topic and sometimes ask my colleagues about it and collect all those things in my mind. And when I came to the actual process of writing I usually put some, see, headlines; what I'm going to do for example at the beginning – the introduction and then how can I move forward, I mean just to divide the assignment into certain stages and what I'm going to do in the first stage and then when I move to the second stage what I'm going to do and bla bla bla and take them one by one, take for example the first idea try to analyse it try to write everything about that idea and then move to another and move to another till I finish.

Now I'm just trying to learn something completely new to me; as I told you I give myself some time, go away, have some drink may be for one hour or two hours and come back to the same assignment and try to read it I mean critical reading and I usually find a lot of things that need to be changed.

### **This is once you started but what about before you start writing?**

Before I start I try to gather the information that is related to that assignment sometimes I just jot down some sentences that are related so just to activate my prior knowledge about that topic.

### **In Arabic or in English?**

Sometimes I find myself unable just to write or describe something in English; I have the idea in my mind in Arabic and when I try to translate or transfer it to English I fail. I use my dictionary or sometimes I ask one of my colleagues how do you say this in English? But the idea that you can get rid of your native language I think is impossible. It is impossible to think in English. I'd like to think in English while writing in English but you can't escape from your native language. You have to think or draw in your imagination of what you are going to write in Arabic first and then try to transfer it to English.

### **Do you pay attention to the readers when writing in English?**

Yeah, as I told you, you can say this is the thing that I don't like about myself. I usually don't like to read what I've written. I've tried to solve this problem and

encourage myself to look at what I've written and try to read critically; try to forget you are the writer and read it from another point of view but as soon as you start reading you remember that you are the writer and you try to defend or justify you've written. But I think it's better to give it to another person to see whether it is clear or not.

Sometimes even if your level is a little bit high and you write something for readers whose level of English is lower than yours, I think you have just to go down to that level and try to simplify the language in order to be understandable. In fact this is what I'm doing now in my questionnaire; I have to consider the level of the students who are going to answer the questionnaire. But when I write a chapter in my thesis why should I be so explicit, at the end people who are going to read it are either the examiners or people who are interested in the field of my study that are already acquainted with the jargon and the terminology.

### **How many drafts do you usually write?**

It depends on the topic itself. If it is complicated you need to write many drafts. I can't tell you how many because it sometimes depends on your mood if you're nervous or very relaxed. Sometimes you just write one line and throw it away; sometimes you finish a whole paragraph and when you read it you say oh this is rubbish. Sometimes you can't believe that you're the writer of this piece of writing.

### **And for the whole assignment?**

I'm a type of person who usually cares a lot even about his handwriting. I just start writing and when I commit a mistake I just throw the whole thing and start writing again but let's say 2 or 3 times, yeah 2 or 3 maximum.

### **Why do you do that?**

Because you're never satisfied about your writing. When you start writing something at the beginning you may face many difficulties but when you finish it and read it again and discover many mistakes either grammatical or

semantic mistakes, you decide to rewrite it and the second draft will be better than the previous one and if you decide to rewrite it for the third time I'm sure the third draft will be better. I think this helps a lot in developing your writing skills. The more you write the better you'll be; better improvement you'll have in your skills.

### **Could you please tell me if you have any problems in academic writing in English?**

When your supervisor asks you to write something and you submit it to him and once you get his feedback you will discover many many silly mistakes writing like a comma, a capital letter; even if you revised it for many times, silly mistakes are still there. I don't know is that because I'm the writer so I can't judge myself? Sometimes we fail to give the exact word because you know in English some words have more than one meaning; what goes in this context doesn't go in that context may be it has another meaning so we have to be very careful about that. This is one of the main problems I really face.

I remember when I was writing about my country something about politics used the word regime and my supervisor told me that the word regime has a negative has a negative meaning which was not in my intention, so academic writing is very problematic area and you need to be very careful about it.

### **What strategies do you use to overcome them?**

One of the strategies is to read a lot because the more you read the better you write. And because it is very difficult to stop thinking in Arabic, I try just to suspend thinking in Arabic and try thinking in English. But I think this needs a lot of time. I try to read my writing from a critical point of view and try to criticize myself as a writer by pretending that this piece of writing is not mine and read it again to see beyond the lines.

### **What might stop you when you are writing?**

Err, stress. When I feel stressed I just stop. Sometimes when you just can't achieve what you want to achieve. For example, I would like to describe

something in a particular way but when I come to the actual process I either fail to do that or not satisfied with what I'm doing. I want to write something which is imaginative in my mind but in practice I'm not satisfied. I may try once or twice and then I stop and leave it to another time.

**This is when you are not satisfied?**

I mean the piece of writing doesn't reflect my thinking, my image, what I have in my mind.

**What do you do in such situations?**

I just try to relax, try to go out, change my mood, then come back and try to write again. It always happens to me, when I try to do something and I fail to do that I said to myself OK I'll leave it till tomorrow. When I just relaxed the ideas just came to my mind and I just hurried to my pen and piece of paper and write them down because now I'm in a such mood that helps me thinking deeply, to travel in my imagination and try to find a good description of the things I'm writing.

**When you are under pressure to meet a deadline, what strategies do you use to manage finishing the assignment?**

Well this is the problem which I'm suffering from. I usually spent more time on the writing process which I think a very bad thing because in such a situation I usually commit many mistakes like grammatical mistakes such as commas and etc. I try do to do my best not to leave myself to the deadline which exerts a lot of pressure on me but I usually do that so the strategies that I use is to put myself in a very hard situation and work very hard. I don't like to work but I have to do that. So I usually spend many hours just to finish the piece of work on time.

**When do you revise your writing?**

Well, I revise my writing systematically when I finish a piece of writing. For example, if I write three or four pages, after I finish the first page I revise it then

the second page. So, I revise my work systematically. But I usually revise it at least three or four times before I submit it.

**Do you mean revise your work three or four times after the completion of the assignment?**

After I finish, yes. But I usually don't go deeper in my writing and again this is a very bad habit. I try just to be away from being the person who feels he is the writer of this work. I mean try to go out of yourself and read what you've written from another point of view which is very difficult. I think the person who has this talent is very lucky.

**Interesting! When it comes to editing, do you edit the draft yourself or with other people's help?**

To be honest, by myself. If I get the chance to get help from other person, I directly do that. I'm not the type of person who usually keeps everything secret. I'd like to share ideas with others as well as get benefit from other people's ideas on my work.

**Why?**

I always worry about my work. I have a hash in myself. What I have achieved now is it what I'm planning to do or less. This kind of worry always exists in my mind. That's why, I think.

**What aspects of language are you looking at when you revise?**

First of all I have to concentrate on the structure of the sentences; the grammar and semantics; is the idea in each paragraph clear enough; is it suitable enough for the situation; err does it satisfy what I'm intending to do or not. Does the whole work satisfy what is intended to be or not?

**Why?**

Because I'm not a native speaker so I should look at the language. Sometimes we commit very silly mistakes which don't mean we don't know these things.

But when we write in English we just think in Arabic and therefore commit some grammatical mistakes.

**Well, would you like to add anything to this interview?**

Yeah, when you think of writing as a process, you are aware of the actual writing requirement. So you know that you have to put a plan, to use your knowledge, your cognitive and metacognitive strategies but in reality, you just do what you used to do. We can't get rid of what we've learnt when we were young. It lies dormant in our minds. Whenever we attempt to do a piece of writing, all what you have learnt before comes to you in practical situation. But we just try to do our best to learn something and get benefit from the chance of being here in the UK with native speakers and try to learn how do they think and imitate them.

**Is that the only way to overcome your problem?**

Yes, this is the only way.

**Thank you for your time and help.**

You're welcome.



**APPENDIX I: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION LIBYAN  
FEMALE**

**Interview on English academic writing strategy use (LF7)**

Laila	Time: 4.00 – 40 pm	17/3/2009
Forster Building, Room 15	MSc	Pharmacy
IELTS: 8	Residence in the UK: 2 years	Age: 26

**Tell me about your educational background as far as writing academic assignments in English is concerned.**

Well I don't have much experience in academic writing, the only thing that I had before is my graduation project which was just like finding references and then trying to link them together and now that I'm doing my MSc I do some assignments and essays. But my experience in English academic writing before coming to the UK was just for 4 years as we were asked to write lab reports and some essays besides writing in the exams if you like. So it was not that very long kind of academic writing.

**How did you learn to write an academic assignment in English?**

I took an IELTS preparation course, they taught me how to write academically but before that I just write in the way we it is right just link ideas together not actually writing. In my graduation project I was linking ideas together by incidents not by learning. Nobody taught me how to write it is just how do you feel toward something like proper order or certain organisation. But after taking the IELTS preparation course I feel I'm more confident because you know how to organise your ideas so you start with an introduction and then the main body and how to develop it and the conclusion.

**When you are given an academic assignment in English to write up, Could you please tell me about the strategies you use to plan for that writing assignment?**

I also have a problem in planning because I'm still thinking in my first language so I start thinking about the main frame or idea what it would be and then try to link the ideas in Arabic together and then try to translate them and I try to put some English fuse about them. In the collage the taught us how to brainstorm and how to link different ideas that may be if you see them separately you think they are not linked together but how to try linking them together. These were useful and now I can think in different ways like how to develop the main points into difficult and complicated points.

**And how do you plan for it?**

Just write the keywords of the assignment and then I try to think about where is my influencing ideas and ant try to link them in a certain point because they must meet in a certain point and try to just develop and develop and develop until they meet together.

**So you just put your ideas....**

I just write the keywords in my mind.

**How do you use Arabic and English when thinking and writing?**

I think it is easier to think in Arabic because it is my first language so I can think properly and in a more complicated way so that when I write I can imagine how the assignment would be after it is finished. Then I try to translate and add some English views or point of views from my experience here in the UK.

**So you think it's useful to think in Arabic first?**

Yes, as long as it doesn't take a long time, I think it's useful.

### **What about the readers when writing in English?**

I try, yeah because I think from my experience in the collage they taught us you have to think of the readers and how to make the essay easy for them to understand. It's because most of them are not expert in the subject you are writing in but you have to think of them and make your words and ideas flow easily. So I think a little bit about the readers.

### **But did you use to think of the reader before coming to the UK?**

No, actually because I wrote my project for pharmacists and Supposed they knew everything about the project. That was in my graduation project but now I pay more attention to the readers.

### **Why now?**

Teachers draw my attention to this point. Because in the IELTS preparation course I've learnt that I can read a lot of topics which are different. They can be scientific and geographic and I can still understand them because they were not written for specific readers they were written for general readers.

### **Interesting! How many drafts do you usually write?**

Maximum two.

### **Why?**

Just I write the first ideas and then I add on the first draft the ideas I want to add on the same draft.

### **Do you use a computer?**

No, I don't like using computers when writing. I feel more comfortable when I handwrite so that when I read my writing again I can find the gaps but when I read it on the computer I usually find it OK.

**Could you please tell me if you have any problems in academic writing in English?**

Sometimes I don't have enough words to express my ideas this is one of the main problems so I keep just thinking and thinking which just waste my time and at the end I give up.

**And what do you do if you have an exam or an assignment to hand in?**

I think I do better under pressure so I can find words that express my ideas in the exam better than if I have a lot of time.

**Interesting how do you manage?**

I try to find simple words, then translate them into Arabic then in English and then see if they match or not.

**Is that all?**

especially when I have a lot of time I think I would like to choose a certain style that is easy for the reader to understand so I try to find words that match the idea I wanted to tell the reader about but the problem when write I find it more complicated and sophisticated and not the required thing.

**What might stop you when you are writing?**

The first thing is the noise. The other thing is that when I have another thing that I think more important to do so I'll stop writing. Or if I feel wrote too much to the extent that I can't write in the same efficiency so I'll stop writing.

**What do you do in such situations?**

I'll just stop and then after awhile I come again and read what I've written before and try to complete it. Just trying to do anything interesting, watching TV or surfing the web anything then I comeback to start afresh.

**When you are under pressure to meet a deadline, what strategies do you use to manage finishing the assignment?**

I try not to sleep at night and just write and write that's the only strategy I use. If I have no time I may have to use every minute and second in order to overcome this problem. So I just omit other things and give my writing the priority.

**When do you revise your writing?**

After finishing if I write it in one day but if I write something and stopped so I revise it again just to remind myself about the point in which I stopped.

**Why?**

I prefer to read it as a whole assignment so I can understand the gaps between all the paragraphs but if I read each paragraph separately I think it will be OK at sometimes but it is not well-organised in the whole assignment, that is why I prefer to revise it after finishing.

**When it comes to editing, do you edit the draft yourself?**

I prefer to ask someone who's expert because I'm not professional in academic writing. I'm a more scientific writer so I prefer to ask those who know better about academic writing.

**Like who?**

May be tutors but not classmates (laughs). I try to give it to a native speaker but not every native speaker is good at writing.

**What are you looking at when you revising?**

I have to pay attention to everything, the grammar, cohesion, coherence, linking words, everything so after it is finished I try to see if it is well-organised or not and if all the ideas lead and support the main idea.

**Why?**

Because I think it is important. If you read anything and you find mistakes you can't trust it but if you read something and find it perfect in grammar, spelling, linking its ideas together so you can go with it and read it again and again.

**Would you like to add anything to this interview?**

It's difficult to write academically because it needs a lot of patience in order to express your ideas and organize them. So I think experts and professionals should interfere and you should ask for their opinions about your writing. That's all.

**Thank you for your time and help.**

**APPENDIX J: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION  
CHINESE MALE**

**Interview on English academic writing strategy use (CM)**

Lee	Time: 5.00 – 12.35 pm	7/3/2009
Researcher' house	MA	TESOL
IELTS: 6.5	Residence in the UK: 1 year	Age: 32

**Could you please tell me about your educational background as far as academic writing is concerned?**

I was a bachelor a graduate from university; it's beside Shanghai eh the name of the course eh ..... just English just English every aspect we have taught education, teaching, business everything.

**When do you start writing an assignment in English?**

Oh yea start writing This just a composition or some writing I mean a very short one just like 60 words, 100 words you can count that? If you can count that ok I start in the first or second year during my junior school. Junior school actually

**How did you learn to write academic assignment?**

You mean academic. But for me as far as I am concerned I think it's different I just write very short passages and it's different from writing a very long assignment

**Was that at bachelor level?**

No, just the start of learning English

**How did you learn to write assignments, reports, projects?**

This is in the university. It's different in China u know two kind of English learners one non-English major and one English major like us so the first year in the university I learnt it

Yeas my teacher told us. The first to read broadly actually widely and to get sufficient materials that s one course called extensive reading as for students to broaden our knowledge at first step and we had a writing course ah there were two kind of writing what's report what is different precisely or comprehensively assignments or writing actually, and for report if we write something or write on a book like gone with the wind or something like that we were asked to write a report on what we have read for one week that's a report writing and the other is a comprehensive writing actually may be for examination actually.

**So are you telling me that the teacher gave you the rules about how to write academically or just get engaged in kind of extensive reading?**

as I have said for the comprehensive writing the teacher would give us some rules some instructions and give some topics to us and ask us to write something and u know check or something like that and for report no such I mean instruction or something like that just writing really yeah. Actually our teachers I mean who correct grammar mistakes or spelling mistakes or something like that

**Right, when you are given an academic assignment to write up ...**

You mean here at University of Sunderland?

**Yeas as you are an MA student, what strategy do use to plan for your assignments?**

You mean the strategies or the process that I wrote my assignment?



### **The techniques you use to plan.**

Oh yeah. If you say strategies I can't name it strategies I just have my own habits I have my own processes. First, I think the most important thing to find in depth materials about the assignments. Ok first read the requirement very carefully word by word and line by line and after that I will find sufficient materials and after that I will get a general idea about the assignment and the structures or the ideas and I would write them down to make myself clear.

### **So these are the strategies you use!**

I can't say strategies I really hate the word technology.

### **No, not technology just the habits techniques you use ...**

Because when I hear strategies the word just scared me (laughs).

### **Interesting, well, do you use Chinese when writing in English?**

Well it depends. When I see something at very beginning I will think in Chinese first but now I'm just thinking in English it is ok for me. But if it is written English most of the time I think may be equally in English and Chinese equally just half and half in the past I think in my mother tongue I mean in Chinese first and then translate it to English this is before university may be in the first and second year in the university.

### **And Now?**

Just purely in English I don't see any Chinese now

### **How do you do that?**

Just for writing I rely too much on materials like books so I read a lot and I can't u know because of time limit so I can't translate every sentence into my mother tongue or Chinese so it's a waste of time so I yeah because you know in china if I want to learn something its Chinese teacher but now teachers are English for us they are foreigner so I can do that I think in English

**Interesting! Do you pay attention to the readers when writing in English?**

I rarely actually. Just think of myself and think of my understanding and my experience. No, I rarely think of my readers.

**Why?**

I don't know. May be it's a habit or maybe it's ..... something else, I don't know

I can give very few examples. Just in language not ideas you know. I'm not very confident of my English proficiency or competence if I have some problem to express myself I will consult the books or the materials or dictionaries. Or maybe I will say OK Kim my tutor will not understand this and this so I will consult books or some materials not ..... actually.

**Well. When it comes to the writing process, how many drafts do you usually write?**

Yeah. I can't give you the exact number of pages I can just tell u three times just three times of completed ones. I revise twice actually.

**Why do you do that?**

You know just for our spoken English so sometimes is a slip of tongue ok there may be something wrong with not ideas not actual ideas some sentences correction or something like that or may be the structure may sometimes I think Ok this way I go first and this I go second sometimes I revise it just change it.

**So that's why you write two drafts.**

Actually all together three times and just revise it twice.

**Well, could u please tell me if you have experienced any problems in academic writing?**

Yeah a lot. Especially for expressions. You know Sometimes I am confused when the assignment returned to me I said ok I think I clearly expressed

myself but yeah may be just the problem I have mentioned before ok my tutors couldn't understand some of the sentences or something like that.

It is my problem of expressions. It is not just one phrase or sentence but the whole may be paragraph.

**And what do you do to overcome this problem?**

I read the correction of my tutors carefully; if I had a chance or time I'll go back to her or to him and ask about my expressions. How do you understand it and then just compare it with my understanding. Most time I make notes especially for phrases or lexicons.

**And if they say it is not clear what do you do?**

Just explain it to her or to him. I wouldn't write it again because it's over.

**What might stop you when you are writing?**

The expression or words I can't find proper words may be this is the first one. You know when I was writing my assignment I would stop very few actually because if I stopped I would need time to go back again so it is difficult so I just wrote day and night without sleeping.

**APPENDIX K: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION  
CHINISE FEMALE**

**Interview on English academic writing strategy use (CF5)**

Maya		Time: 12.00 – 12.56 pm	4/3/2009
Participant's (Durham)	house	MA	TESOL
IELTS: 6.5		Residence in the UK: 2 years	Age: 28

**Tell me about your educational background as far as writing academic assignments in English is concerned.**

When I started writing in English? Oh, that was a long time ago I guess when I was in junior middle school? Just writing some very simple composition in English not the academic ones. And the first real academic one I started writing should be the one at the BA (what should I say)

**Dissertation?**

Yes, dissertation and during my teaching experience I wrote something, something academic but not in English in Chinese

**In Chinese?**

In Chinese because the academy requires the dissertation in Chinese instead of English.

**Though you study English?**

Yes they require Chinese you know essence.

**Interesting! How did you learn to write an academic assignment in English? By assignment I mean project, thesis, dissertation report any kind of academic assignment.**

when I was starting my bachelor degree, the supervisor gave me some instructions about academic writing but they were super, super er, er, how to say it shallow ones not very in depth.

**You mean superficial?**

Superficial yeah, that's the word and it's not Harvard system, it's I cannot remember may be some Chinese system I cannot remember very clearly and I didn't know anything about academic writing until I came here that's true I think I've learnt a lot about academic writing but not in the EAP courses

**So that was the first experience**

The real experience of writing academically

**Now when you are given an academic assignment in English to writ up could you please tell me about the strategies you use to plan for that assignment?**

Strategies?

**Yes, now that you are doing your MA in TESOL, when they ask you to write an assignment what strategies or techniques do you use to plan for the assignment; how do you plan for that assignment?**

First I need to read the requirements of the assignment very carefully I need to figure out what the tutor really wants me to write about you cannot go sideways and then read through the other you know the reference books which required by the tutors it's such important co-information regarding the assignments and then may be searching for some other relevant information in the library or in the internet.

**So that's the sort of planning you do before you start**

Yeah, Yeah.

**Well, do you use Chinese when you writing in English?**

Err some people have this kind of habit thinking in Chinese first then translated it I do not. just put everything in English from the very beginning.

**So you don't use Chinese?**

No, no I don't.

**OK. Do you pay attention to the readers when writing in English?**

Yes of course.

**Why do you do that?**

Mm. Actually, at the very beginning we were told that it is the supervisors who check our assignments they are the only readers of our assignments so I have to be very careful about my the choice of words the style of writing mm for example Dr x xx hates American English so I have to be very careful not to use Z instead of S and for examples colours do not miss U in it. All these kind of things I need to take supervisors ideas into account when I am writing academic things.

**How do you do that?**

May be after I've finished the assignments I will check it to make sure that everything is done according the requirement.

**Well, that's interesting.**

To correct the American spelling in it.

**When it comes to academic writing process now, how many drafts do you usually write?**

For an assignment of two thousand words I guess three times or four times and modify it again and again and again.

**Why do you do that?**

Because I think at the very beginning you have very I mean a rough idea of what you are going to write and two or three days later you get some new ideas I want to activate and may be one week later may be you previous ideas completely wrong or not appropriate and I want to just change it completely that's possible

**Could you please tell me if you have experienced any problems when you write academically in English?**

Quit many I think (laughs)

**Such as?**

Appropriate resources what kind of references books I can get which part is the most necessary most important part and sometimes I don't know whether the reference I speak to the reference standard the Harvard system whether the logic or the style is appropriate sometimes I am not sure.

**What strategies do you use to overcome these problems?**

Mm for example before start writing the assignment I need to check to read other requirements for example for reference standards to make sure that I know the requirements or the standards.mm.

**And why do you think you do that?**

Because if you don't stick to the standards you will get a lower mark so I have to check that. That's very important part to my supervisors all the time and very important part in the EAP course. (laughs) because many problems I just stop here and ... sometimes my faults will be in this order when I am writing I don't know which part should be put first and which should follow the first one

**And what do you do in that situation?**

Sometimes just have a break and may be the next day check it again you get new ideas.

### **What might stop you when you are writing?**

Stop me? Sometimes I cannot comprehend the assignment question at all at the very beginning and I need to talk to my tutors and other classmates to figure it out first. Sometimes when I am writing the assignment mm I find there are conflicts or contradictions in my writing the different parts are in conflict so I need to reconsider it to find the problem and sometimes I get stuck just because I can't find the appropriate word for example you need to use a lot of words instead of says, states, claims I need to find a new word as synonym to replace it.

### **And what you do in such situation when you can't find a word or in conflict as you said.**

Err, to refer to some references to check which part of my idea is correct and which part is not and modify it to make it coherent.

### **When you are under pressure to meet deadlines ....**

Overwork and ask for help from experts like Dr x xx (laughs).

### **Just from experts?**

Tutors and may be discussion with my classmates sometimes

### **Well. When do you revise your writing?**

Through the whole process and in the end

### **And why do you do that?**

Because I can realise I can notice the mistakes spelling or may be logic any mistake while I am writing so just correct it and in the end just check the whole assignment to make sure there is no mistake in it.

### **Right. How do you revise it?**

For the spelling you know the Microsoft soft word has function to check the spelling mistakes for other mistakes sometimes I will show my assignments to



my peers and even my tutors and if they identify some mistakes in it just correct them.

**Well when it comes to editing could you please tell me how do you edit the draft?**

I think most more I do it myself if I got stuck I have no idea myself I will turn it to my peers Or supervisors for help.

**Why?**

Sometimes I am not confident of my writing may be they are more experienced.

**Interesting! What things are you looking at when revising?**

I think grammatical mistakes. I often make grammatical mistakes in writing sometimes it cannot be tested by Microsoft.

**Why do you do that?**

Because I am weak in this aspect so I hope I can eliminate all the grammatical mistakes that is the mistakes specially hated by supervisors.

**Right would you like to add anything to this interview?**

I don't know May be I am not experienced in academic writing I don't know whether you can get the desirable results from my interview. I've never learnt how to write academic things until I came here. Just one year that's not experience in academic writing.

**Thank you very much for your time and help.**

## APPENDIX L: ACADEMIC WRITING STRATEGY USE

English academic writing strategies employed by HE students in the NE of England with particular reference to their nationalities and gender



Seham Abdul-Rahman  
School of Education & Society  
University of Sunderland



*Chinese*



- usually rework sentences and paragraphs, forming a solid foundation
- bricklayers revise quite a lot, mainly sentence-level, spelling and grammar

*British*



- write down ideas as they occur to them, revising later
- oil painters revise extensively, in particular: meaning and sequencing

*Libyans*



- usually write a single draft which needs little revision
- where watercolourists do revise, this is usually in meaning and sequencing

Writing strategies metaphors identified by Chandler (1995)