Language learning, academic achievement, and overseas experience: A sociolinguistic study of Taiwanese students in Australian higher education

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores the contemporary linguistic environment in Australian higher education, which has evolved as a result of globalization to accommodate a large number of incoming international students who are using English as a second language. Among them Chinese international students stand out as the largest group, which, for instance, made up 39.9 percent of all higher education enrolments in 2014. This study explores the new phenomenon of the Mandarin language predominating among languages other than English in Australian higher education. The study shows how the changing linguistic environment shapes Taiwanese international students' experiences in Australia, as a group who happen to share a common language with Chinese students but do not belong to the same cohort.

Based on ethnographic fieldwork spanning three years, this study follows the trajectories of thirty-five Taiwanese higher education students in Australia. The study investigates in-depth how language learning intersects with their motivation to invest in overseas study, their participation in educational settings as well as in local communities, their sense of identity and belonging, and their overall study experience.

Data include one-on-one interviews, personal communications, field notes, and participants' academic writing assignments and the feedback they received.

Employing content analysis, the study finds that these Taiwanese international students chose to invest in studying in Australia in order to attain English language proficiency, internationalization, and self-fulfillment. However, when they sojourned in Australia, there was a clash between a monolingual language ideology, where English was the target language, and multilingual language realities, where Mandarin was widely used. The unexpected linguistic environment mediated their use of English despite their strong motivation to enter English-speaking networks. In addition, the Master's participants often found themselves participating peripherally in classroom and group work. For PhD participants, their candidature was often a lonely experience with little institutional or community support.

As regards participants' experiences with academic writing, the study identifies gaps in institutional language support services. Furthermore, the feedback given to the research participants on their academic writing was oftentimes ineffective and did not facilitate their learning.

Besides university study, the study also presents participants' language use and settlement experiences outside university, a previously underexplored area. Domains, including church, accommodation, and romance, are examined and successful cases are presented of participants who were lucky to find a bridge to extend their social network as well as improve their language skills.

Overall, the study argues that language is a manifestation of participation, which is a dynamic and constantly changing process. The findings have implications for education providers regarding the (language) learning support required by international students.

Statement of Candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled "Language learning, academic achievement, and overseas experience: A sociolinguistic study of Taiwanese students in Australian higher education" has not previously been submitted for a degree, nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree, to any university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and that it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis. The research presented in this thesis was approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee, as noted in Ethics Approval Ref. 5201100705D on 06 October 2011.

GRACE CHU-LIN CHANG

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Note on Transcription

Most of the data comes from interviews and field notes. These data were transcribed in Mandarin first and translated into English by the researcher. In order to avoid repetition, data type will only be marked in quotes when collected from sources other than interviews and field notes. For the full list of transcription conventions, see Appendix 7.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Research topic and rationale

The changing landscape of international student mobility has been one of the striking phenomena of globalization. According to a report by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2013b), there were almost 4.5 million international students worldwide in 2013. The largest numbers of international students originate from China, India, and Korea. The majority of international students, around 2.8 million, study in the tertiary sector.

In terms of the host countries of international students, the United States (17 percent), the United Kingdom (13 percent), Australia (6 percent), and Canada (5 percent) together hosted 41 percent of all foreign tertiary students enrolled worldwide in 2011 (OECD, 2013b). Australia, in particular, has become a strong competitor in the global market for international higher education, as evidenced by the fact that Australia has the highest rate of international enrolments in higher education: in 2011–2012, international students accounted for 26.4 percent of all higher education enrolments (Institute of International Education, 2013).

According to the Australian Department of Education, there were 410,925 international students from 193 countries studying in Australia across all educational sectors in 2013 (Australian Education International, 2014c). Regarding their language backgrounds, only 18 percent of international students come from countries where English is the first language (McNeilage, 2014). It is particularly noteworthy that students from China accounted for 29 percent of all international students in Australia. This is the highest ratio of any nationality (see Figure 1). Furthermore, within the higher education sector, Chinese students made up 39.9 percent of all higher education enrolments (Australian Education International, 2014b). These numbers indicate that the linguistic social environment in Australian higher education is shaped to a significant degree by students who are using English as a second language. Moreover, these numbers show that Mandarin predominates among the languages other than

English. Taken together, these facts make Australia's higher education sector a particularly promising site for sociolinguistic investigation: How does the changing linguistic environment of Australia's higher education influence international students' English learning? And how does it influence their university participation and academic achievement? What is international students' actual language experience at Australian universities?

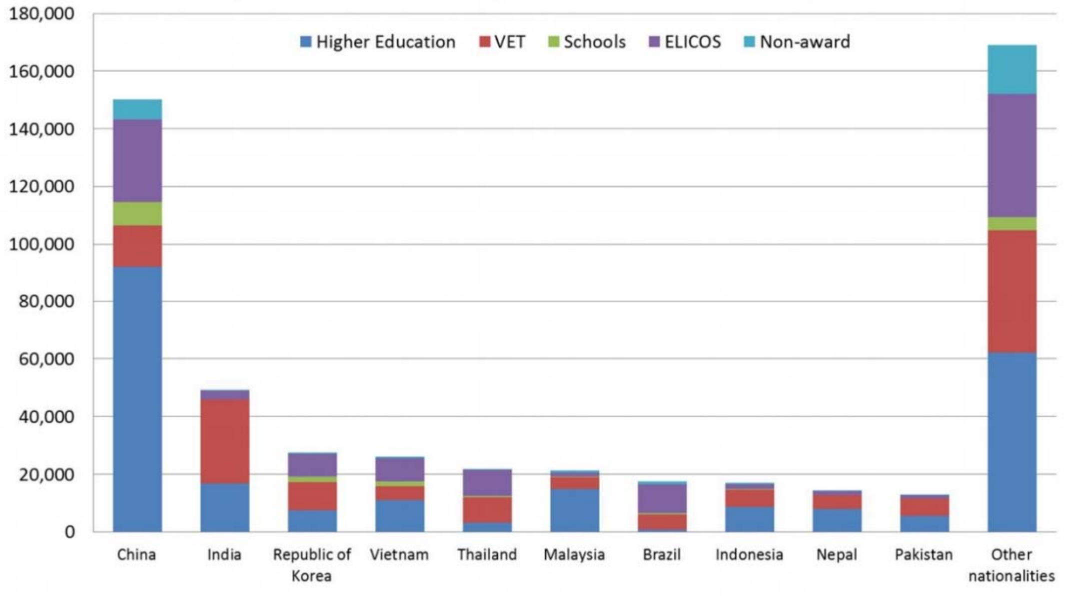


Figure 1 International enrolments in Australia by nationality and sector, 2013
(source: Australian Education International, 2014b)

As international students are never a homogeneous group, my research focuses on Taiwanese international students. The reasons for this focus are twofold: Firstly, Australia has become one of the top three overseas study destinations for Taiwanese students (see Section 1.3); secondly, as Mandarin speakers Taiwanese students are part of the linguistically predominant international student group. At the same time, Taiwanese students do not belong to the cohort of Chinese students because Taiwan and China are two separate political entities who have had a complex political relationship since 1949, which has resulted in Taiwanese constructing their identity partly in opposition to mainland Chinese.

My research thus aims to reveal how the linguistic environment in contemporary Australian surroundings, and particularly Australian higher education institutions, shapes Taiwanese international students' experiences in Australia. What is it like for Taiwanese students to participate in Australian higher education? What do they do to progress their English learning? How does language mediate their participation in academic activities as well as in the local community? Are they obtaining what they hoped for when they decided to invest in studying in Australia?

In the following sections, I first contextualize this exploration of Taiwanese international students' study experience in Australia by locating my research at the intersection of Australia's inward student mobility and Taiwan's outward student mobility. I then provide my personal experience as a Taiwanese international student in Australia, which gives me an emic perspective as a researcher. The chapter concludes with an outline of the thesis.

1.2 Australia's inward student mobility

1.2.1 From foreign aid to commercialized international business

Over the past 60 years, Australia's international education sector has grown remarkably. Starting as a small-scale activity, Australia has become one of the largest providers of international education in the global market. For 30 years after the Second World War international education in Australia was driven by developmental and international aid goals under the so-called Colombo Plan. Under this scheme, Australia awarded scholarships and sponsorship to Asian students to study in Australian training and degree programs. According to data presented by the CEO of Australian Education International (AEI) in the "Going Global 2011" conference, approximately 40,000 students benefited from the program (Walters, 2011, p. 3). It has been widely acknowledged that through this scheme Australia's trade and education connections with neighboring Asian nations were strengthened (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2005). It is against this historical backdrop that Australia's international higher education sector needs to be understood.

The 1980s saw Australia shift its international education from “aid to trade” (Boey, 2012; Marginson, Kaur, & Sawir, 2011). During this period, Australia started to adopt a market-oriented approach (Marginson, 2011). The Australian government reinvented internationalization of higher education within a free market context and opened universities to full fee-paying international students in 1985. Subsidized places for international students were gradually abolished (Marginson, Nyland, Sawir, & Forbes-Mewett, 2010). Full-cost pricing was installed, and price ceilings were soon removed (Marginson, 2011). No limitation was set on the intake of international students as long as they were not filling places that would have been allocated to local students (Kettle, 2007). In fact, except in the case of recipients of institutional scholarships, “public educational institutions are not allowed to charge below the full cost of provision of education to international students” (Ziguras & McBurnie, 2011, p. 125).

As a result of these changes in the policy framework, Australian universities have been generating significant revenues from international students. In 2013, there were 410,925 international students studying in Australia (Australian Education International, 2014c), contributing $15 billion to the Australian economy (Australian Education International, 2014a). Among them, 217,520 were in the higher education sector, contributing $10.2 billion. Education was Australia’s largest service export and fourth-largest export overall after iron ore, coal, and gold (Australian Education International, 2014a). This demonstrates the significance of international students to Australia’s economy.

1.2.2 The niche of Australian international higher education

A number of traits of Australia are attractive to international students. First, for historical reasons, students from other former British colonies such as Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia may be attracted by a cultural connection (Rizvi, 2004). In addition, as mentioned in 1.2.1, the Colombo Plan helped to further strengthen some of these Commonwealth ties. Subsequently, many students have been following in the footsteps of family members who studied in Australia. Apart from these historical reasons, the increasing demand for higher education in South Asia favors Australia because it is geographically closer than the United States and the United Kingdom, yet enjoys the advantage of being one of the “inner circle” English-speaking countries (B. B. Kachru, 1992). According to B. B. Kachru (1992), English consists of three concentric circles: the Inner Circle (native-speaking countries), the Outer Circle (second language-speaking countries), and the Expanding Circle (foreign language-speaking countries). The inner circle countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, are commonly viewed as the owners of English and deemed as ideal destinations for overseas study (Takahashi, 2013).

In addition, Australia is generally perceived as a safe country with lower tuition fees and living costs than those in the United States and the United Kingdom (Rizvi, 2004). However, this relative affordability was not applicable during 2011–2014 when the Australian dollar was strong, sometimes even surpassing the US dollar. Such change inevitably influences international students’ finance and further impacts their studying and living experience in Australia. In fact, Australia has become the world’s most expensive country for international students, according to research by HSBC bank (HSBC, 2013). The typical annual cost for international students in Australia is $US38,516 ($42,195), compared with $US35,705 in the United States, $US30,325 in the United Kingdom, and $US26,011 in Canada (see Figure 2).

Despite the high cost, international students still choose to study in Australia because studying in Australia is closely linked to immigration opportunities (Marginson, 2011; Tsukamoto, 2009). The downturn in international student numbers following tightened immigration regulations in 2010 serves as evidence for the close connection between Australia as a study and immigration destination (Dodd, 2013).

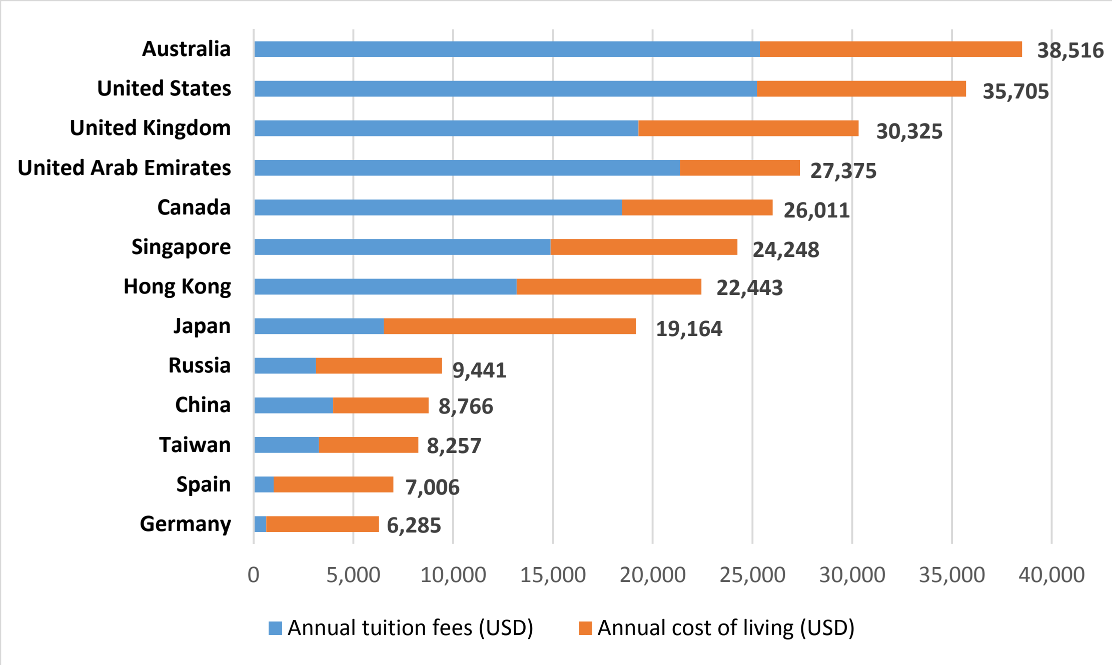


Figure 2 Annual cost of studying abroad for international students in US$
(HSBC, 2013)

1.2.3 Issues of university funding and support for international students

An important driver pushing this extraordinary internationalization of higher education is education funding policies. The opening up of Australian universities to self-funded international students has coincided with public funding cuts in higher education. The government share of university revenues dropped from 91 percent in 1983 to 44 percent in 2003, rising slightly to 45 percent in 2007 (Marginson et al., 2011, p. 386). Tuition fees and charges reached 38 percent of university revenue in 2007 (Marginson et al., 2011, p. 386). The need for revenues powered the extraordinary supply of Australian's international education. As Marginson (2011, p. 22), a well-known researcher of Australian higher education, has put it: "Australian universities needed the money, badly."

There is now a high level of concern within the university sector that the dependence on international fee income is not sustainable. The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney, for instance, remarked in a recent news interview that "we are incredibly reliant at the moment on the international student market. For my university, about

$389 million of our $987 million of student fee income comes from international student fees. Now, all of that is just not sustainable" (Alberici, 2014). Similarly, a Melbourne study by Forbes-Mewett and Nyland (2013) also expresses concern about universities' heavy dependence on international students' revenues and the institutional allocation of those revenues: "International students are paying in quite a direct sense for research to an extent unknown in any other country" (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2013, p. 184).

At the same time, international students who pay high tuition fees to study in a reputable university may not always receive the support services they need. Forbes-Mewett and Nyland (2013) reported that resources are often first allocated to divisions which generate research performance, while insufficient resources are given to student support staff for them to assist international students in areas such as language, academic support, safety, wellbeing, and housing. Funding to improve teaching quality is also scarce. One interviewee used the word "unethical" to describe how universities handle their student fees (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2013, p. 190). Another interviewee from the student support division predicted that university policy would eventually "kill the goose that laid the golden eggs" (p. 187). Marginson argues that international students are being assigned the role of "consumer" before their role as student (2011, pp. 32-33).

Such funding allocations result in various needs of international students going unmet. These needs range from educational experiences such as English language learning (Benzie, 2010; Yates & Wahid, 2013) and structured interactions between local and international students (Rosenthal, Russell, & Thomson, 2006) to accommodation problems (Obeng-Odoom, 2012). These issues are further discussed in Chapter Two.

In fact, the needs of international students are not easily heard within the education system. Forbes-Mewett and Nyland (2013) argue that international students have little bargaining power once they are enrolled. In addition to practical constraints, international students who have disappointing or negative experiences might not want to complain loudly and openly about it, because they are also dependent on the reputation of their universities, which has an influence on the symbolic value of their degrees (Chowdhury & Phan, 2014).

There is currently a lack of international students' insider perspectives on their English learning and academic experience in Australian higher education. This is especially true for the cohort of Taiwanese international students. Research with this group has to date been predominantly located in the United States (see Section 1.3, p.11).

1.3 Taiwan's outward student mobility

Until recently, Australia was not a particularly popular study destination for Taiwanese students. Overseas study destinations have been closely tied to Taiwan's political history and economic development. An overview of the trends of Taiwan's outward student mobility is provided below.

After World War II, Taiwan was keen to develop and modernize. Its close political and economic relationship with the United States has made that country the most popular destination for Taiwanese overseas students since then. According to Ling's (2003) historical review and interview data, in the 1950s and 1960s studying in the United States was the dream of many Taiwanese university graduates. There was a popular saying at the time, "來來來，來台大，去去去，去美國" [come come come, come to National Taiwan University, go go go, go to the United States], which shows how trendy it was to study in the United States. According to the Ministry of Education statistics (2014b), during the twenty years from 1950 to 1969 the total number of Taiwanese outgoing students was 25,690. Of these, 21,175 went to study in the United States; the remainder went to Japan (2,354 students) and Canada (918 students). Only 48 students went to study in the United Kingdom and 40 to Australia. As the economy of Taiwan was just starting to develop, many self-funded Taiwanese students carried a heavy financial burden and had to work part-time in Chinese restaurants in order to save enough tuition fees while studying in the United States (Ling, 2003). The experience of Taiwanese students at this time was richly reflected in the Taiwan overseas study literature, which documented Taiwanese overseas students' loneliness, hardships, and ambitions (Ling, 2003).

From the 1970s to the 1980s, accompanied by Taiwan's booming economy, Taiwan's outward student mobility increased steadily. In the period 1970–1989, the total number of Taiwanese overseas students increased to 90,701, which was more than triple the number in the previous two decades. The United States continued to be the top destination for Taiwanese overseas students; during this period, there were 82,742 Taiwanese students studying in the United States, accounting for around 91 percent of the total of outgoing students (Ministry of Education, 2014b). By contrast, only 142 students were studying in Australia during the same period.

The years 1989 and 1990 marked a watershed in the history of Taiwanese studying abroad. The Taiwanese government relaxed the policy for students studying overseas considerably. All the restrictions on studying abroad were lifted, except the compulsory military service that young male adults had to complete before they went overseas. This relaxation of policy substantially encouraged Taiwanese outward student mobility. Since 1990, the number of Taiwanese outgoing students has surged (see Table 1 below). In the 1990s, the total number of outgoing students grew to around 240,000. From 2000 to 2009, the total number continued to climb to 335,000. The yearly average of Taiwanese outgoing students has been around 30,000 for the period between 1990 and 2013.

Table 1 Taiwan's outgoing student numbers 1950–2013

	1950–1959	1960–1969	1970–1979	1980–1989	1990–1999	2000–2009	2010–2013
USA	3,940	17,235	27,802	54,940	125,951	150,458	61,695
Canada	121	797	496	131	18,789	23,011	6,323
UK	0	48	172	305	42,552	79,880	14,801
France	10	210	315	514	4,751	6,728	2,704
Germany	37	312	497	846	4,154	4,699	2,637
Australia	5	35	49	93	18,338	27,121	12,533
New Zealand	0	0	4	4	4,009	5,705	1,925
Japan	324	2,030	1,153	1,579	18,300	20,148	12,028
Others	149	437	877	924	1,876	18,080	11,293
Total	**4,586**	**21,104**	**31,365**	**59,336**	**238,720**	**335,830**	**125,939**

(source: Ministry of Education, 2014a, 2014b)

Not only has the total number of outgoing students significantly increased, but the study destinations have also diversified. As Figure 3 shows, although the United States is still the top destination, the percentage has dropped from 92.6 percent in the 1980s to 52.8 percent in the 1990s. It continued to decrease to 44.8 percent from 2000 to 2009, and increased slightly to 49 percent between 2010 and 2013. There has been a significant increase in other inner circle English-speaking countries, demonstrating that the majority of students prefer to go to English-speaking countries, with fewer students choosing to go to France, Germany, Japan, and other destinations.

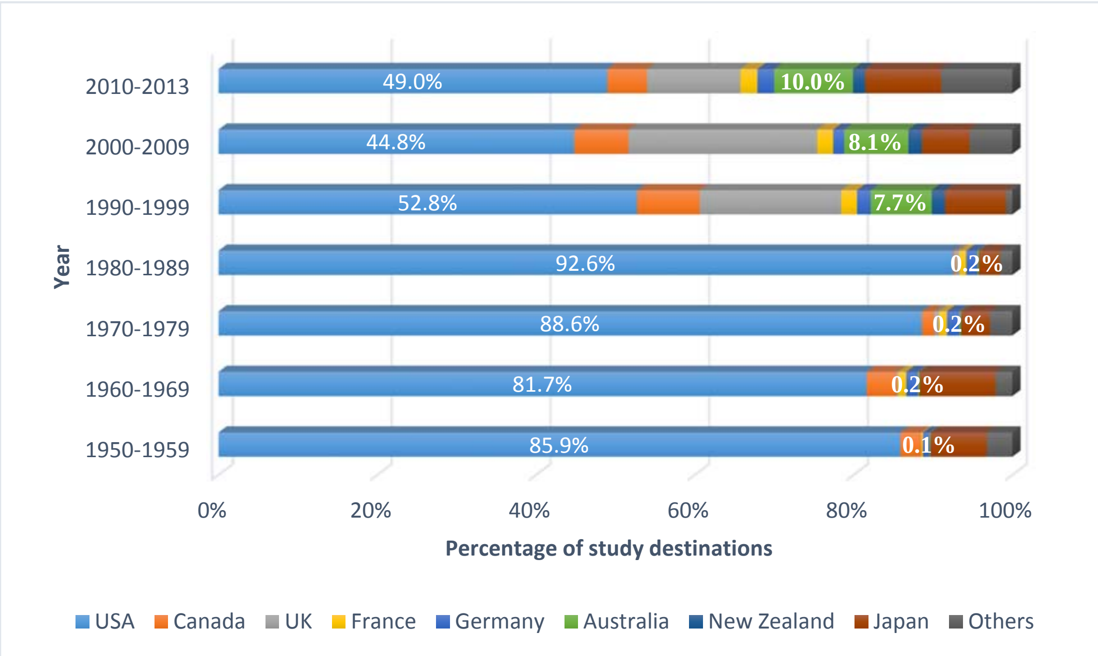


Figure 3 Distribution of Taiwanese students' overseas study destinations 1950–2013 (Source: Ministry of Education, 2014a, 2014b)

The number of students studying in Australia has shown persistent growth since 1990, as shown in Figure 4 below, when Australia began to be one of the commonly chosen destinations for Taiwanese students. In the period 1950 to 1989, the total number of Taiwanese students studying in Australia was less than 200. After 1990, this number increased significantly to 18,338 in the period 1990 to 1999, and continued to increase to 27,121 in the period 2000 to 2009. Between 2010 and 2013, 12,533 Taiwanese students were studying in Australia, which represents 10 percent of the total number of Taiwanese outgoing students (Ministry of Education, 2014a). The highest peak was in 2009, when there were 4,716 Taiwanese students studying in Australia. Australia has become one of the top three study destinations for Taiwanese students after the United States and the United Kingdom.

As the United States has been the top study destination for Taiwanese outgoing students, research studies have focused mainly on Taiwanese students' experience in the United States (e.g., C.-C. D. Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006; Yen & Stevens, 2004; Ying, 2002; Ying & Liese, 1994), while there is a paucity of research on Taiwanese international students in Australia. Thus, the current research project is a timely contribution to enhancing Taiwanese students' perspectives on their experiences of language learning, education, and temporary settlement in Australia.

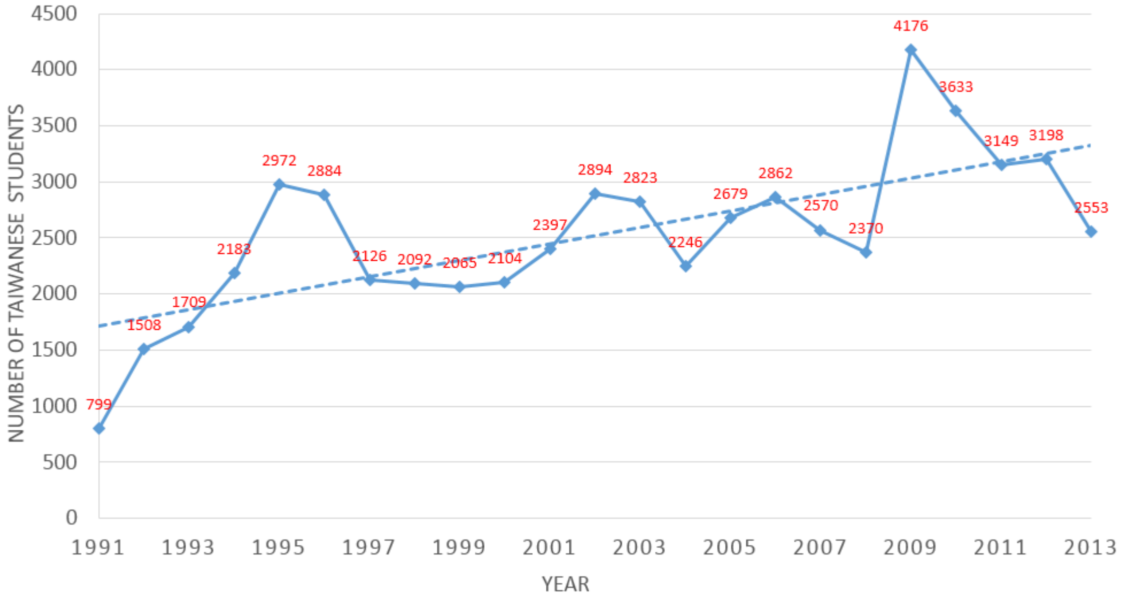


Figure 4 The number of Taiwanese students studying in Australia from 1991–2013 (Source: Ministry of Education, 2014a, 2014b)

Being a Taiwanese international student in Australian higher education myself, I offer my own linguistic experience in Australia in the following section. My personal account is not intended to be comprehensive, but to serve as a background to the research and my own position as a researcher.

1.4 A personal account

In February 2011, my husband and I moved from Taiwan to Sydney to pursue our PhD studies. Excited about coming to Australia for the first time, we were keen to try out our English and immerse ourselves in the English language community, even speaking with an Australian accent. However, after a few weeks in Sydney I began to wonder where I could immerse myself in English, let alone English with an Australian accent. For one thing, most of the new people I met seemed to be from mainland China. Once they knew I was from Taiwan, they tended to speak to me in Mandarin. Due to the popularity of Taiwanese TV variety shows in China, some were keen to talk to me about the shows that they had watched, and having these fun conversations in English seemed an unlikely proposition. For another thing, when I walked from my unit to the campus, which took about 30 minutes, along the way I frequently overheard Mandarin, while seeing many Mandarin advertisements for renting and trading goods posted on the electric poles. The Mandarin language was used much more widely in Sydney than I had ever expected.

My husband was in the same situation. He was located in a research office, sharing with three other Chinese PhD students in the department. Instead of speaking English, he was speaking Mandarin most of the time. The only chance for him to speak English was with his supervisor during their one-hour weekly meeting. Another student from Taiwan also told me she was concerned about the slow improvement in her English. She had expected to acquire English quickly and easily, but she had not done so. “I don’t feel like my English is any better than it was before I came,” she confided. “There are no local students in my accounting classes. My classmates are all international students, and about 90 percent are from China.” Similar to us, she came all the way to Australia and to her surprise found herself in classes where most of her peers were Mandarin speakers so that she spoke Chinese every day. Furthermore, she found it hard to make local Australian friends at university, despite the fact that she has a very lively and easy-going personality. Interestingly, she was not the first person I met here who told me that they wished they had local Australian friends and could experience more of Australian culture.

Outside university our daily life certainly involved interactions with many different people. People spoke with a variety of accents and with different levels of English proficiency. Our first landlady, who had migrated to Australia from Korea, for instance, did not speak much English so that our communication was mostly through gestures and smiles. When it came to making phone calls to inquire about health insurance or utility connections, each time I had to accommodate different operators, who spoke fast with all kinds of accents that I was not familiar with. There were times I had to strategically hang up and make another call in order to get an operator whose pace and accent I could understand better. One time, an operator from an electric company read me three plans of usage in kWh and price in cents per kWh, all in one breath like a rapid bullet train, and asked me to make a decision. There was no way I could understand what those numbers really meant for my future power bills. All I wanted was to have electricity connected as soon as possible, so I told him that I wanted to choose the one most people chose. After hearing my decision, he then started to read me all the terms and conditions, again in one breath, like another rapid bullet train, and he asked me if I agreed. The English language spoken in an overseas country was like a broad platform of endless combinations of accents and speaking rates.

It is observations such as these that are frequently shared with other Taiwanese students. I often found myself in the same position as my research participants, facing similar circumstances and challenges and having similar wishes. My position thus brings an emic understanding to the research, assisting me in capturing my research participants' experiences and viewpoints. The intricate relationship between my participants and myself is further discussed in Chapter Three (Section 3.5).

1.5 Thesis outline

In the previous sections, I have outlined my research problem and provided the socio-historical background for the study. The research problem this thesis intends to address is related to the way that the linguistic environment of Australian higher education has evolved as a result of globalization to accommodate a large number of incoming international students, among whom Chinese international students stand out as the largest group. The linguistic environment has thus become influenced to a significant degree by the Mandarin language, in addition to English. In this context, how does the changing linguistic environment influence international students' experiences in Australian higher education, particularly those who are also Mandarin speakers, such as Taiwanese students? With this question in mind, I have reviewed Australia's inward student mobility and Taiwan's outward student mobility as the backdrop of this study because it is at the crossroads of this inward and outward mobility that the actual experiences of Taiwanese students in Australia lie. Being a Taiwanese international student myself, I have also provided my personal account, which shows my emic perspective as a researcher.

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter Two reviews the pertinent literature. This provides an overview of relevant studies of international students through the lens of second language learning theories. Studies that undergird my research include those examining international students' educational experiences in the classroom and in group work as well as their experiences of academic writing, English proficiency development, and PhD study. Further, the review includes studies that investigate international students' community participation outside educational settings, such as in the areas of religion, accommodation, and romance. The chapter thus presents a review of current research into international students' language learning in English-speaking countries.

In Chapter Three, after outlining the research methodology that undergirds the study, I set out my methodological approach to the research, followed by an account of the procedure of data collection. After introducing the research participants, I discuss my researcher positionality, particularly in terms of how my research participants saw me, how I adjusted my role as a researcher and a friend, and what strategies I adopted to ensure ethical conduct of the research. I also set out the methods of analysis before I close the chapter by addressing the limitations of the study.

In Chapter Four I provide an in-depth analysis of the research participants' pre-departure language learning trajectories. The chapter first analyzes participants' English language learning trajectories in both the public education system and the private sector. I further discuss the relationship between investment in private language learning and English competency. The chapter concludes with an examination of participants' motivations to invest in overseas study and the reasons for their choice of Australia as a study destination.

In Chapter Five, I explore participants' study trajectories in Australia. Adopting content analysis, I first present participants' language desire and the choices they make in terms of desired interlocutors. Secondly, I investigate the intersections between ideologies of language learning and practices that participants engage in, and the response of participants, especially when their imagined monolingual ideologies meet multilingual realities. Thirdly, I describe how the participants engage in the community and discuss why they stay in a peripheral position throughout their time in Australia. Following this, I examine PhD participants' trajectories, as their experience is specific to the structure of Australian PhD programs, where coursework is not a common practice. Finally, I present participants' experience outside university, and explore the role of significant others who serve as a bridge into Australian society. Overall, I argue that language is a manifestation of participation, which is a dynamic and contested process.

Chapter Six probes into participants' academic writing and the feedback they receive. I first examine the challenges the participants face in their academic writing. By incorporating critical discourse analysis and contrastive rhetoric, I discuss what ideologies of language and learning are implicit in the practices of academic writing, and how the participants respond to them. Second, I present the factors besides language proficiency that affect participants' writing. Third, I probe into barriers to the improvement of English academic writing, with a particular focus on the academic writing support they receive (or do not receive), and a further look at the feedback they obtain from their teachers. Throughout, I argue that the academic genre is not neutral but politically and socially situated, and that academic writing performance, as a social practice, goes beyond language proficiency.

In the concluding chapter, I revisit the research questions by providing brief summaries of my findings and conclusions. Next, I outline the implications and limitations of my study and suggest future directions for research. I provide implications for language learning theories, as well as expanding these implications to the relationship between the English language and international higher education. Furthermore, I offer practical implications for Australian international higher education, especially in relation to language support and community building. I conclude the thesis by discussing the limitations of my research. In particular, I suggest that more research is needed to investigate the post-overseas study trajectories of international students when they step into the global job market.

Chapter Two: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the research on international students, with a particular focus on research into their language learning and use. Taking a social perspective, language learning is conceptualized as a central facet of the overseas study experience. As such, I focus on the relationship between language ideologies, practices, and overseas study experiences. I begin by providing the key concepts of this literature review, which include an overview of research perspectives on international students, followed by relevant second language learning theories.

Following the orientation to post-structural theories of language learning, I concentrate on reviewing the literature apposite to the language learning experience of international students in two domains: educational experience in university and social participation outside university. In terms of educational experience, as the degree programs for master's students and PhD students are rather different in orientation and practices, I review the literature separately. For master's students the most important educational practices are attending class and interacting with lecturers and other students. Therefore, I first review literature on international students in classroom settings and group work. This is followed by a review of academic writing research because writing is the most prevalent educational problem identified in the literature (Sawir, Marginson, Forbes-Mewett, Nyland, & Ramia, 2012). In addition, as language issues constitute an overarching theme in studies of international students, I review studies on English language proficiency development of international students to complete this section.

I will then move on to a review of the literature on PhD study. Due to different practices of PhD programs in different countries – for instance attending classes and having to pass qualifying examinations is a common practice in the United States but not in Australia – I base this review mostly, but not exclusively, on literature relevant to Australian practices, namely independent research and supervision. As PhD programs require PhD students to produce discipline-specific knowledge, I first review the role of language in the disciplines. Changing from receiving knowledge to producing knowledge, PhD students are in a transition period from learner to independent researcher. I then review PhD students' socialization into the academic community. This is followed by a review of the literature on PhD supervision, the central practice of PhD study.

After reviewing the literature on educational experiences of international students, I review literature on international students' language learning in domains outside the university. Despite the fact that international students' life outside the classroom involves a wide variety of activities, for instance, going to parties, taking a part-time job, and doing recreational activities such as sports and music, there is very limited literature investigating language learning of international students in these domains. I review the obtainable literature, which is in the domains of accommodation, church, and romance.

2.2 Key concepts

The terms "international students" and "overseas students" are often used interchangeably, and I will follow this practice here. According to the OECD, international students are those who leave their countries of origin and move to another country for the purpose of studying (OECD, 2013a). Thus, they are usually defined by their citizenship, residence status, and prior education. Additionally, in Australia, international students usually pay full tuition fees in contrast to subsidized local students (Chowdhury & Phan, 2014). Finally, the term "international students" often has negative connotations of Otherness and weak English (Cotterall, 2011, pp. 521-522). Chowdhury and Phan (2014, p. 14) similarly argue that international students are often perceived as a homogeneous group that is represented in superficial and inaccurate ways.

2.2.1 Research perspectives on international students

In her research on international students in an Australian university, Kettle suggests that three perspectives can be identified in the research literature (Kettle, 2007, 2011).

The first of these includes a body of literature that conceptualizes international students as inadequately equipped for success in Australian university courses due to their different linguistic, cultural, social, and educational backgrounds. Much of this research adopts a culturalist approach where cultural differences constitute the analytic focus. Culturally determined ways of learning and approaching knowledge are linked to international students' inadequacy in their academic studies (e.g., Ballard & Clanchy, 1984). This culturally-based approach focuses on international students' ways of learning. In this approach, Asian students are singled out as a particular research focus and are found to rely on surface rote learning and passive participation, to lack the ability to think critically, and to be prone to plagiarizing. Kettle (2007, p. 52) suggests that research on this perspective contrasts stereotyped overseas students with idealized Western ways of academic practice, such as deep comprehension, active participation, ability to think critically, and proper acknowledgement of sources. The researcher argues that these are often just as elusive to local students as they are to international students.

The second perspective, according to Kettle, opposes the first. Highlighting misconceptions of international students, since the 1990s studies on this perspective have started to present empirical data to argue that international students are able to adapt their learning to become proficient learners in the new Australian context (e.g., Chalmers & Volet, 1997; T. T. Tran, 2013). Although defending individual and cultural heterogeneity, the research adopting the second perspective continues to focus on the strategies and cognitive capabilities of students. One difference is that the studies adopting the first perspective tend to present a deficit image of international students while the studies adopting the second perspective offer a positive image instead. Examining misconceptions of Chinese students from Confucian educational values, Ryan (2010) raises cautions of the binary construction: neither "deficit" stereotypes which emphasize negative traits, nor "surplus" stereotypes which praises positive traits is helpful for teachers to understand students' real needs and difficulties (p.47). Ryan (2010) thus suggests a more holistic approach to understand multiple sources of students' difficulties and to establish genuine dialogue based on mutual respect and appreciation.

The third perspective shifts the focus to the students' social context and the ways in which relations of power and particular social constructions impact students' experiences. Research in this strand looks at how the students are being discursively constructed and positioned in their courses (e.g., Benzie, 2010; E. Lee, 2008; Ninnes, Aitchison, & Kalos, 1999). Concepts such as identity, power, discourses, and self and others are often utilized in these studies.

Despite the varying perspectives, language proficiency and language learning have been at the forefront of research into Australian international higher education. However, a student's language learning cannot be separated from their educational backgrounds and the social context of the host country of their overseas study. This literature review focuses on international students from non-English backgrounds studying in English-speaking countries, and the role of language in their trajectories. The following section presents the research on the experience of language learning of international students in light of Second Language Learning theories.

2.2.2 Conceptualization of second language learning when studying overseas

Similar to the trend of research on international students toward a social perspective, Second Language Learning (SLL) theories have taken a social-constructivist perspective since the mid-1990s. Research foci shifted away from the structuralist view that learners' cognitive and affective characteristics lead to attaining native-like language competence. By taking a post-structuralist view, SLL research recognizes that language is socially contextualized and mediated. As Bourdieu (1977) stated:

> In place of *grammaticalness* it puts the notion of *acceptability*, or, to put it another way, in place of 'the' language (langue), the notion of *legitimate* language. In place of *relations of communication* (or symbolic interaction) it puts relations of symbolic power, and so replaces the *meaning* of speech with the question of the *value* and *power* of speech. Lastly, in place of specifically linguistic competence, it puts *symbolic capital*, which is inseparable from the speaker's position in the social structure. (p. 646, italics in the original)

Bourdieu highlights the social nature of language. From the structure of a language through to the meaning of words during the interactions between interlocutors, language and language use are socially constructed. Just as language does not occur in a vacuum, Bourdieu argues that “speech always owes a major part of its value to the value of the person who utters it” (1977, p. 652). The significance ascribed to speech cannot be separated from the speaker; the speaker cannot be understood when situated outside the social relationships in that context. The socially-informed SLL research paradigms thus moved from experimental approaches to qualitative approaches. Research started to examine learners in their natural environments such as at home, in school, or in the workplace. Research methodologies often included ethnography, narratives, diary studies, and so forth in order to obtain learners’ insider perspectives.

One of the areas where SLL research has been advancing is “identity.” The theory of identity aims to integrate the individual language learner with the larger social world. Norton (2000, p. 5), one of the leading researchers in identity theory in language learning, defined identity as “how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future.” Questioning the static view of the motivation and personality of the language learner, Norton highlights the interrelationship between language learner, their agency, and their multiple social roles. Norton states that “when language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with target language speakers, but they are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world” (2000, p. 11). Norton’s view draws on that of Bourdieu, who argues that when a person speaks, the speaker wishes not only to be heard, but also to be “believed, obeyed, respected, distinguished” (1977, p. 648). However, a speaker’s right to speak, to “command a listener” and to “impose reception” (1977, p. 648), is unequally distributed because of the symbolic power relations between interlocutors. The power relations generated from inequality grounds what Norton calls “a site of struggle” in one’s identity. Moreover, the power relations in the social world affect a learner’s access to the target language community. The rise of the social perspective in SLL research is particularly pertinent to studies of the language learning of international students because international students enter a new social world in the host countries of their overseas study. As is evident in contemporary SLL theories, language learners' learning is inseparable from who they are, what context they are in, who their interlocutors are, where they are located, and how they are perceived, both physically and socially. The following sections will examine research studies looking at international students' language learning through the relevant social lenses as they relate to language desire, identity, and participation.

2.2.3 Language desire: Motivations for studying overseas

The motivation that makes a learner want to learn a language and their level of commitment have been linked to the learner's success. The concept of motivation in SLL was strongly influenced by the foundational work of Gardner and Lambert (e.g., 1972). According to their theory, two types of motivation can be distinguished, namely instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. Instrumental motivation refers to practical reasons for language learning, such as for employment or tertiary qualifications. Integrative motivation refers to internal reasons, such as building relationships with people using that language. The underlying assumption is that language learners have access to the target community, as long as they have the enthusiasm to learn. Arguing that potential integration is not able to explain motivation in a foreign language context where second language learners do not have direct contact with native speakers and thus do not have a target community to join, Dörnyei proposed the theory of L2 motivational self system (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). This theory, from a psychology perspective, reinterprets integration as "ideal L2 self" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 26), which stresses on "imagery and vision" that a learner has for his/her self to keep their language learning on track and successful.

However, with regards to international students learning language in a target-language society, these motivational theories overlook the complex relationship a language learner faces in the real world, as Norton has pointed out (2000). In addition, placing the full onus on the language learners will inevitable attribute language learners' success or failure to themselves alone and discount other important factors. Norton and sociocultural theory proponents building on her work highlight that regardless of how motivated language learners are they must have a conducive context and opportunities of interaction to promote success in learning.

Following Norton (2000), a number of SLL studies have since broadened their approach to examine how English (or any other target language) is discursively constructed. This means that research investigates the constructed nature of language desire. The concept of language desire offers a more relevant and practical explanation than the traditional theory of motivation. The term “language desire” was coined by Piller (2002a). In her study *Bilingual couples talk: The discursive construction of hybridity,* language desire refers to the attraction for speakers of a language among bilingual couples. For instance, a German female research participant indicated that there was a link between her earlier exposure to English language and her finding English-speaking males as attractive. Piller and Takahashi (2006) and Takahashi (2013) have continued to expand the theory by including gender, desire, and power, emphasizing that language desire is a discursive construction circulating in society rather than constituting a mere individual pursuit.

In their research of Japanese overseas students in Australia, Piller and Takahashi (2006) highlight that English is constructed as glamorous and desirable in English learning magazines and promotional materials for English-language schools and overseas study programs. Through perusing such media texts, learning English overseas becomes associated with fulfilling a life dream, finding one’s true self, and moving toward a new life. In such materials, English is portrayed as “a glamorous means of reinventing and empowering” one’s identity and “a magical means of self-transformation” (Piller, Takahashi, & Watanabe, 2010, p. 183). It was ideologies such as these that motivated the young Japanese women in the study to learn English in Japan and later to pursue study overseas.

The desire for English resulting from media discourses about the desirability of English propelled them to make an “investment”, a term introduced by Norton Pierce (1995). Norton and McKinney (2011, p. 75) argue that when a learner invests in a second language, they expect that they will attain “a range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital.” The term “cultural capital” was originally used by Bourdieu (1991, 2001), who distinguishes four forms of capital: economic capital (e.g., money, property); cultural capital (e.g., artistic knowledge, educational qualifications, literacy); social capital (e.g., networks of family and friends, social connections with associations and institutions); and symbolic capital (e.g., prestige, social recognition, certain language accents). Studying overseas is often regarded as a means to obtain various forms of capital (e.g., Kuznetsov & Kuznetsova, 2011; M. Yang, 2007). For instance, during the period of studying overseas, students have opportunities to establish social networks with well-known academics (social capital), cultivate a preferred accent (symbolic capital), and graduate with a Western university qualification (cultural capital). When the students go back to their home country or enter the global job market, these accumulated capitals may expand the students' prospects for better employment (economic capital). These various forms of capital are all interrelated and enhance students' access to power and status in a society. The discourse of English language is often associated with these capitals, and reinforces to students the value of studying overseas.

In exploring the reason non-native postgraduate TESOL students choose to study in an Australian university, Inoue and Stracke (2013) argue that English linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) was at play in the decision making of the eight international students from five non-western countries in their study. The non-native English speaking students chose Australia because of their belief in the privileged status of English in Australia as one of the Inner Circle countries (see B. B. Kachru, 1992 in Section 1.2.2) and the belief that a TESOL qualification from Australia would make them stand out when they return to their home countries. In other words, the participants were influenced and, at the same time, contributing to English linguistic imperialism when they decided to study in Australia. Their qualification also relied on the inequality of varieties of English to bestow symbolic power. However, as some participants in the study were also aware of World Englishes and wished to teach their future students to appreciate the varieties of English, the researchers suggest that English linguistic imperialism may begin to weaken or may be challenged in the future.

Similarly, attitudes towards the perceived value of English accompanied by the prestige of the host country are the most important factors found to influence Taiwanese students' choice of Australia and the United States as their study destinations (C.-H. Chen & Zimitat, 2006). From a consumer behavior perspective for marketing purposes, Chen and Zimitat surveyed 518 Taiwanese students in Taiwan in order to explore what factors influence their decision to study in Australia and in the United States. The researchers found that the primary factors for choosing Australia and the United States were similar. These factors included positive attitudes toward the destination country, its economic power, western education, and prestigious university as well as the advantages of improved English proficiency, increased job prospects, and understanding of western culture. Apart from the commonalities, the intention to study in the United States was also influenced greatly by family and peers because much more information about studying in the United States was available and family members who were university alumni were also reinforcing the benefits of studying in the United States, whereas for Australia personal safety and life style were perceived higher than that of the United States especially after September 11. The studies by Chen and Zimitat (2006) and Inoue and Stracke (2013), although based on different theoretical frameworks, both demonstrate that the desire to improve English proficiency by studying in an Inner Circle country may be a powerful motivator driving international students' choice of study destination.

2.3 Educational experience in study abroad

While following their language desire to embark on the journey of studying overseas, as newcomers international students are expected to have the opportunity to join their educational community via legitimate peripheral participation before moving towards full participation. As Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest:

> Legitimate peripheral participation' provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artifacts, and communities of knowledge and practice. It concerns the process by which newcomers become part of a community of practice. (p.29)

Legitimacy means being accepted by others in the community of practice so that they can gain access to resources and opportunities for socialization. Peripherality, for Lave and Wenger, is a positive term, in contrast to marginalization. Therefore, legitimate peripheral participation describes a process whereby a newcomer is accepted and is able to engage in varying degrees of participation, which gradually increase and move the newcomer to full participation in terms of their involvement, interaction, and responsibility. Entering a new community involves power relations, which affect whether new international students move to full participation, stay in a peripheral position, or become marginalized in their educational activities and socialization and are denied entry. As they begin the journey of studying overseas, international students face negotiations of identity, membership, and participation, all of which are mediated discursively in linguistics practices (Gee, 2000; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Norton, 2006, 2013).

University is often the foremost site for international students to use the target language for both academic and social purposes. The following studies look at how language practices influence international students' identity negotiation and participation in university. The key areas are classroom settings, group work, academic writing, and language proficiency development.

2.3.1 Classroom settings

The university classroom is often central to international students' participation. Here they attend classes like local students and participate in the educational community. However, the way they are perceived and positioned by their teachers and peers affects the degree of agency they can capitalize on in order to participate. Drawing from her audio and video recorded interactional data of Japanese overseas students in Australian university classrooms, Nakane (2007) presents a clash of perceptions and understandings of international students in relation to their classroom participation. Asian students in general, and Japanese students in particular, are often perceived by their lecturers as silent, shy, and passive, failing to participate voluntarily in oral classroom discussions. However, when interviewed by Nakane, many Japanese students indicated that they did want to talk more in class. Their reluctance to speak resulted from a lack of confidence in English, a sense of discomfort with their lecturers, unfamiliarity with the norm of classroom discussions, and constant interruptions by their peers, who were often the more outspoken local students. However, the teachers failed to recognize the power imbalances among the students in this context, instead persisting in their belief that the silent behavior was an inherent cultural Japanese trait. As a result, classroom practices did not enable Japanese students to participate fully.

Further, Nakane also video recorded several students in separate classes for one semester in order to capture what the students actually did in the classrooms. One

Japanese overseas student, Aya, was recorded as being the second most frequent in oral participation in her classes. Even with such a high level of participation, Aya told the researcher that she would have spoken more if she had had more confidence in some subjects. Furthermore, her teacher and peers still perceived Aya as a quiet student. The empirical evidence presented by Nakane shows that the international students are often classed within an overarching stereotype, in this case, a “silent East” versus “articulate West” (Ellwood & Nakane, 2009, p. 204).

Despite these general cultural (East-West) stereotypes that international students often encounter, international students can in fact participate differently in different classroom settings and negotiate their identities using different approaches (Morita, 2004). Drawing from her qualitative longitudinal data of Japanese international students in Canada, Morita (2004) shows that the participants are all struggling with the fact that they are positioned as inferior learners, based on how their teachers and peers perceive their English skills and their oral participation in class. However, the negotiation strategies they utilize and the responses they receive affect their identity transformation and their participation. Two examples from the study are provided below to illustrate this point.

The first example highlights the impact of positive responses. Nanako, an education student, was generally quiet in all her three courses. Her silence was due to reasons such as unfamiliarity with the course content, inability to understand jokes, and being the youngest and least experienced education student. However, when she sought help from one of her instructors, the teacher did not see her silence as a problem. Instead, the teacher told her it was normal to take some time to be able to join discussions, and her different background was useful to bring new perspectives to the class. Surprised by the teacher’s positive response, Nanako became comfortable with her legitimate reticence and was able to see her difference as a strength rather than as a weakness.

In the second example, the teacher’s response was not as constructive. The student, Rie, was able to participate in one course actively and confidently, but not as well in a second course. She sought help from her second instructor. She told the teacher her problems and the effort she had made to overcome the problems. She then politely asked the teacher to make some adjustments such as speaking more slowly and providing more explanations because as an international student she did not have the same local knowledge. However, the teacher told Rie there was not much she could do because she considered Rie's problem as principally one of language proficiency. The situation became a negotiation between a teacher and a student about who should accommodate whom, in what way, and to what degree. In this case, a deficit identity was assigned to Rie as a result of power relations. However, Rie refused to accept such marginalized positioning because that would not explain why she was able to do so well in the other course. She kept trying to follow in class but still had difficulties, finally choosing to participate selectively as a way to exercise her agency.

Morita's (2004) study clearly demonstrates that international students' participation in a classroom setting involves identity and membership negotiation, which are tightly bound up with many contextual factors, including course content, pedagogical interaction, interpersonal relationship and power relations. The interaction between international students' agency and their situated context in turn shapes their language use and language learning.

Despite the fact that "talking" in class is such a concern that it affects how international students express themselves and negotiate their identity in academic activities with their lecturers and peers, Yates and Wahid (2013) found that speaking is a skill that is largely neglected in students' EAP and degree programs in Australia. Drawing on their longitudinal international postgraduate interview data, the researchers reported that international students receive little instruction on speaking skills and often have little opportunity to interact with native speakers. The international students showed their desire to become competent speakers of English by persistently seeking out various opportunities to meet native speakers. However, they were largely unsuccessful in their attempts to practice speaking with local students on campus and with native speakers outside the campus.

The lack of opportunities to speak and instruction on speaking in class is exacerbated by limited interaction with local students. Many local students show little interest in talking to and making friends with international students. Similar findings of limited interaction between local and international students have also been reported in many other Australian studies (e.g., Benzie, 2010; Rosenthal et al., 2006; Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland, & Ramia, 2008). For instance, Rosenthal, Russell, and Thomson (2006) found that one third of 800 international students in their study had no contact with local students. As a result, their exposure to the colloquial English spoken by their local peers was limited. Limited interaction with the local student community was a major source of dissatisfaction among the international students (Yates & Wahid, 2013).

In many respects, the interaction between local and international students is similar to the division between racial/ethnic minority and majority students. Comparable phenomena have been examined in studies of African American college students in the United States (Pierce, 1989; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000), Latina/o undergraduates in the United States (Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009), Middle Eastern and African students in the United States (Hanassab, 2006), and international students in the United Kingdom (Coate, 2009) and Australia (Marginson et al., 2010; Robertson, Line, Jones, & Thomas, 2000). The similarity in the experiences of international students and racial/ethnic minority students is also a reminder that the diverse nature of international students should not be homogenized and overlooked when examining their experiences of studying overseas.

Researching African students in the United States, Chester Pierce (1988, p. 31; 1995) introduced the term "racial micro-aggressions" in order to describe a mechanism that "controls space, time, energy, and mobility of the Black, while producing feelings of degradation, and erosion of self-confidence and self-image." The term "racial micro-aggressions" has been adopted by other researchers investigating other racial/ethnic minorities, and has been extended beyond African students in contexts outside the United States. Micro-aggressions may manifest themselves in somewhat implicit ways such as being ignored, laughed at, or put down with an indifferent facial expression. Even if they do not constitute explicit verbal attacks, such micro-expression may be equally harmful. Besides the stress caused by subtle humiliations and putdowns, victimized students also suffer from not knowing whether it is their race, ethnicity, language proficiency, nationality, or behavior that causes the negativity toward them. Furthermore, while being puzzled and wondering how to deal with the situation, the students also have to defend themselves against the charge of being "too sensitive" (Yosso et al., 2009, p. 2).

Taking account of the phenomenon of "racial micro-aggressions" will enhance our understanding of the language learning of international students, since international students are perceived not only as foreign students, but also in terms of their other traits, such as their race, ethnicity, their country of origin, and their accents. Native speakers' perceptions often influence whether they have an interest in interacting with international students, thereby influencing international students' opportunities for language use.

What is often overlooked is the fact that a native speaker's perception of a non-native speaker molds their interaction. Lindemann's (2010) research provides evidence of how a "native" speaker's attitude toward a non-native speaker has a significant impact on the success of the interactive communication and the native speaker's judgment of the non-native speaker's English proficiency.

To test her theory, Lindemann (2010) designed the following research project. First, in order to measure attitudes toward Koreans, Lindemann asked native US English-speaking university students to rate two recordings of the same message: one was Korean-accented speech and the other was native US English speech. Based on how the speakers sounded, the native speaker students were to rate the speakers on how *intelligent*, *friendly*, and *nice to listen to* they considered them to be (p. 225). The students who rated the Korean speaker and the native English speaker about the same were considered by the researcher as having a positive attitude toward Koreans. Those who rated the Korean speaker as less intelligent, or not nice to listen to, were considered to have a negative attitude.

The subsequent task was to ask these students, both with positive and negative attitudes toward Koreans, to complete an English task with Korean native speaker university students who had relatively high English proficiency. The whole process was recorded and transcribed. The results showed that nearly all interactions were successful except two cases, where the native speakers held negative attitudes toward Koreans. The negative-attitude speakers behaved differently than they would toward native speakers, for example not wanting to ask questions to clarify when they felt confused. In other cases, although the students successfully completed the task, the conversation recording showed that the negative-attitude students often downplayed their Korean peers' role. The native speaker students often challenged what they heard, and they seldom gave acknowledgement when they understood. They often ignored their Korean peers' attempts to explain and kept asking questions regarding the information the Korean peer had just provided. The native-speaking students indicated that they had problems with their peers' speech even when they did understand it.

Lindemann's research clearly shows that successful communication hinges not only on the language learner's proficiency but is also very much dependent on the strategies adopted by native speakers.

As explained above, international students' language learning depends on their agency to participate; however, their agency to participate is impacted by contextual factors as well as by people who interact with them and position them in different ways.

2.3.2 Group work

Participating in the classroom and related assessments are often facilitated by organized group work. Research on interaction between students during group work provides valuable insights into language use and power relations in international students' study experience. Many educators have recognized the challenge of facilitating meaningful interactions between diverse students, as Wright and Lander (2003, p. 237) explain: "It is one thing to have a culturally diverse student population and yet another to have those students engaged in positive interaction." In order to create more social and academic interaction, group work is often a teaching activity adopted for such purposes. However, the provision of opportunities does not necessarily lead to greater integration (Kimmel & Volet, 2010). During group work students often experience frustration and resentment because they have to deal with relationships, positioning, communication problems, and different expectations and work habits (Strauss & U, 2007).

An important study of group work was conducted by Leki (2001). Her research shows how power and positioning in the work groups may exclude international students from making significant contributions to group projects. Leki carried out a longitudinal qualitative study for five years on how international students from non-native English-speaking backgrounds participated in group work in US universities. Data were collected in three ways: through in-depth periodical interviews with participants and lecturers, classroom observations, and collection of documents given to and produced by the groups. The experience of one of the participants in the study provides a clear demonstration of inequality of power at play in the practice of group work. A summary is presented below as this particular case illustrates the different levels of power and approaches to the task (Leki, 2001, pp. 48-55).

Ling, a Taiwanese overseas student, was assigned to work with three native English speakers in her geography class. The first assignment was to match people of certain lifestyles with the neighborhoods in the United States that they would like to live. Ling understood the task immediately, but she also knew she was not able to do the assignment being a newcomer to the United States. She had no idea, for example, what socioeconomic group would drive what make of car, read which magazines, or join what clubs. The assignment required implicit local knowledge of the United States, which was probably relatively easy for the local students but far out of the reach of an overseas student who had just arrived in the country. However, the researcher found in the interview that although Ling was not able to answer the questions, she was thinking critically about the assignment. Ling told the researcher that even in the context of Taiwan this question was hard to answer because people were diverse and they made different choices. Ling wanted to contribute; however, she was not given a chance to contribute because no group discussion on this assignment ever took place; when the group members saw Ling's initial inability to answer the questions, they positioned her as less than competent.

The second group assignment was to compare two newspapers and draw cartogram maps of countries according to how they were mentioned in the reports. Ling was being proactive; she suggested the group go to the library together and look for an English newspaper and a foreign newspaper. She saw herself as an equal contributor so she offered to translate and analyze a Chinese newspaper. However, her expertise in Chinese was ignored by the group. The researcher's classroom observation documented the students' conversation, which showed that the group members implicitly asked Ling to "step back and allow those who were competent to take care of the business" (Leki, 2001, p. 55). The group members decided to only look at English newspapers and did most of the work by themselves. Once again, the researcher found that Ling had grasped the aim of the task immediately, which was to detect bias in newspapers. Ling's group still received high scores for both assignments at the end. The teacher was pleased by their seemingly good work, but was not aware of the negotiation and positioning in the group processes.

Leki's empirical data show that international students, coming from a different linguistic background with different life experiences, are often devalued and positioned as less capable and less intelligent in the Western context. This power relation, causing division and inequality, may be aggravated due to the practices of group work if the task is not designed carefully. The researcher demonstrates that in group work tasks are often allocated to those who are seen as most competent, while marginalization or exclusion is experienced by those who seem not to have a similar level of knowledge and English language skills. This can lead to feelings of aggravation on the part of all group members. Not only may the students who are excluded feel resentful, but local students who do more work in group projects may feel exploited by the international students perceived as less capable, which may generate more negativity toward them (Strauss, U-Mackey, & Crothers, 2014).

Nevertheless, with careful planning and designing, group work can be a good practice where students have positive experiences of engagement and participation. A case study by Cruickshank, Chen, and Warren (2012) provides an exemplary practice of power equality in group work in a TESOL class in Australia. A few intervention strategies were used to address students' language and learning needs and also to draw on their areas of strength. For instance, to avoid the situation of students working with their friends, the teacher gave them a structured routine of forming groups and getting to know each other. For each group work session, a structured discussion format was provided, which gave each student equal share of the planned participation in a stress-free way. The class work was also designed in a way that each student could show their particular strength at different times; for example, Hong Kong students could demonstrate their knowledge of the Hong Kong context and local students could share their knowledge of the Australian context. In terms of assessment, a scaffolding method was used. Students were given a model as well as explicit criteria and feedback. They also received comments on their individual drafts, which the international students stated was a valuable learning tool for language learning and content learning. The findings show that the students highly evaluated the group work. They felt more confident working with mixed groups and friendships were formed between local and international students during the facilitated interaction. The lecturer commented on the students' learning (Cruickshank et al., 2012, p. 806) as follows:

> It was interesting to see the impact of the discussions on the students. Some of the locals opened up and talked about their ignorance of grammar and their feelings of embarrassment at not knowing what a verb is. The internationals were shocked and this put them in a position as experts. This happened also in talks about different systems and cultures. I still remember one local student looking in surprise and saying, 'So you don't have a word for 'the' in Chinese?' (Lecturer interview)

This successful case study of group work provides a framework in which all students have a voice, with international students placed on an equal footing, and in which both international and local students are able to learn from each other by working in groups. When comparing the studies by Leki (2001) and Cruickshank et al. (2012), one obvious difference is that in the latter study the students' primary subject content, TESOL, was highly pertinent to their career goals as future English teachers. Therefore, understanding the challenges faced by international students learning English was relevant to the career goals of the local students. Despite the value of the subject content, the positive outcome evident in the second study demonstrates the value of a classroom practice based on the concept of equality. The teacher's structured group format provides structured interaction that leads to equal participation. The dynamics between students can thus be channeled to positive interaction given the impact of contextual factors.

2.3.3 Academic writing

Besides classroom participation and group work, international students' language learning is also evident in their academic writing processes. Hyland (2013, p. 53) argues that "[u]niversities are about writing and that specialist forms of academic literacy are at the heart of everything we do." Participating in the written discourse of the institution is certainly an essential part of international students' university experience as well as their language learning. In this subsection I discuss how academic writing intersects with international students' language learning, identity negotiation, and written discourse participation. I begin with the concept of contrastive rhetoric, which was meant to facilitate second language learner's academic writing, followed by the concept of critical contrastive rhetoric, a response to contrastive rhetoric. I will then look at the empirical studies of reflections by international students on their writing approaches as well as on the feedback they receive from their instructors. Academic writing practice allows us to observe how international students may be marginalized when it comes to the taken-for-granted writing conventions in their English-medium universities. It also offers insights regarding the ways in which international students use their agency to negotiate their identity.

Initiated by Kaplan (1966) in the 1960s, contrastive rhetoric assumed a relation between cultural logic patterns and writing structures. Such relationships were believed to have a negative effect on international students' writing in English because of L1 rhetoric conventions. This transference was viewed as negative interference causing their underperformance in English academic writing. For instance, in contrasting English with Asian languages such as Mandarin and Japanese, English was characterized as linear, direct, deductive, and logical, while Mandarin and Japanese were characterized as circular, indirect, and inductive (Kaplan, 1966). Contrastive rhetoric has been widely applied in language teaching based on the assumption that the more the second-language learner understands the different conventions of writings in L1 and L2, the better their second language learning outcomes will be.

Nevertheless, contrastive rhetoric has faced a wide range of criticism. Firstly, Kubota and Lehner (2004) argue that contrastive rhetoric has been taken too far by including cognitive and sociocultural variables of writing rather than a purely linguistic comparison; generalization and stereotyping have been embedded in constructing English rhetoric as a superior form over other language rhetorics. Languages are constructed as static and homogeneous. As the example of English and Asian languages shows, English is described as direct and logical, as opposed to Asian/Oriental/non-Western languages being described as circular and non-logical. The writing by the students from Asian cultures has thus been perceived as culturally lacking, indicated by terms such as "out of focus", "lacking organization", or "lacking cohesion" (Kaplan, 1966, p. 3). Consequently, international students using English as second language tend to be negatively portrayed, for example as passive and unable to think critically. Secondly, there is a fundamental flaw in cross-language comparison based on contrastive rhetoric. Y. Kachru (1995) points out that contrastive rhetoric tends to compare idealized English rhetoric with essentialized features of other languages. For example, a contemporary English style is compared with a classical style of Chinese (Kaplan, 1972). Such comparison therefore lacks validity. Thirdly, contrastive rhetoric also fails to recognize other factors that affect second language learners' writing, such as their L1 writing skills, their own preference and agency, and their L2 proficiency (Kubota & Lehner, 2004). In order to challenge the essentialism implanted in contrastive rhetoric, Kubota and Lehner have proposed critical contrastive rhetoric, which takes into consideration power relations, discursive construction of knowledge, multiplicity of languages, and learner identity (Kubota & Lehner, 2004).

Qualitative studies have shown that international students may be silenced by the accepted writing conventions in their institutions. Drawing from the interview data of international master's degree students' writing experience in an Australian university, Tran (L. T. Tran, 2009, 2011) revealed that international students' desires for alternative approaches to knowledge tend to be marginalized. One Vietnamese student in the study enjoyed writing with creativity and inspiration. She was a competent writer in her L1; she had some articles published in some Vietnamese magazines when she was a high school student. With her passion for writing, she was longing to go beyond the conventions in her academic writing as well. However, her desire was suppressed when she was taught that she should start her paper with a general statement and move to specifics in an introduction to academic writing program. She was struggling between what was valued by the university and what she herself valued. In the end, she decided to compromise by writing in accordance with a conventional pattern that was expected by the university but which she considered boring. She felt it was the "safe" way, especially when her lecturer looked strict (2009, p. 273). Tran (L. T. Tran, 2011, p. 86) describes this adaptation as "surface adaptation", which international students use as a coping strategy to gain access to their academic discipline. Another case presented is "committed adaptation", by which the international student considered the English academic convention a superior form than the convention in his L1. Thus the student was willing to follow what was required of him. The last approach adopted by an international student in Tran's study is "hybrid adaptation" (2011, p. 88). The student tried to engage with the writing by meeting the requirements while at the same time incorporating her style preference. For example, the student preferred the use of metaphor to make her writing more interesting, and took a risk by doing so because she was not sure whether the teacher of the management course would accept it or not. Tran’s study shows that international students bring with them different approaches to writing. However, international students’ agency and desire are often engaged in a private and silent struggle. The question is whether there is space for them to apply new and different ways of writing knowledge through academic writing practice in higher education institutions.

Part of the academic writing practice is feedback, which is prevalently adopted in teaching pedagogy, though its effectiveness remains vague. Students often interpret whether their writing meets the criteria and expectations of their instructors by the mark they receive as well as by feedback. Investigating whether students value feedback and what their perceptions of feedback are, Weaver (2006) surveyed 44 students and conducted group discussions in a university in the United Kingdom. Several important findings emerged. First, most of the students were not given guidance on how to interpret and use feedback. Second, the majority of the students valued constructive criticism, which they considered necessary for them to improve; however they did not think they were given enough constructive feedback. Third, the students were asked to provide samples of written feedback that they had received and explain their perceptions of the feedback. Their major perceptions were that the feedback was too general and vague, lacked guidance, was mainly negative-oriented, and was unrelated to the assessment criteria.

Weaver’s study highlights the issue of effectiveness of feedback for all students. However, there has been little research on international students’ perceptions of feedback. Research on feedback to international students has largely focused on English language and error correction feedback, while little has been done on feedback in respect of international students’ disciplinary writing (Leki, 2006). Studies on the effectiveness of feedback in the real-life context of degree programs are lacking because it is challenging to investigate. As Hyland and Hyland (2006, p. 10) explain, “Like all acts of communication, it [feedback] occurs in particular cultural, institutional, and interpersonal contexts, between people enacting and negotiating particular social identities and relationships, and is mediated by various types of delivery." Studies on feedback in respect of international students' disciplinary writing are much needed.

2.3.4 English language proficiency development

English language proficiency is tightly bound to international students' ability to participate in their degree programs. This can be exemplified by several studies of Taiwanese international students in the United States, in which English proficiency is consistently a major theme in the study experience of Taiwanese students (Y.-J. Chang, 2011; Dao, Lee, & Chang, 2007; Ho, 2011; C.-C. D. Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006; Yen & Stevens, 2004; Ying, 2002).

Drawing from their quantitative data of 112 graduate Taiwanese students in Southeast United States, Dao, Lee and Chang (2007) suggest that the students who had low perceived English fluency and low acculturation level were more likely to experience depressive feelings. Similarly, investigating 155 Taiwanese graduate students at about one year after they arrived in the United States, Ying (2002) found that the students were more likely to form cross-cultural relationships if they possessed better English communication skills, had a more extraverted personality, had a good knowledge about American culture, and were situated in a university where fewer co-ethnics were present.

Taking a closer look at five Taiwanese students during their first academic year at a Midwestern university, Yen and Stevens (2004) reveal that discrimination and language barriers were major difficulties for the participants. The participants mentioned that American students avoided looking at and speaking with them as well as avoided doing group work with them. Their difficulties in translating their ideas into English, such as finding proper words and grammar, and encountering unfamiliar slang and fast talking rate, were not only ignored by the local students but sometimes also by their teachers. For instance, one participant in the study reportedly told her professor that she might need some extra help due to language but the professor told her it was her own problem. Later the professor asked her questions at every class and sometimes when she could not answer the question, the other students laughed at her.

Linguistic difficulties were also reported in Ho's (2011) study, which investigated four Taiwanese postgraduate students at the University of Kansas. The students reported their difficulties with the speaking rate and the use of slang. They also reported feeling inadequate about their vocabulary. In order to overcome these difficulties, the students were adopting strategies. For instance, the students would prepare sufficiently for classes, rehearse presentations, get advice from language centers, make use of professor's office hours, and prepare well before each meetings.

Research with Taiwanese international students has mostly focused on the United States as the host country and literature investigating Taiwanese international students in Australia is relatively limited, as explained in Section 1.3. One available research study is of the learning experiences of Taiwanese graduate nursing students studying in Australia by Wang, Singh, Bird, and Ives (2008). The researchers interviewed 21 nursing participants; the majority of whom had stayed in Australia between one to two years. Using thematic content analysis, the study identified four dominant themes, namely obstacles to learning in the Australian academic environment, learning differences between Taiwan and Australia, coping strategies, and desired academic assistance. All participants indicated some level of obstacles to their leaning, and language was a major concern for all of them, especially as Australian English accents and slangs appeared quite unfamiliar to them. As the nursing participants had not been trained in essay writing, writing was rated as the worst problem for many of them. The difficulties were not limited to language differences, but extended to differences in health care systems, because the participants were familiar with the health system in Taiwan but not that in Australia. Two thirds of the participants reported negative experiences of dealing with unfriendly university staff and other students, who seemed to hold negative stereotypes of overseas students. Almost all participants had a difficult time making friends, especially with Anglo-Australians. Seven of them felt often isolated in group work.

Despite all the obstacles reported, more than half the participants appreciated the new perspective on learning with more freedom and autonomy given to them, and three of them described that they found "the joy of learning" in the new approach (p. 145). Most of the nursing participants actively developed strategies to maximize their learning. For instance, they adopted an active learning attitude, took initiative to make friends, went to church or took a part-time job to extend their social network, sought advice from lecturers, tutors and supervisors, and immersed themselves in English by listening to radio, watching Australian TV programs, and staying with host families. Most of the participants valued academic assistance such as language support, counseling, access to learning resources, and student organizations providing mentorship. They found language and learning support effective when it was specifically tailored to their needs, such as English for academic writing. Four of them had very positive experiences attending a bridging program to assist their transition to Australian learning styles and improve their English proficiency. However, other participants wished for more learning and language support as there were long queues waiting for assistance and there was a lack of discipline-specific language assistance.

The above review of Taiwanese international students in the United States and in Australia shows that English language proficiency is a recognized problem for Taiwanese students. However, this linguistic 'problem' should not be considered a stigma because improving English language competence has always been one of the major aims for Taiwanese students who pursue their higher education in English-speaking countries. In addition, from a post-structuralist perspective, adequate English language proficiency is a socially contextualized outcome. For instance, students are considered to have adequate English language proficiency when they meet English language proficiency requirements by performing well on a standardized English test; however, the students can start to feel inadequate in English language when they have difficulties understanding local accents in the host country. As existing studies of Taiwanese international students have focused more on the American context, there is a need to research Australian context in further detail. This research gap is significant, particularly as it has not been addressed against the background of large numbers of Chinese international students studying in Australian universities. Therefore, there is a need to investigate in-depth the linguistic environment the students are situated in, the practices they are engaging, and the people who are interacting with them so that gaps in the practices that are hindering Taiwanese international students' language learning and use can be identified.

International students expect their English language proficiency to improve and advance during study overseas. The need of international students for ongoing language learning has often been obscured by the level of language proficiency that is expected of them as they are admitted to enter their degree programs.

International students obtain their university admissions by meeting English proficiency requirements along with academic qualification requirements. In Australia, English language proficiency is usually demonstrated through performance on the IELTS (International English Language Testing System). The academic module of IELTS consists of four parts, namely Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking. Scores from 1 (Non-user) to 9 (Expert user) are used for each part of the test. The results from the four parts then generate an overall band score. An IELTS overall score between band 6.0 and band 7.0 is commonly accepted as the minimum entry level for Australian universities (Feast, 2002). Different faculties vary in terms of their score requirements. Band 6, according to IELTS (IELTS, n.d.), suggests a "competent user", who "has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations" (IELTS, n.d.). Band 7 suggests a "good user", who "has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning" (IELTS, n.d.). Meeting the English proficiency requirements indicates that the student's level of language competence is acceptable for their study program in English-medium universities (IELTS, n.d.).

However, this acceptability is often interpreted or treated as full competency. As Kubota observes (2009, p. 614), "[T]here is an elitist assumption that international students should already come with perfect English language proficiency and that the university has little obligation to further support their academic development in their second language." Little attention has been paid to evaluating the language learning provided by institutions to international students. The views of international students themselves are rarely sought as to how they would evaluate the quality of their institutions, which "brand" themselves not only on the basis of the education they offer but also on the value of the English language medium (Yates & Wahid, 2013). Without institutional provision of English language learning embedded in the students' discipline content learning, international students' language learning is largely left to their own devices.

On the other hand, international students' English proficiency has often been linked to university standards and quality (Benzie, 2010). There has been a heated debate regarding the low English proficiency of international students as the reason for decreasing university standards as a trade-off for revenues (Alexander, 2007). Concerning the impact of international students' poor English skills on the overall quality of universities, public concerns about international graduates' entering the workforce with inadequate communicative competence in English have also been voiced (Arkoudis, 2009). Furthermore, issue has been extended to the competitiveness of the workforce, which it has been contended has been lowered by international graduates obtaining permanent residency (Birrell, 2006).

Only recently have Australian universities been encouraged to re-evaluate their English language provision by a government document in 2009, titled *Good Practice Principles for English Language Competence for International Students* (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009). In addition, the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act has been revised to ensure that institutions have adequate services in place to support students, including both international and domestic students, once they are enrolled (Murray & Hicks, 2014). Currently, each university is developing its own strategy (Murray & Hicks, 2014). Murray and Hicks (2014) report a positive case of an institutional approach to English language proficiency at the University of South Australia. This university decided to de-centralize their English learning provision in order to align language learning with academic content and professional communication skills. The English learning provision is made available to all students who are identified as in need after enrolment. Key forms of English provision include: one-on-one consultation with a language and learning advisor, extra feedback on assignments by advisor, workshops on proficiency and academic literacy, and online resources. While the English learning support program is continuing to develop, the study reports that the students have begun to benefit from this institutional approach (Murray & Hicks, 2014). This positive case demonstrates the benefits of effective institutional language learning provision.

In addition to implementing institutional practices, Sterzuk (2014) highlights the importance of considering the nature of the English standard that an institution implements. Researching international students in Canada, Sterzuk shows that it is usually the English of native speakers that is taken for granted as a benchmark. However, rather than being a linguistic standard, this native-speaker standard is socially defined, as Sterzuk demonstrates with a case study of a student from Nigeria. Despite the fact that English is Nigeria's official language and English is the language of instruction there, the Nigerian student in question was not considered a native speaker of English by his Canadian professors or his Canadian peers and they often corrected his English.

Furthermore, Sterzuk argues that positioning native speaker's English as the standard inevitably excludes international students learning English as a second language. In fact, even texts they produce in "Standard English" may be considered as deficient, as in the following example:

> Professor: The Chinese student, when we went through her thesis, when we finished it and I handed it to the committee, um, they wanted to start correcting the English. And I had already corrected it and I know correct English when I hear it. I know what it is. But I know that I had already heard how she said things and so I didn't notice anymore. But I then realised that what they were looking at, there was nothing incorrect about it. It wasn't even [pause] it wasn't wrong, but it was reading as if the person had a Chinese accent. Do you know? Like, you could tell. You could read the accent. But it wasn't – there was absolutely nothing wrong about it […] (quoted in Sterzuk 2014, p. 62)

Examples such as these demonstrate that the English language proficiency development of international students is complicated by the issue of whose standard of English is used to measure their English level. Similarly, a study of international students in Australia by Ryan and Viete (2009) argues that the notion of 'native speakers' has been powerful in universities, and may result in a confusion of international students' English skills with their academic abilities. As stated by Ryan and Viete (2009, p. 304), "Many academics base their assessments of students on judgements about students' use and control of language and these can be influenced by idealized views of language fluency and sophistication". In order to promote respectful two-way interactions in the academic environment, the researchers suggest that international students experience a more successful learning when they have a sense of belonging, their knowledge is respected and valued, and when their achievement can be acknowledged.

2.4 PhD study

Community participation and identity negotiation may differ in the area of PhD study; as such, research on PhD study is reviewed as a separate section here. While classroom participation and group work are common practices for undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students, this is usually not the case for PhD students, particularly in Australia, where PhD students do not attend classes but mainly conduct research independently with guidance from their supervisors. However, this does not mean that their journey is less challenging. As Green states (2005, p. 153), doctoral study "is as much about identity formation as it is about knowledge production." The identity formation process can be a struggle because it is a phase where doctoral students "are in a liminal, in-between space; caught between being a novice researcher and becoming an independent researcher" (Manathunga, 2011, p. 89). In this in-between phase, PhD students' perceptions of themselves influence how they use their agency as well as project their voice in their new academic communities and in their supervised research theses. Duff (2007) describes this process of learning as "academic discourse socialization." Duff (p. 4) suggests that it takes "social interaction" as much as "cognitive experience" for a PhD student to participate in the new academic community and develop toward becoming an independent researcher as well as a competent academic writer.

The following subsections first look at how the language proficiency of international students intersects with the academic discipline of PhD students, before considering PhD students' participation in institutional practices and socialization with their peers. This is followed by a review of supervisory practices.

2.4.1 The role of language in the disciplines

PhD students, especially those from non-English speaking backgrounds, are well aware of the overall impact of their English language skills on professional development and identity formation. It is a common assumption that English proficiency deficits cause more constraints for doctoral students in humanity disciplines than those in science disciplines. For instance, a survey study by Casanave and Hubbard (1992) reported that academic writing skills figure much more prominently in the humanities and social sciences compared to science and technology. For humanities and social science doctoral students, writing is a prevalent and essential task throughout their candidature, while for those in scientific disciplines, writing is only a part of the requirement and usually takes place toward the end of their research (Casanave & Hubbard, 1992).

The degree of dependence on language can influence how doctoral students position their communicative competence. For example, Cho's (2004) study investigated four non-native English-speaker doctoral students in the process of publishing their research papers in the United States. Cho (2004) found that three out of four participants chose to conduct quantitative research because they felt less constrained by their language skills when applying numbers and formulas. In other words, the level of importance of English language skills for success in a discipline indcates the possible layers of challenge a non-native speaker PhD student may be facing. Drawing from their data from four Taiwanese doctoral students in the United States and their supervisors, Y.-J. Chang and Kanno (Y.-J. Chang, 2011; Y.-J. Chang & Kanno, 2010) demonstrate that for doctoral students in the sciences, English competence may not always play a critical role in their achievement. For instance, one student participant of Aeronautic Engineering indicated that a lack of English language skills did not hinder his work and the training in mathematic calculations he received back in Taiwan gave him the competence to advance in his field. Thus, doctoral students' participation not only capitalizes on their English proficiency but also on other forms of non-linguistic capital.

At the same time, Y.-J. Chang and Kanno (2010) challenge the link between the broad categorization of disciplines and language dependence. These researchers argue that sub-disciplines present a much more diverse and complex picture. For example, labor economics and econometrics are both branches of economics; however, higher English proficiency would be expected in labor economics than in econometrics because the former relates more to sociology and the humanities, while the latter relies heavily on mathematical presentation and visualization. Finally, the researchers argue that even within one disciplinary community, the doctoral students would participate in some practices competently and in other practices ineptly. The context of the interaction still plays an important role. In the case of the Aeronautic Engineering student, he felt more confident in terms of conducting his study but less confident in terms of socializing with his laboratory peers.

Although language proficiency plays a substantial role in a PhD student's candidature, language proficiency is also impacted by peer interactions in institutional practices, and by cooperation with their supervisors. These aspects are discussed below.

2.4.2 PhD study as socialization into the academic community

Without formally structured courses for PhD students to interact with other peers, PhD students often experience isolation and loneliness (Sawir et al., 2008). Having access to "the kinds of supportive community of practice offered by a research culture which nurtures" thus becomes vital to a PhD student's academic identity formation (Wiskera, Robinsonb, & Shachamc, 2007, p. 304). As Carlone and Johnson (2007) suggest, developing an academic identity requires three dimensions: disciplinary competence, performance, and recognition. In order to cultivate a strong academic identity, PhD students need to have a deep understanding of their specialized field (competence), ability to communicate/display their knowledge/skill to other members of the community (performance), and acknowledgement by themselves and others as a legitimate member of the academic community (recognition). This process can only unfold through interaction with other academics.

However, a supportive community of practice is not always provided to PhD students in Australian universities (Benzie, 2010; Cotterall, 2011, 2013; Fotovatian, 2012). Drawing from her qualitative longitudinal data of international PhD students in Australia, Cotterall (2011, 2013) observes that none of her participants enjoyed a supportive community of practice. The PhD students in her study indicated that, for instance, few relevant seminars and workshops were held in their department, and there was little opportunity to discuss their research with other professors and PhD students. Lacking opportunities to interact and cooperate with other researchers can be most disappointing. Without such interactions with other members of the community, the PhD students are rarely able to exhibit their competence and gain recognition from the community in order to increase their confidence as academics. Consequently, the PhD students feel invisible and marginalized in their departments (Cotterall, 2013).

The absence of structured academic socialization in PhD students' institutions not only affects the formation of their academic identity but also the development of their research skills. McCallin and Nayar (2011), who research PhD education in the New Zealand context, suggest formal research training offered to PhD students. They suggest that courses or workshops would save PhD students having to learn through "trial and error", by covering topics such as academic thesis writing, research methodologies, research data analysis, and ethics and grant applications (McCallin & Nayar, 2011). Furthermore, offering research training to PhD students would also save the time and energy spent by supervisors on covering the same topics for each supervisee repetitively (McCallin & Nayar, 2011). To the best of my knowledge, the effectiveness of such training programs has not yet been empirically evaluated.

The existing structure of PhD candidature thus makes the role of supervisors extraordinarily significant for PhD students' trajectories. The following subsection reviews PhD supervision practices.

2.4.3 PhD supervision

Despite the importance of supervision to PhD students, research studies on the evaluation of PhD supervision are relatively rare (Lee & McKenzie, 2011). One of the challenges to research effective supervision could be the nature of doctoral supervision. As Lee and McKenzie (2011, p. 69) suggest, "Academic workloads and other forms of recognition for supervision are highly variable, partly because supervision is neither simply 'teaching' nor 'research' but an uneasy bridge between both." The approaches, styles, and expectations of supervisors can vary enormously in facilitating the candidature of PhD students. Supervision is impacted by practical issues such as workload, time, expected completion rate, and quality assurance regimes, as well the supervisor's own experience of receiving supervision and their concept of supervision (A. Lee, 2008).

Another challenge in researching PhD supervision lies in the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee, which is always "structurally asymmetrical" (Green, 2005, p. 154). The power relations in the relationship often cause individual supervision experiences to be left unspoken. Consequently, qualitative feedback from students to their supervisors is rare as a means to improve supervision (Cotterall, 2011). Owler (1999) describes the supervisor-supervisee relationship as follows:

> The difficulty of managing the PhD supervisory relationship is a well-known one. The intensity with which this relationship can be played out reveals that much more is involved than a simple transference of knowledge from one individual to another. On the contrary, each individual is revealed to have complex investments in this relationship. (p. 132)

As the relationship is fraught with higher risk for PhD students than their supervisors, acquiring PhD students' reflections and perspectives becomes challenging. Lee and McKenzie (2011) suggest that anonymity is the first priority when investigating PhD students' experience. When designing research student feedback surveys, they found that PhD students feel that they are risking more by taking a survey than do course work students. They worry about the possibility of being identified by their supervisors and fear consequences to their supervisory relationship as well as to the completion of their thesis and future careers. Even with assurance of anonymity, some PhD students still fear that their written feedback might be identified because their supervisors have become very familiar with their writing styles. Even PhD graduates may continue to have concerns about anonymity because their previous supervisors may still have considerable influence on their career development, since supervisor and supervisee may continue to move in the same academic circles (Lee & McKenzie, 2011). A good relationship with supervisors is thus crucial. The PhD students who have a good relationship with their supervisors are more likely to feel satisfied with their candidature and their university. They feel more supported, less stressed, and more confident than those who suffer from a difficult relationship and are often stressed, sometimes even depressed (Adrian-Taylor, Noels, & Tischler, 2007).

The way in which PhD students are supervised usually involves practices in a range of aspects. Lee's research (A. Lee, 2008) reports supervisory practices from the perspective of supervisors. Based on data from 12 supervisors who have together supervised over 150 PhD students in the United Kingdom, Lee suggests that the main practices are: functional, enculturation, critical thinking, emancipation, and a quality relationship. First, functional practice refers to facilitating PhD students' progress so that they meet official requirements. Additionally, supervisors can help students access resources and opportunities inside and outside their department (Pearson & Kayrooz, 2004). Second, enculturation practice means encouraging PhD students to become members of the disciplinary community, by familiarizing them with disciplinary discourse and connecting them with professional networks. Third, critical thinking practice denotes the coaching of PhD students to question and analyze their work in such a way that students' ideas are nurtured (Stracke & Kumar, 2010). Fourth, emancipation practice means that PhD students are mentored to reflect and develop in both personal and professional areas. Fifth, a quality relationship practice refers to ensuring that PhD students are motivated, inspired, and cared for. These enabling practices are largely parallel to the facilitative practices proposed by Pearson and Kayrooz (2004). Similarly, they describe the role of a supervisor as a facilitator, a mentor, a coach, and a sponsor.

At the same time, supervisory relationships are often characterized by tensions and conflicts. Exploring problems experienced by international graduate students and supervisors, Adrian-Taylor, Noels, and Tischler (2007) surveyed 55 international postgraduate and PhD students from 15 countries as well as 53 faculty supervisors in Canada. The results show that 22 percent of international students and 34 percent of faculty supervisors have experienced student-supervisor conflicts. Common conflicts recognized by both parties include lack of communication, unclear conversation, and lack of openness (e.g., students are afraid to disagree with or confront the supervisor due to power relations). In addition to these communication difficulties, common conflicts include the supervisor's lack of time, and differing expectations regarding the responsibilities of supervisees and supervisors and how close their relationship should be. There are also differences of opinion concerning what skills are important to develop in graduate training.

While both supervisors and supervisees agree that problems such as these may threaten the quality of the supervisory relationship, other problems exist stemming from a discrepancy between the views of supervisees and supervisors (Adrian-Taylor et al., 2007). For example, the international graduate students in the study consider lack of (useful) feedback, lack of respect from the supervisor and lack of support/guidance as major sources of conflict; by contrast, few supervisors identify these as sources of conflict. Supervisors consider poor English proficiency and lack of research skills as the major sources of conflict; few students considered these problematic. These discrepant views indicate that there may be a gap in understanding and perception between supervisors and supervisees.

With regards to poor English proficiency of supervisees – a key problem from the supervisors' perspective – Adrian-Taylor, Noels, and Tischler (2007) suggest that some supervisors may ignore the differences between the students who speak English as a first language and those who use English as an additional language. This may result in unrealistic expectations and can position international PhD students as linguistically deficit and incompetent. Furthermore, as discussed in Section 2.4.1, such expectations on the part of supervisors and institutions are often the result of a lack of attention to the ongoing language learning needs of international PhD students.

Another key concern reported by both local and international PhD students relates to the absence of (useful) feedback (e.g., see Cotterall, 2011; Wang & Li, 2011 for Australia; McAlpine, Jazvac-Martek, & Hopwood, 2009 for Canada and the United Kingdom). Feedback, particularly written feedback, is essential to PhD students' learning on many levels. Kumar and Stracke (2007) stress the significant role of feedback in supervision:

> In a supervisory environment, feedback on written drafts is a form of communication, as it is through written feedback that the supervisor communicates and provides advanced academic training, particularly in writing, to the supervisee. It is through this feedback that the supervisee is able to understand that writing is a form of learning, as revising drafts after feedback can lead to a process of discovery, an integral part of PhD education. It is also the feedback that allows the supervisee to engage in critical thinking and writing; thus communicate ideas. (p.462)

However, feedback provided by supervisors to PhD students is an area that has not received sufficient attention (Reinders, Cho, & Lewis, 2013). Neither the feedback given by supervisors, nor the perception of supervisees receiving the feedback, has been researched in much scale and depth (Kumar & Stracke, 2007).

Problems with feedback may relate to quantity and quality. Students typically consider feedback which only gives criticism without giving guidance as lacking in quality. Drawing from longitudinal qualitative data of international PhD students in Australia, Cotterall (2011, 2013) found that PhD students felt dissatisfied with the feedback on their writing because the feedback failed to provide direction for their revision. Cotterall reported that the situation was difficult for them, and severely stressed one PhD student in particular, who was struggling alone for three whole months in the early stages. In her study, none of the students interviewed risked bringing frictions to their supervisory relationship by negotiating the types of feedback they would appreciate receiving. Cotterall reported further that one PhD student explained, “[W]hen you’re arguing with a professor …the truth is you really have a lot to lose” (Cotterall, 2013, p. 6). As Greenhalgh (1992, p. 402) argues, there is an important social dimension to feedback: “In principle, a supervisor’s response to a draft not only delivers a message at the semantic level but also plays out the social relationship between reader and writer, teacher and student.” Ineffective supervision practices can take their toll on the supervisee, with the power relations at play resulting in an absence of genuine dialogue, and hence a lack of reflection on the part of the supervisor in respect of their supervision practices.

In sum, existing research has found that international PhD students in Australia face challenges in terms of a lack of structured institutional support to enable them to participate in an academic community as well as to advance their academic literacy and general communication skills. PhD supervision thus plays the most essential role in their trajectories. However, in cases where conflicts or ineffective supervisory practices occur, PhD students are often placed in a high-risk position, unable to challenge their supervisor due to power relations.

2.5 Community participation outside educational settings

So far this review has focused on international students' language learning and use, which intersect with various practices in educational settings. This section reviews international students' language use outside university, which is also an integral part of international students' overseas experience. Off campus, international students' identity as students may not be saliently marked. Instead, international students may be considered to be "temporary transnationals" (Weiss & Ford, 2011, p. 229) or comparable to new migrants, who need to settle down in the host country, engage with local communities, and get involved in various social activities. International students have to deal with mundane aspects of everyday life such as accommodation, transportation, food, leisure activities, and social relationships. In the context of these practical aspects of living, international students often expect their language learning and communication skills to show pronounced improvement through their everyday experience and social interaction. However, there is very limited literature examining international students' language learning and their life outside university. This section discusses three domains that the existing literature has identified where international students' language learning intersects with their social life and community participation. They are the domains of accommodation, church, and romance as these three areas often serve as access points for international students to learn local knowledge and local culture as well as practice the target language.

2.5.1 Accommodation

Accommodation is often assumed to be beneficial to language learning through living with local families or local students (Takahashi, 2013). However, in practice, obtaining such ideal accommodation is not easy. As Khawaja and Dempsey (2008) reported, there is a shortage of affordable housing for international students in Australia. In terms of university-managed accommodation, only a small capacity exists, and the rent is usually more expensive than private rentals off campus (Obeng-Odoom, 2012). For instance, the University of Sydney can only house 5 percent of its students, which means 95 percent of students have to live in non-university accommodation (Obeng-Odoom, 2012). The rent in a residential college is almost double that of comparable private off-campus accommodation (Obeng-Odoom, 2012). Finding accommodation outside university is a problem for all university students because universities are unable to regulate private rental providers. However, international students are likely to face more difficulties of this nature than local students, since many of the latter live at home with their parents (Obeng-Odoom, 2012). Furthermore, this situation limits the opportunities for international students to share accommodation with local students (Yates & Wahid, 2013).

Affordability of accommodation also impacts the types of accommodation that international students can choose from. Drawing from their qualitative data of international students' accommodation experience in Tasmania, Yue, Lê, and Terry (2014) found that, despite their preference for homestay in order to gain opportunities to practice English and forge closer relationships, international students often move to shared housing due to economic considerations. In the same vein, in Cross's (2006) study of Chinese international students in Perth, 70.8 percent of the Chinese international students chose to share a house with other Chinese students for financial reasons (p.158). Economic constraints thus impact the opportunities for international students to engage in English outside university with local families and students. Moreover, affordable accommodation also intertwines with other factors, such as the distance to their universities, transportation time and cost, and general safety and convenience (Yue et al., 2014). As a result, moving house several times during the period of their studies is not uncommon (Cross, 2006; Obeng-Odoom, 2012; Yue et al., 2014; Z. Zhang & Brunton, 2007).

Despite the higher expense, homestay is often considered as the ideal form of accommodation for international students in order to use English in daily life. However, for some international students, homestay may not be a pleasant experience. In Cross's (2006) study of Chinese international students in Perth, homestay was not a positive experience for most of them due to incompatibility in lifestyle and food, as well as communication problems. Also, the students felt they could have had more freedom living in a shared flat than with a family. Only a small number of the international students in the study enjoyed living with their homestay parents, and appreciated the general help they received from them in respect of language and living (Cross, 2006). These homestays were usually well-educated local families, especially those holding occupations such as teacher. Cross (2006) thus suggests that some families may serve as better homestay hosts for international students, for example families where the parents have professional occupations.

The factors mentioned above, including availability of accommodation, affordability of accommodation, and compatibility of homestay or house mates all affect international students' access to English in everyday social interaction. This is also evident in Takahashi's (2013) ethnographic study of Japanese female students in Australia. The students in the study also regarded accommodation as a way to access opportunities for English practice; gradually, however, their other desires and needs were placed above their language desire. As Takahashi (2013, p. 95) describes it, "Home increasingly became much more than just an opportunity to improve English."

2.5.2 Church

It can be difficult for international students to find opportunities to speak English through their accommodation arrangements. Consequently, many of them turn to religious groups for language learning and community participation, as church is often considered a part of Western culture. However, in the literature on English learning and teaching, the aspect of religion has seldom been addressed, despite the fact that a link has been established worldwide between Christian missionary work and English language teaching (Varghese & Johnston, 2007).

Newcomers have been found to try learning English through church without sharing the religious beliefs of the church. Chao and Kuntz (2013), for instance, conducted an ethnography of a church-based ESL program in an American city. While intended to help new immigrants learn English and socialize into American society, the Christian faith and values were inevitably embedded in the program. Consequently, some participants who had other faiths felt alienated from the program. As one interviewee reported, "I like the teachers in the program. They are very nice people to help us… This is my own thing that I did not go to the class. I am an atheist" (Chao & Kuntz, 2013, p. 472). Other participants considered teaching materials such as Christmas customs and gospel songs as an imposition. This study shows that language learning through church can result in conflicts of faith, language learning, and individual identity.

On the other hand, language learning may be the by-product of a genuine religious conversion and a church's community practices, as evidenced in Han's (Han, 2007, 2009, 2011) research. This longitudinal ethnographic research documents a Chinese migrant couple's trajectory of joining a Christian church. Specifically, the research demonstrates how English learning failed in formal English language classrooms but succeeded in church. As this case has useful implications for second language learning in socially inclusive practices, more details are provided below.

This skilled immigrant couple, Grace and Timothy, did not find formal English classes helpful in advancing their English skills because they were constantly positioned as deficient language learners and were not afforded a legitimate position to speak. Instead, it was in the Mandarin–English bilingual Chinese church that their language improved along with their participation. The difference between formal English classes and the Christian church lies in the idea of inclusion. Having inclusion as the core value in evangelizing faiths, the church accepted this couple and newcomers by embracing their multilingual backgrounds. Unlike English classrooms, which are often based on a monolingual concept that favors the exclusive use of English, the church activities were run in multiple languages so that different linguistic needs could be met and everyone could participate. Grace and Timothy were given space and opportunities to speak. For example, they were invited to read the scripture on the stage and sing hymns with the English worship team, with the husband later even chairing a Thanksgiving program in English. Gradually their language proficiency improved along with their level of participation. In addition, unlike English classrooms which often place language learners in an inferior position, existing church members and newcomers would learn each other's language through shared activities; as such, their frequent code-switching contributed to a relationship that was much more equal.

In addition to improved language skills along with their integration into the church, Grace and Timothy found a way into social and economic participation in Canadian society through the church. Having good relationships with other church members, Grace and Timothy were given interpersonal support and advice such as when they were making a decision on buying a house, facing the challenges of dealing with workplace conflicts, and reaching the sales targets required for job promotion. The church community played an important role in this migrant couples' economic advancement.

Based on the empirical evidence, Han (2011) challenges the prevalent assumption that newcomers should solve their language problems first in English classes, and that their participation in the host country, be it social, economic or socio-political integration, will follow. Han's study shows that language learning is taking place in church: while this is not primarily a teaching institution, its inclusive ideology and practices create a favorable environment for language learning. Thus, Han suggests that academic institutions too should take an active role in receiving and supporting newcomers such as ethno-linguistic minority students by establishing inclusive practices.

2.5.3 Romance

Other than church, romance often constitutes an important part of international students' life outside university. International students typically are at a stage in their lives where finding a romantic partner is relatively important, as highlighted by recent news about "Erasmus babies." According to MacGuill (2014), the European Erasmus student exchange program has resulted in a demographically significant number of international couplings and has produced one million babies.

International romance is inevitably intertwined with language learning and use. As mentioned in Section 2.2.3., Piller's research *Bilingual couples talk: The discursive construction of hybridity* (Piller, 2002a, 2002b, 2008) initiated the exploration of language learning in cross-cultural romantic relationships. Language learning can become an essential aspect of the private communication of bilingual couples (Piller, 2002a). One point to note is that among the bilingual English-German couples in the study, many achieved a high level of L2 proficiency to the extent that they could pass for a native speaker (Piller, 2002b). Interestingly, this finding coincides with the widely held belief that finding a romantic partner who is a native speaker of the target language constitutes a significant boost to one's language learning.

Based on Piller, as cited in Section 2.2.3, Takahashi's study (2013) shows that the language desire of Japanese female students made them long for a boyfriend who was a white Australian and/or native speaker of English. In Takahashi's (2013) ethnographic study, following their dreams to study in Australia, these Japanese women soon realized that being surrounded by many native speakers and picking up English effortlessly did not happen as naturally as they had imagined. They could not easily understand Australians speaking, and in turn they were not easily understood. Forming close friendships with local people seemed impossible without excellent English proficiency. They soon felt disappointed, self-critical, and sometimes resentful when they were ignored or ridiculed by Australian students. Not being able to socialize with Australians, some participants could only try to improve their English using traditional approaches such as watching TV, studying textbooks, and listening to the radio. Lacking opportunities for language practice reinforced their idea that a native-speaker Australian boyfriend could be an ideal teacher for their language learning as well as a mediator to gain entry to the Western world. Their romantic choices then were largely intertwined with language and race.

2.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed research into a wide range of international students' experiences that are relevant to language learning, identity negotiation, and community participation. Beginning with general research perspectives adopted for the purpose of investigating international students, and later including second language learning theories, I have highlighted second language learning as a main facet of the study-overseas experience. Several key concepts have been reviewed, including identity, legitimate peripheral participation, investment, and cultural capital. In order to account for international students' motivation to study abroad, I have also discussed the concept of language desire that motivates international students to invest in studying overseas.

I then moved to a discussion of international students' educational experiences based on empirical research studies. The main areas covered included classroom settings, group work, academic writing, and the development of English language proficiency. These areas are fundamental to international students' academic learning and language learning. However, oftentimes international students are marginalized in these practices, with their agency to participate frequently constrained by how they are positioned and perceived. Consequently, their language learning does not advance as successfully as it might. Moreover, international students' ongoing language learning needs are often neglected and effective institutional language learning provision continues to be scarce.

I have considered PhD study in a separate section due to the different practices found in PhD programs. I have first discussed the relationship between language and PhD study disciplines, examining the impact of the absence of an institutional supportive community on the identity formation and academic socialization of international PhD students. I then discussed the role of the supervisor and the effectiveness of supervisory practices such as supervisory feedback. The asymmetrical relationship between PhD students and supervisors often constitutes an impediment to genuine dialogue, particularly when international PhD students find themselves confronted with ineffective supervisory practices.

Finally, I have discussed several key areas outside educational settings, namely, accommodation, church, and romance. These areas are often perceived by international students as having potential for language learning and social connections. However, practical constraints may limit international students' access to linguistic resources in these areas. Moreover, individual agency may also prioritize other needs and desires over language learning.

This literature chapter has depicted international students' language learning in the country of their study destination as being not necessarily as ideal as they had expected. It is thus important to explore how language learning intersects with various aspects of international students' experiences by bringing in international students' voices so that a better understanding of their trajectories can be gained. A relative lack of attention has been given to the emic perspectives of international students, and specifically Taiwanese students in Australia. On the basis of the reviewed literature and the existing gaps in our knowledge, the following research questions have been formulated to guide this study.

Based on the concept of language desire introduced in Section 2.2.3, language learning is not only related to individual motivation, but also to discursive constructions of the target language and target culture, which reinforce a learner's desire to learn the language. The concept of language desire leads me to my first question, which examines the pre-departure concept as essential background to understand the study abroad experience:

1. What are Taiwanese tertiary students' previous experiences of learning English?
   How does language learning intersect with Taiwanese tertiary students' motivation to invest in studying overseas?
   Why do they choose to study in Australia?

Beyond an examination of international students' pre-departure expectations, experiences, and desires, the present inquiry – like the literature it is based on – focuses predominantly on the language learning and settlement experiences of Taiwanese tertiary students after their arrival in Australia. The literature reviewed here suggests that specific educational experiences (classroom, group work, academic writing, development of English proficiency, PhD study) and community participation contexts (accommodation, church, romance) are of particular importance. In order to understand whether these are the same for Taiwanese students or whether other significant practices may exist, the next three research questions focus specifically on educational settings.

The second research question broadly asks in which social worlds these language learners engage:

2. What kinds of practices, particularly in relation to language learning and language choice, do Taiwanese tertiary students in Australia engage in?
   What ideologies of language and learning are implicit in these practices?

The third research question moves on to the educational practices in which these Taiwanese students participate:

3. What is Taiwanese tertiary students' experience in Australian universities?
   How does language intersect with their identity and participation in educational settings such as in classroom and group work?
   What is Taiwanese PhD students' experience of engaging in the academic community as well as in supervisory practices?

Furthermore, academic writing is a major part of university assessment and language learning. However, as discussed in Section 2.3.3 and Section 2.3.4, existing research has found that international students often face particular difficulties in this area. Research presented in Sections 2.3.3 and Section 2.3.4, as well as in Section 2.4, also suggests that the feedback students receive on their written work may constitute a particularly problematic area that warrants further investigation. My fourth question therefore is:

4. What is Taiwanese tertiary students' academic writing experience?
   How do they perceive the feedback they receive on their academic writing?

Based on the literature reviewed in Section 2.5, it is also obvious that practices engaged in by overseas students outside university have a profound influence on their language learning and overall educational experience. Therefore, my fifth research question seeks to illuminate precisely that intersection:

5. What are Taiwanese tertiary students' experiences of language learning and participation outside university?
   How does language learning intersect with these areas and shape their temporary settlement experience?

The next chapter outlines the research methodology employed to answer these questions.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the research paradigms that undergird my methodology and approach. I then describe the research procedure in detail, including participant selection and data collection. After introducing the research participants, I discuss the relationship between the researcher and the researched. This is followed by the methods of data analysis. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the possible limitations of the study.

3.2 Qualitative research using ethnographic techniques

This study is an investigation of language learning experiences of overseas Taiwanese students in Australian higher education. As stated in Chapter Two (see Section 2.6), the central research questions are:

1. What are Taiwanese tertiary students' previous experiences of learning English? How does language learning intersect with Taiwanese tertiary students' motivation to invest in studying overseas? Why do they choose to study in Australia?
2. What kinds of practices, particularly in relation to language learning and language choice, do Taiwanese tertiary students in Australia engage in? What ideologies of language and learning are implicit in these practices?
3. What is Taiwanese tertiary students' experience in Australian universities? How does language intersect with their identity and participation in educational settings such as in classroom and group work? What is Taiwanese PhD students' experience of engaging in the academic community as well as in supervisory practices?
4. What is Taiwanese tertiary students' academic writing experience? How do they perceive the feedback they receive on their academic writing?

5. What are Taiwanese tertiary students' experiences of language learning and participation outside university? How does language learning intersect with these areas and shape their temporary settlement experience?

To explore in depth the experience of the research participants in the specific context of Australian higher education without resorting to over-simplification and numerical classification I adopted a qualitative paradigm using ethnographic techniques for the following reasons.

First, qualitative research explores human activity in a natural setting, attempting to "make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). This principle of placing participants' perspectives at the center of the enquiry fits well with the major objective of the research, which is to capture insiders' trajectories, their subjectivities, and their sense-making by giving a thick description and authentic interpretation. This study aims to present the participants' experiences in rich detail and to let their voices be heard and valued. The nature of qualitative research, which is cyclical, contextual, and longitudinal, is fit for the purpose of generating authentic interpretations in a specific context.

Second, within the qualitative paradigm ethnographic approaches constitute a way to understand both small and big phenomena. Following Dell Hymes (1974), Blommaert described ethnography as "an approach in which the analysis of small phenomena, is set against an analysis of big phenomena, and in which both levels can only be understood in terms of one another" (2005, p. 16). By investigating how language learning intersects with trajectories of Taiwanese students in Australian higher education institutions, the study also reflects the nature of Australian tertiary education provided to overseas students, and the role of English in overseas higher education.

Third, the researcher himself/herself is also a research tool. Through rapport building, active listening, and observation, meaning and reality are co-constructed and contextualized rather than comprising one intrinsic truth (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003). It is from the interactions between my participants and myself that the data to answer the enquiries have emerged. The researcher cannot and does not intend to achieve pure objectivity; instead, from a post-structuralist point of view the researcher should “acknowledge what we ourselves bring to our research in terms of our lived experience, certainly, but also our politics and our intellectual frameworks” (Gray, 2003, p. 63).

The specific research techniques employed in the research are provided in the account of the research procedure in the following Section 3.3.

3.3 Procedure and data collection

Data collection for this study spanned three years with three phases, involving 35 primary participants and 5 secondary participants. This section outlines the procedure of how the study was carried out and what types of data were collected.

In October 2011, approval to recruit Taiwanese overseas students for this study was granted by the Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee of Macquarie University. The recruitment was then advertised online. The advertisement, with both English and Mandarin versions, was posted on several electronic bulletin boards popular among Taiwanese students. A full list of these venues and the content of the English advertisement can be found in Appendix 1. The online advertisement provided an email address for those interested in participating to contact me. In addition, the snowball technique was used to recruit potential participants by means of personal contact and social media. The advertisement was posted on a few social media channels to disseminate the recruitment news to my friends and their friends. Only when the potential participants explicitly expressed their interest were they contacted. The initial correspondence was via email or website messages in order to minimize any pressure to participate imposed on individuals by friends.

Selection criteria for primary participants were:

— Taiwanese students receiving long-term higher education in Australia

— English as second language users

— Age range from 18 years and above

Between October 2011 and January 2012, thirty Taiwanese students were recruited through various channels. Two of them had been known to me prior to the research – I had met one in a university setting in March 2011 and the other at a social event in

June 2011 respectively. Nine participants responded to my recruitment advertisement (see Appendix 1). Out of the nine, four had seen the advertisement on an electronic bulletin board system, Taiwan BBS, which is popular among Taiwanese students both in Taiwan and overseas. The remaining five participants had seen the recruitment advertisement through the IDP Education Taipei Office (http://www.taiwan.idp.com/), which offers placement services for Taiwanese students pursuing education in Australia. Another two participants were recruited during a social event held by Taiwanese Student Association (TSA) in Sydney and were directly approached by the researcher. Another nine participants were recruited by word of mouth and were the friends of various acquaintances whom I had told about my research. Another eight participants were introduced to me through other participants. Table 2 provides an overview of the recruitment channels.

Table 2 The recruitment channels and the number of participants recruited

The recruitment channels	The number of participants recruited
Pre-existing contacts	2
Taiwan BBS electronic bulletin board	4
IDP Education Taipei Office	5
Taiwanese Student Association (TSA)	2
Friends of various acquaintances	9
Through other participants	8
Total	30

As the diverse channels for recruitment were used, the risks of sample bias and loss of objectivity are low. First, only two out of thirty participants had been known to the researcher prior to the research; in other words, twenty-eight participants were total strangers to the researcher at the time of recruitment. This also means that the participants were not from a homogenous group and were unlikely to share the same feelings and opinions as they were not situated in one particular institution. In fact, the recruited participants were from ten universities in four different states (Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia). Detailed information about participants is provided in Section 3.4.

Following the recruitment, the Information and Consent Form (see Appendix 2) was provided to each participants prior to the interview. I went through the form with each individual participant, explaining the research, how they would participate, and how their confidentiality would be maintained at all times. I also informed the participants that they could withdraw at any time without having to give a reason, and after interview they could freely decide whether they would like to continue to participate in the follow-up research by keeping in touch with the researcher. All participants signed the form as well as agreed for their interview to be audio-recorded. One PhD participant chose to partially withdraw after the interview and asked me to exclude her account of difficulties in dealing with her supervisor right after her interview (See details in Section 3.5 and Section 5.5.3.).

Dataset One: Initial interviews with 30 participants, October 2011–January 2012

Following recruitment, I then conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Participants whom I was not able to meet in person because of geographic distance were interviewed via the video chat program Skype. I started the interview by having each participant fill out a short demographic information form (see Appendix 3), which contributed in two ways. First, it served as a good way to start a conversation between two strangers. Second, the information was useful, including basic biographic information, means of future contact, English proficiency test scores at the time of obtaining university admission, duration of sojourn in Australia, accommodation, and university and study area. After the demographic information form was filled out, interviews were conducted, mostly in Mandarin with occasional mixing of English and Taiwanese according to participants' preferences. These interviews were all audio recorded and lasted on average one hour. The semi-structured open-ended interview questions were arranged in time sequence of past, present, and future, in order to obtain the big picture as well as details of their trajectories: what their language learning experiences were like, what made them decide to study overseas and particularly in

Australia, what their Australian study experience was like, and what they were expecting for their future (see interview questions in Appendix 4). The collected interview data form the main data on which the analyses in Chapters Four and Five are based.

Interviews are useful in recalling events which are not directly observable to the researcher (Gobo, 2008). I incorporated ethnographic interview techniques including suitable places, observation, and communicative strategies, suggested by Gobo (2008, pp. 190-200). The location for face-to-face interviews was decided by participants to suit their convenience and liking. As participants tended to choose places that they felt most familiar and comfortable with such as their favorite coffee shop, study lab, or a corner on the campus, I was able to observe the environment they were situated in and sometimes their interaction with other people such as waiter/waitress, or friends who happened to be passing through. In the interview, I would encourage participants to continue with a description by showing my interest (e.g., "嗯真有趣，可以告訴我多一點嗎?" [Ah, interesting! Can you tell me more?]), probing when answers seemed vague, check whether I understood them correctly by summarizing their comments, and request for clarifications. In addition, I was particularly careful to avoid giving any cues or any comments so that participants' answers were not conditioned to, for example, negative or positive reflections I might have formed.

In discussing ethnographic interviews, Gobo (2008) points out some shortcomings of ethnographic interviews and these need to be acknowledged here. First, there could be a gap between the interviewee's declared state and his/her actual state although ideally these two states are assumed to be close. For instance, a participant might express more negative views on his/her experience in Australia because some unpleasant event had happened just prior to the interview. The opposite situation could happen as well. Second, there could be a gap between the researcher's cognitive interests and those of the interviewees. For instance, a participant who told me that what she liked most about Australia was going to church repeatedly asked whether this was relevant because she thought it was irrelevant to my focus, as she understood it, on learning experiences at university. I reassured her of the legitimacy of her answer and encouraged her to share more details about her experience with church. Third, we have to acknowledge that people have limited memories and they do not have all the facts.

For example, a participant might not remember whether he/she had been informed about language learning services provided by their university and might be unsure whether such support existed or not. Therefore, any such account cannot be treated as a “reality report” (Gobo, 2008, p. 195) as to whether the university does or does not provide language learning services. Instead, such a report must be treated as an account of the participant’s perception and can serve to show that language learning services may not be salient to the participant and that any such language learning service does, for all intents and purposes, not ‘exist’ for the participant. In addition, in the limited time of the interview it is impossible for participants to offer all the details of every topic touched upon; what is mentioned in an interview is always what is salient to the interviewee at the time.

Given the strengths and shortcomings of ethnographic interviewing as discussed above, one ethnographic interview can never obtain all relevant knowledge, and ambiguities and interpretations have to be resolved in subsequent interactions and observations in the field (Gobo 2008, p. 191). Therefore, I decided to conduct follow-up observations to strengthen and deepen my understanding of the interview contents. These follow-up observations and interactions constitute Dataset Two and Three (see below).

As there were two modes of interviewing involved, face-to-face interviews and computer-mediated interviews via Skype, there is a need to address the influence of these two modes. Nineteen participants were interviewed face-to-face and eleven participants were interviewed via Skype. Most of the participants were very generous in sharing their experiences and thoughts both face-to-face and via Skype. Generally, it was more difficult to build rapport and elicit participants’ narratives in a Skype interview due to the limited availability or complete lack of facial expressions and gestures. The latter was particularly true if the video camera had to be switched off due to the quality of the Internet connection. However, I also discovered that Skype interviews have certain advantages. First, participants seemed not bothered by the fact that the conversation was being recorded. By contrast, in some face-to-face interviews participants asked me to put the MP3 recorder out of sight so that they would not feel nervous. Second, except for one participant, participants were very used to talking on Skype and extremely comfortable with the medium. I believe some participants actually felt more comfortable speaking their minds on Skype because it offered them a higher level of anonymity. This is certainly the case for one particular participant, who was generously sharing his experiences on Skype and told me he really enjoyed the interview, which was like chatting to a good friend rather than taking an interview. However, when I met him in person for the second interview about assignments and feedback on academic writing, even though he was still enthusiastic, the conversation was more difficult. Despite the minor differences between the two modes of interviewing, the purpose of the interview was achieved through both modes.

Dataset Two: Collection of writing feedback and follow-up interviews on writing feedback with 17 participants, May 2013–June 2013

During interviews, it emerged that a key concern for the participants was their academic writing and the help they were getting (or not) to improve it. A particular concern of the participants was how to deal with feedback they received on their academic writing. I followed this lead by adopting a materialist and processual approach to probing into the "unproblematic side", the feedback given by educators. Consequently, it became necessary to collect additional data, namely the participants' academic writing. These naturally occurring data contributed greatly to the study by avoiding a single perspective, focusing solely on the participants in understanding the complex webs in which their experiences of language learning and use were embedded.

After obtaining research ethics clearance, recruitment started within the cohort of Phase One interview participants. Twelve of the original thirty participants joined the second interview. Of these, no academic writing data were collected from PhD students because of confidentiality concerns. To make up for the shortfall, an additional five participants were recruited via the snowball technique, with existing participants as intermediaries, in order to reach saturation of the research data. In total, 17 master's participants from seven universities in three states took part in the second phase of the research. All participants signed a new consent form (see Appendix 5) as well as agreed for the interview to be audio-recorded.

I collected assignments or essays that the participants wished to make available, including all documentation relevant to those assignments such as the writing task as it was set by the teacher, the actual assignment, and any reflections the participants might have on how they went about writing it, as well as any feedback they received on their assignments, including marks. A brief set of questions were asked about each assignment participants made available to me, including how they went about writing the assignment, whether they found the original task easy or difficult, whether they sought and/or received any writing support from any source, and what they thought about the feedback and/or mark they had received. The interview guide is provided in Appendix 6. The written assignments, feedback, and interview data form the major source of data for the analysis presented in Chapter Six.

In the second interview, similarly, two modes of interviews were utilized. Nine participants were interviewed face-to-face, and the remaining eight participants were interviewed via Skype because some of them were in different states and a few had gone back to Taiwan. As this interview involved participants' actual assignments, which were in the form of printed papers or electronic files, the two modes of interviewing had additional strengths and weaknesses in comparison to the concerns raised in the first round of interviews. In face-to-face interviews, it was easy for participants to show me assignments which were printed out on paper. I then scanned these for e-filing with their permission. However, they had to make an extra effort and email me assignments which were in electronic form. By contrast, it was easier for Skype participants to show me assignments in electronic forms, but they had to make an extra effort with the printed-out assignments by scanning them into electronic files before sending to me. In total, 56 assignments were collected, including 17 hardcopy assignments and 39 electronic assignments.

Dataset Three: Longitudinal follow-up ethnographic observation, October 2011–October 2014

Considering Watson-Gegeo's (1988) concerns about a situation whereby a "researcher 'dive-bombs' into a setting, makes a few fixed-category or entirely impressionistic observations, then takes off again to write up the result" (Watson-Gegeo, 1988, p. 576), I decided to continue to build rapport and maintain communication with those participants who were willing and available. Given the continued availability of some participants, an ethics amendment was obtained to extend the period of participant observation beyond the original one year to three years until October 2014. I re-sought participants' consent to keep in contact with me and continue to share their experiences.

Adopting a natural approach, the follow-up participant observation involved informal meetings, phone calls, email exchanges, online chats, or text messages with participants about their experiences of English language learning and use. Data were collected in the form of field notes and relevant communication between the participants and me. I regularly caught up with a small number of participants, having coffee with them on campus or accompanying them to various social events. The frequency, duration, and medium of communication were discussed with the participants and depended on their availability and convenience. As for the participants who lived in other states of Australia or had gone back to Taiwan after graduation, I visited them during the course of my personal trips whenever possible, or otherwise we kept in touch via social media such as Facebook. The data collected not only supplemented the interview data but also served as a continuation of their trajectories, which kept changing and evolving after the interviews.

The follow-up observation involved thirteen primary participants. In addition, observation data was also collected from five secondary participants (See Table 6) to supplement the data provided by the primary participants. Secondary participants were those who fit the criteria of research participants but did not join the study formally because they met the researcher after interview periods. Of these five participants, two were a couple, who were both PhD students. They were introduced to the researcher by a participant. Another two were also PhD students, one was introduced by a participant and the researcher met the other in a university setting. The fifth participant was a Master student who the researcher met in a university setting. These participants were told about the researcher's study, and were interested in sharing their experiences. They were asked about their experiences especially in the areas that were identified as salient themes in the interviews. Their consent was obtained if any of their experiences or narratives were included in this study. Overall, this set of data formed a minor dataset and was not collected systematically from all the 18 participants due to the participants' availability and the researcher's capacity. The analysis in Chapters Four to Six is predominantly based on Datasets One and Two. Data drawn from Dataset Three in the analysis are specifically identified when they are used. Although the use of Dataset Three is limited, the prolonged engagement with the participants is important to the overall credibility of the study and the authentic interpretation of Dataset One and Dataset Two.

3.4 Participants

The 35 primary participants (30 from Dataset One and 5 from Dataset Two) were enrolled in ten universities, one TAFE college, and one language school in four states in Australia. Master's and PhD students constituted the majority of primary participants. Except for the two youngest participants, all had obtained their bachelor's degrees in Taiwan. A list of their study status at the time of interviews is provided in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Participants' study status at the time of interview

	Graduated more than six months earlier	Just graduated	Ongoing	Total
PhD	0	1	6	7
Master's	6	6	12	24
Bachelor's	0	0	2	2
TAFE	1	0	0	1
Language school	0	0	1	1
Total	7	7	21	35

Of the 35 participants, 20 were female and 15 were male. Their ages ranged from 24 to 38. They had stayed in Australia on average 1.9 years, except for four participants who had stayed on average 12 years, since they came to study at a much earlier time, had obtained work and become Australian permanent residents. In terms of the participants' residence at the time of the first interview, 27 were in New South Wales, 4 in Queensland, 2 in Victoria, one in South Australia, and one in Taiwan. This means that the universities attended by the participants were concentrated in major cities.

The participants' study areas spanned a broad range:

- Humanities: Cultural Studies, Linguistics, Literature, Fine Arts, Music, and Social Work
- Social Sciences: Engineering Management, Integrated Marketing Communication, Marketing, Accounting, International Business, Project Management, Government and International Relations, Human Resources, Finance, International Trade and Commerce Law, and Psychology
- Sciences: Information Technologies, Food Studies, Medicine, Environmental Management, Photovoltaics and Solar Energy, Health Promotion, and Biomedical Engineering

Detailed participant information for Datasets One, Two, and Three is provided in Table 4, Table 5 , and Table 6 below.

As the number of research participants was not for statistical generalization, the findings of this study are unlikely to be representative of all Taiwanese overseas students in Australia. However, following qualitative research enquiry and ethnographic techniques employed, the study aims to capture nuanced social actors' living experiences and voices.

Table 4 Participants in the initial interview

Pseudonym	Degree	Study area	Gender	Age	Time in Australia when joining the study (in years)	University location*
Alice	Master	Health Promotion	F	27	3	Melbourne (M2)
Ann	PhD	Humanities**	F	38	2	Sydney (S1)
Barbara	Master	International Trade and Commerce Law	F	26	2.5	Sydney (S1)
Bert	Master	Medicine	M	30	1	Sydney (S4)
Betty	Bachelor	Finance	F	21	2	Sydney (S1)
Brian	Master	Photovoltaics and Solar Energy	M	27	2.5	Sydney (S3)
Cathy	Master	Fine Arts	F	26	2.5	Sydney (S3)
Daniel	Master	Engineering Management	M	25	1.5	Sydney (S2)
David	Master	Linguistics	M	27	1	Melbourne (M1)
Donna	Master	Accounting	F	23	1	Sydney (S1)
Edward	Master	Information Technologies	M	38	13	Wollongong (W1)
Emma	Master	Cultural Studies	F	24	1	Sydney (S4)
Gigi	Master	Marketing	F	25	0.5	Sydney (S4)
Jeff	Bachelor	Preparatory language school	M	26	8 (weeks)	Sydney (Language center)
Johnson	PhD	Sciences	M	30	2	Sydney (S1)
Kevin	Bachelor	Government & International Relations	M	17	2	Sydney (S4)
Kimberly	Master	Food Studies	F	23	1	Brisbane (B1)
Laura	TAFE	Information Technologies	F	36	16	Sydney (TAFE)
Linda	PhD	Humanities	F	37	8	Sydney (S1)
Lisa	Master	Finance	F	33	1.5	Sydney (S3)
Mark	Master	Environmental Management	M	26	1.5	Sydney (S1)
Melody	Master	Music	F	36	16	Sydney (S3)
Michelle	Master	Social Work	F	34	4.5	Adelaide (A1)
Sophia	PhD	Humanities	F	34	5	Melbourne (M1)
Steven	PhD	Sciences	M	30	2	Sydney (S4)
Tiffany	Master	Human Resources	F	25	1.5	Sydney (S3)
Tim	PhD	Humanities	M	37	2	Sydney (S1)
Vincent	Master	Biomedical Engineering	M	28	3	Sydney (S3)
Wendy	PhD	Sciences	F	34	1.5	Sydney (S4)
Yvonne	Master	Food Studies	F	24	1	Brisbane (B1)

*Each university is coded with an initial of the city and a number as there are cases where several universities are located in one city.

**The study areas of PhD participants are categorized in broad disciplines for anonymity reason.

Table 5 Participants for Dataset Two (academic writing and feedback)

Pseudonym	Degree	Study area	Gender	Age	Time in Australia when joining the study (in years)	University location
Abby†	Master	International Business	F	24	1.5	Sydney (S3)
Alice	Master	Health Promotion	F	27	3	Melbourne (M2)
Betty	Bachelor	Finance	F	21	2	Sydney (S1)
Billy†	Master	Integrated Marketing Communication	M	30	0.5	Brisbane (B2)
Cathy	Master	Fine Arts	F	26	2.5	Sydney (S3)
Chloe†	Master	Project Management	F	27	1.5	Brisbane (B2)
Daniel	Master	Engineering Management	M	25	1.5	Sydney (S2)
David	Master	Linguistics	M	27	1	Melbourne (M1)
Donna	Master	Accounting	F	23	1	Sydney (S1)
Emma	Master	Cultural Studies	F	24	1	Sydney (S4)
Gigi	Master	Marketing	F	25	0.5	Sydney (S4)
Lisa	Master	Finance	F	33	1.5	Sydney (S3)
Mark	Master	Environmental Management	M	26	1.5	Sydney (S1)
Natasha†	Master	Cultural Studies	F	31	1	Sydney (S4)
Tiffany	Master	Human Resources	F	25	1.5	Sydney (S3)
Toby†	Master	International Business	M	27	1.5	Sydney (S3)
Vincent	Master	Biomedical Engineering	M	28	3	Sydney (S3)
†Newly recruited participants for Dataset Two						

Table 6 Participants for Dataset Three (Longitudinal follow-up ethnographic observation)

Pseudonym	Degree	Study area	Gender	Age	Time in Australia when joining the study (in years)	University location*
Alice	Master	Health Promotion	F	27	3	Melbourne (M2)
Alissa‡	PhD	Humanities	F	27	/	Sydney (S2)
Ann	PhD	Humanities	F	38	2	Sydney (S1)
Da-Wei‡	PhD	Humanities	M	36	/	Sydney (S2)
Donna	Master	Accounting	F	23	1	Sydney (S1)
Edward	Master	Information Technologies	M	38	13	Wollongong (W1)
Emma	Master	Cultural Studies	F	24	1	Sydney (S4)
Johnson	PhD	Sciences	M	30	2	Sydney (S1)
Judy‡	Master	Translation	F	27	/	Sydney (S2)
Melody	Master	Music	F	36	16	Sydney (S3)
Michelle	Master	Social Work	F	34	4.5	Adelaide (A1)
Natasha	Master	Cultural Studies	F	31	1	Sydney (S4)
Peter‡	PhD	Social Sciences	M	28	/	Melbourne (M2)
Siao-Huei‡	PhD	Humanities	F	36	/	Sydney (S2)
Sophia	PhD	Humanities	F	34	5	Melbourne (M1)
Tim	PhD	Humanities	M	37	2	Sydney (S1)
Wendy	PhD	Sciences	F	34	1.5	Sydney (S4)
Yvonne	Master	Food Studies	F	24	1	Brisbane (B1)
‡Secondary participants						

3.5 Researcher positionality

In February 2011, I came to Australia from Taiwan in order to commence my PhD program. This made me one of the Taiwanese students in Australian higher education, like my research participants. This background shaped my understanding of Taiwanese students' trajectories coming to Australia as well as influencing my relationship with my participants.

How participants saw me

It was only half a year after I came to Australia when I embarked on Phase One interviews. Some participants would see me as a newcomer and automatically took the role of a helper by either joining my project or passionately sharing with me information about how to survive in Australia. By contrast, some participants would see me as a PhD candidate and a scholarship holder, and assumed that I had more resources and connections than they had. They sometimes asked me for information or help, in matters such as accommodation, study, language, or interpersonal relationships. Being in a similar situation, I always tried my best to offer my support and help, knowing that things were not as easy as they were back home. Occasionally I felt sorry for some of them having no one to turn to but me, a new acquaintance.

Coming from the same cultural and linguistic background and being close in age, I had a similar trajectory to that of my participants in terms of growing up, language learning, and educational route. I was exposed to the same discourses they were exposed to in society regarding English, overseas degrees, and international experience. I was also facing the same constellation of factors they were facing when making choices and plans. Furthermore, I was an ordinary international student and second language learner just as my participants were, facing all sorts of challenges and difficulties in a foreign land. Therefore, their experiences often resonated with mine. This similarity significantly contributed to my ability to capture their experiences from their narratives and to the authentic interpretation presented in this study.

However, I was also different from any of my participants just as they were all different from each other as individuals in many ways. Coming from the same country and sharing the same first language did not in itself guarantee me favorable acceptance and ready-made access to their lives. Sometimes these factors worked to my disadvantage in building up relationships with my participants. As described in Chapter 5.2, association with people coming from the same cultural and linguistic background was often considered to be against linguistic interests in a successful overseas study. Under these circumstances, I continually had to extend myself in order to build rapport, keep an open mind, and be flexible in interactions. By doing so, I was being a researcher because I was taking approaches that I would not normally take to make personal friends. This was not denying my own identity but adding another layer to my own self. Over time, I found myself becoming extended, enriched, and liberated in my knowledge and understanding, and in relationships that I might not have been able to embark on and maintain had it not been for this project.

How I adjusted my role

Toward the end of the first round of interviews, almost every participant expressed surprise that it felt like they were chatting to a good friend, telling me that they enjoyed it so much they did not feel like it was an interview at all. I took their response as an affirmation of my interactive style and a positive reception of my genuine attitude. However, what was more challenging was the long-term interaction that followed. At one point, I was not sure how to balance my roles of professional researcher and genuine friend. As many of them were familiar with conducting academic social research, the last thing I would want would be for them to consider my approaching them as simply a utilitarian act for my own gain, and to regard the help and care I offered them as merely a trade-off for the experience and information they gave me. It was true that I met up with my participants initially because of this study, but the following longitudinal interaction moved beyond that of researcher and research subjects. However, after a short while, my worries and confusion disappeared after I made up my mind to be a friend first and a researcher second. This is not to say that I was not carrying out participant observation as planned, but rather that I was now doing it with a different mindset. I was freed from the idea of gathering particular data from them, instead moving on to the act of embracing their lives. When I spent time catching up with them, walking with them through a difficult time, or joining events they invited me to which might not seem particularly relevant to the study, I would not care how much valuable data I could obtain. I made it clear to them that their involvement in the study would not influence my friendship with them. While this was probably not the most efficient way of conducting research in terms of time and energy, in my humble opinion it was the best way of doing ethnography, because it smoothed and deepened the depth of my interaction with my participants as well as broadening my discovery of their lives. Instead of me chasing after them and checking up on them, some long-term participants frequently initiated a catch-up with me. I cherished very much their trust and friendship.

In the process, I shared many moments of my participants' daily lives: I helped them move house, discussed essay and thesis writing, forwarded job opportunities, rehearsed job interviews, encouraged those who were experiencing difficulties and stress, supported them during the time they lost their loved ones out of the blue, and waved farewell to them when they completed their studies. I also felt privileged to be able to join in many important events and share many achievements of their lives: I celebrated with them when their journal papers were accepted, when they found their romantic partners, when they submitted their theses, when they were granted their degrees in the graduation ceremonies, when they secured jobs, and when their first babies were born. I am glad I was there for them and with them.

Ethical considerations

Several strategies were applied to ensure ethical conduct of research, which included three main elements: informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntariness.

A written consent to carry out an audio recorded interview was obtained from all the primary participants prior to interviewing (see Appendix 2). It was made clear that the purpose of recording was solely for the researcher to keep details of their narratives, and as such the recordings would not be played to any other parties. It was guaranteed that no individual would be identified in any publication of the results. Therefore, pseudonyms are used for all participants in the study. It is for this reason too that the study areas of all the PhD participants are indicated throughout this thesis as the general categories of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Sciences, in view of the fact that Taiwanese PhD candidates are relatively few in number, potentially allowing them to be identified if their specialized areas were revealed. For participants pursuing other degrees, there is no such concern, so their specific study areas are indicated.

Another ethical issue regarding the researcher-participant relationship that was purposefully handled with care was confidentiality. Given that I came to know at least 40 Taiwanese students in Australia and became a good friend to many of them, and that some of the participants might be acquaintances or friends, I made it a hard and fast rule never to pass on anyone’s information to another person. Whatever a participant revealed to me was treated as confidential, no matter how trivial the information might be. I protected each one’s privacy to such an extent because I wished to have their full trust. On this matter, I had to put researcher’s ethics before any desire to create a social network.

The third ethical consideration was full voluntariness, which means the participants could retract any information they had shared with me, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason. In one case, a participant revealed to me many difficulties she encountered with her academic supervisor. However, soon after the interview she contacted me to ask that the information concerning her dealings with her supervisor be excluded from the study. I responded to her right away and removed these valuable data as requested. This case demonstrates that the participant was concerned about power relations, and it is, of course, participants’ right to continue to feel comfortable without experiencing worry about any possible risk to the outcome of their academic endeavors.

3.6 Data analysis

As detailed in Section 3.3, the collected data consisted of interviews in two datasets, field notes from participant observation, and naturalistic data in the form of written assignments and feedback. The approaches chosen for their analysis will be discussed below.

In spite of the different foci of the first and second interviews – one on the overall Australian study experience, the other on academic writing and feedback – I handled these two sets of data in a similar manner by adopting content analysis.

One major aim of content analysis is "to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study" (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992, p. 314) through "the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). I chose to adopt a conventional content analysis, which is a process of inductive category development (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Mayring, 2005). Combined with grounded theory techniques (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), at the initial stage no predetermined categories were imposed. My purpose of starting with such open coding was to keep myself from imposing my own assumptions due to my similar background, and to immerse myself in their worlds by carefully listening to the participants' narratives (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In addition, an inductive approach is appropriate "when prior knowledge regarding the phenomenon under investigation is limited or fragmented" (J. Y. Cho & Lee, 2014, p. 4). As shown in Chapter Two, the literature of Taiwanese international students in Australia is largely lacking.

Data analysis began in the initial stage of data collection and continued throughout the period of data collection into the writing stage. It did not take long to observe some recurring themes and patterns, such as "too many Chinese", "English not improving as much as expected", and "wish to know some local friends", and the interview schedule for the following interviews was adjusted accordingly (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Participants were also asked about their experiences and their thoughts about these themes; for example, the proportion of Chinese students in their classes, their evaluation of their English competence before and after studying in Australia, and their social network.

All the audio-recorded interviews were transcribed by professional transcribers based in Taiwan. I then checked all the interview transcripts for errors and omissions, and refined the transcripts over a number of proofing cycles. All transcripts were read word by word, and any content related to language learning and use were highlighted. The transcripts were then coded into the qualitative analysis software Nvivo, together with field notes and relevant documents. The initial open coding was thorough. Labels for codes were taken directly from the transcripts. Codes were rechecked for recurrent themes, which later were integrated into categories. These categories arranged the codes into meaningful clusters (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). For instance, codes such as

‘Chinese classmates’ ‘Local classmates’ ‘Other international classmates’ ‘Classroom atmosphere’ and ‘teaching styles’, were integrated into the category of ‘Classroom setting’. Several categories were combined together to form a higher category. For example, categories such as ‘Classroom setting’ ‘Writing assignments’ and ‘Language support’ were combined into the category of ‘educational experience’. The writing of each chapter constantly took me back to Dataset One and Dataset Two to draw the data segments that exemplified particular themes. For example, for the salient theme ‘too many Chinese’ I went back to the references, which showed 17 out of 30 participants were explicit about this theme. I analyzed each case further and extracted data of how many Chinese classmates they each had. I then selected a number of representative excerpts to present as supportive evidence in the analysis chapter. In addition, I compared these cases with those few cases where the participants had few Chinese classmates.

During the cyclic process of analysis, which at times informed further data collection, I would go back to my participants and seek further details on emergent themes. I also adopted member checks by checking with the participants my understanding of their experiences in order to achieve clarification and viability. In addition to content analysis, I adopted cross-case analysis to compare and contrast participants’ experiences. Cross-collation of data was facilitated by individual files that were created for each participant. Each file contained the participant’s demographic information, interview recording, interview transcript, documents provided, my field notes, and communication record between the person and me.

For Dataset Two interviews, similar steps were taken to generate themes, codes, and categories for analysis. Apart from interview recordings, participants’ written assignments and feedback were also scanned into electronic format and stored in their individual files. While coding the interview contents in Nvivo, I would cross-reference their assignments and feedback in conducting analyses.

Analysis was conducted on the basis of the original data; for the interviews this means that the analysis is predominantly based on Mandarin-language data. Only those data excerpts that appear in the thesis as evidence have been translated into English. In order to ensure the accuracy of the translations a peer check of each excerpt was conducted by a Mandarin-English bilingual with NAATI accreditation. Finally, a professional copy-editor was employed to ensure the fluency of the English translation.

3.7 Limitations of the study

In this chapter, I have laid out my research paradigm, methods of analysis, and the role of the researcher as a research tool to the participants. While the ability to communicate with participants in their preferred language was an advantage, this also posed certain challenges. As mentioned in Section 3.5, for some Taiwanese overseas students, association with people from the same linguistic background was considered a liability to their English immersion and overseas experience in Australia. Such an ideology may have covertly influenced potential participants that I was able to recruit in the first place. Therefore, most of the participants in the study were more open-minded in terms of their willingness to interact with same language speakers. A few participants indicated that they made an exception for me because they were interested in the research topic and in sharing their stories; otherwise, they would not be interested in getting to know another Taiwanese in Australia. For these participants, it was especially hard to continue with follow-up observation. In other words, the researcher as a research tool was constrained by participants' language desire and ideology in this study.

Another limitation was posed by longitudinal fieldwork, especially when follow-up observation was somewhat fluid and inherently changing. Given that I met each participant at different stages of their overseas journeys, every participant continued on their own life track. Their availability in terms of time, geographic distance, interest, and focus was subject to change through time and space and in some cases it became hard for me to maintain regular communication. For instance, I interviewed a few participants at the time they had just finished their study and were packing up to go back to Taiwan. Although with the help of technology I was still able to contact them and keep updated on their lives through Facebook, it became harder to carry out follow-up interviews when they became immersed in their life back home. Once again, I accept such realities of life, which had an impact on my interaction with the participants and cast some limitations on the field work for this study. For this very reason, the observational data appear rarely as evidence in the analysis chapters. As pointed out above, observational data serve as validation to the researcher's in-depth understanding of the participants and help to ensure the credibility of the interpretation of the two primary datasets.

Finally, this study aims to provide a qualitative exploration of Taiwanese students' language learning experiences in Australia informed by the participants in this study. It is not intended as a case study of the trajectories of individual students. On the other hand, the research is not intended for statistical generalization, either. This study thus makes no claim to be representative of the experiences of all Taiwanese overseas students in Australia.

The methodological considerations and procedures described here underlie the findings of my research, which are presented in the following chapters.

Chapter Four: Pre-departure language learning trajectories

4.1 Introduction

This is the first of three analysis chapters and focuses on the research participants' English language learning trajectories before they came to study in Australia. The reason for examining participants' pre-departure experiences of English language learning is based on the concept of language desire presented in Chapter Two, which shows that language learning is not only related to individual motivation but also to the discursive construction of the target language surrounding the language learners. Exploring participants' previous English language learning experiences provides a deeper understanding of what the English language means to the research participants, how the English language is intertwined with their decision to study abroad and, particularly, in Australia; and how their previous English language learning experiences interact with their study experiences once they come to Australia. The first section presents participants' English language learning experiences in both the public education system and the private sector in Taiwan. In the next section, I explore participants' motivations to invest in studying overseas. The chapter concludes with an exploration of why participants chose Australia in particular as their study destination.

4.2 Participants' English language learning trajectories

At the time of data collection in 2011–12, among the 30 participants, 16 were young adults in their 20s, and 13 were in their 30s. One 17-year-old was included (this was an exception to the recruitment criterion of 18 years old and above because the participant expressed strong interest in joining the study and he fit the criterion of studying long term in Australian higher education). Their elementary education in Taiwan would thus have taken place in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as shown in

Figure 5 below. That means that all but two participants (Kevin, Betty) received their primary and secondary education in the old curriculum prior to the 2001 curriculum reform. A key difference between the pre-2001 and the post-2001 curriculum lies in the fact that pre-2001 English instruction only started from junior high school (normally age 13), whereas post-2001 it was implemented in elementary school (S.-C. Chen, 2006). The post-2001 curriculum also places greater emphasis on communicative skills. Overall, participants' experiences of learning English in compulsory public school were very similar. By contrast, their experiences of additional English language learning outside compulsory education were highly diverse with different levels of investment. In the following sections I present participants' learning trajectories by first discussing their experiences of English language learning in compulsory education before moving on to private learning settings.

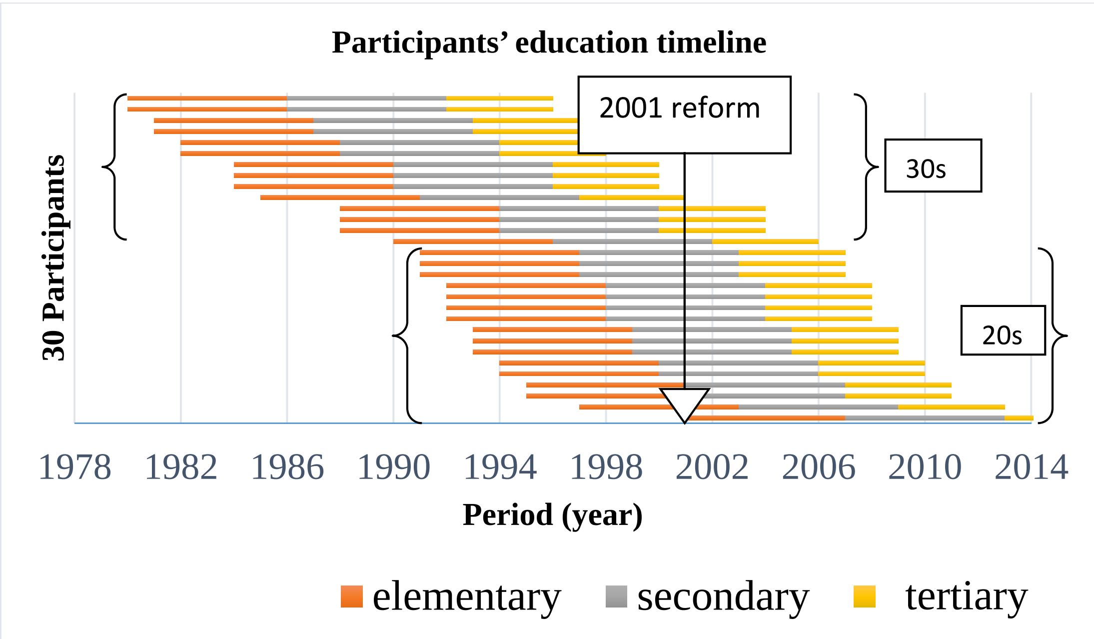


Figure 5 Participants' education timeline

4.2.1 Compulsory English learning

Except for Betty and Kevin, all participants received their secondary education in public schools in Taiwan. The way they describe their English during that period paints a monotonous, uninspiring, and extremely test-oriented picture. English language learning was full of memorizing vocabulary items and grammar rules, doing translation practice exercises, answering reading comprehension questions, and taking frequent written tests. Speaking and listening practice, by contrast, was largely absent, as Jason explained:

> "…然後國中就是筆試，考筆試，然後高中就是考試，然後上大學之後，除了上大學英文之外，就再沒有讀過英文了。"
>
> "…And then in junior high, it was all about written tests, and in senior high school as well. After going to university, except the mandatory English class in the freshman year, I didn't study English anymore."

Daniel similarly described this test-oriented learning experience.

Daniel:	呃，其實我從小到大，我從國中開始我對英文就非常的不感興趣。非常不感興趣。國中還好，因為國中英文其實還算是蠻簡單的，要拿高分也是都還可以，不過也都是為了應付考試。高中之後英文算是比較……變得比較深一點，那其實我高中的英文沒有任何一個學期有及格過的
Daniel:	Um…actually since I was young, I had no interest in learning English at all, since high school. Yes. Not interested at all. Junior high was OK because the English was fairly easy, and I had no problem getting good grades if I wanted, but it's all about managing exams. And English taught in senior high was more advanced, and actually I didn't pass even one semester.

Two themes mentioned by the participants repeatedly were exams and interest in learning English. Given that English was not used in daily communication but rather served as a school subject, their ability to do well in exams and obtain a sense of achievement influenced their motivation and attitude toward learning.

4.2.2 Private investment in English learning

Interestingly, for most of the participants, their attitude toward learning English preceded the compulsory curriculum. Twenty-one of them mentioned that their parents sent them to children's English cram schools before they entered secondary education for the formal English curriculum. Sending children to English cram school is seen as a cultivation of a talent and, moreover, an early preparation and investment that underpins English language learning in formal education so that "children don't lose at their starting point" (Chung & Huang, 2010, p. 443) Several participants also talked about their parents' expectations. For instance, Barbara mentioned that her parents had not learned English well and worked in the fields of art and engineering, while her aunt, who had majored in English, was able to work for a foreign company.

Barbara: 我覺得我爸媽把希望付諸在小孩身上，像我爸媽，姑姑，表弟，從我小時候他們就都覺得英文很重要，我不知道這個觀念那裡來的。

Barbara: so my parents expect us to achieve what they did not. My parents, my aunt, my cousins all think English is important. I was surrounded by this idea when I was little and I didn't know where it came from.

When participants started to learn English they faced the expectations of their parents and the wider environment that conveyed to them the idea that English is important.

Pre-compulsory English learning

Early experiences of English language learning were different for each participant. However, it is possible to distinguish between those whose parents invested heavily in their English learning and those who did not. I first present the experiences of the former before moving on to those of the latter group.

Three of the participants mentioned that they had private tutors, or went to bilingual kindergartens and private elementary schools, where English was the medium of instruction. These participants indicated that their early English learning made it really easy for them when continuing to the formal curriculum in high school.

Grace: 你從甚麼時候開始學習英文呢?

David: 我學英文大約是從國小三年級…因為我念私立國小，我們是天主教學校，所以比較重視英文這樣子。我們那時候起步是比較早，…對，那我自己私底下也有去補習這樣子，我們那邊就是有一個 xxx 教授教。那那個老師因為他教的很不錯，所以，其時我大概在國小的時候，就已經把國中的文法都學完了。

Grace: When did you start to learn English?

David: I started in third grade… I went to a private elementary school, which was a catholic school and they emphasized English learning. That's why I started earlier than others ...Apart from that, I also went to a private cram school, where the teacher was a professor from X University. Yes. And he taught pretty well so I had learned all the grammar a junior high school student had to learn when I was in elementary school.

They liked the teachers' way of teaching, developed an interest in learning English, and most importantly of all, enjoyed a sense of achievement in the compulsory curriculum as a result of their additional language learning.

Apart from these very costly pathways, most of my participants attended either well-known chain schools or independent local community schools for additional English tutoring. Their experiences were mostly positive and enjoyable, although some were not.

Many of the participants generated a very positive attitude toward learning English. For example, Donna evaluates her school in highly positive terms: "很喜歡!" [I just loved it!] Wendy, sent to children's cram school when she was a second grader, said, "我那時候遇到一個很好的老師，那個老師他英文教得好，我底子也是從那邊打上來的，後來國中也是對英文滿有興趣，一直對英文都不會排斥" [I had a good teacher. He taught very well. It gave me a good foundation so I cultivated my interest in English when entering junior high school. Thus, I felt no resistance to learning English]. Similarly, Yvonne, who began going to cram school in third grade, said, “我從小學三年級就開始上兒童美語，然後對英文一直都還蠻有興趣的。然後所以就是國小的英文基礎應該算不錯吧！因為國中、高中的英文都沒有在準備” [I went to children’s English school since third grade, and I was interested in it. I was pretty good at the basics of English while I was in elementary school so I didn’t have to study English hard in junior high and senior high school]. The most emphasized benefits in their narratives are firstly, they developed a liking for and interest in learning English, and secondly, the foundation built in cram schools gave them a somewhat smooth and successful transition to the compulsory curriculum.

Some participants, instead of remembering anything they had actually learned from the diverse children’s English cram schools, regarded this experience as purely for fun, serving more a social than a learning function. Steven said, “那個我很小很小從一年級之後我就開始有去，可是其實那我都沒有學到什麼東西，那個就是玩遊戲而已。” [I went to children’s English cram school from a very young age, first grade, but I didn’t learn anything, it was all about playing games.] Tiffany said, “還可以，因為那時候國小吧。去交朋友也不錯啊。” [It was OK. That was when I was in elementary school and I reckon it was good to make friends there.] Brian has a similar opinion: “有補，但是就是，就是大家去那邊玩，就去那邊玩的。” [But that was, that was only for playing with others, for fun.] Jeff said he did not remember much: “沒有太大印象。可能幫助不大吧。” [I don’t remember much. Maybe it wasn’t really helpful.]

A small number of participants lost interest in going to cram schools right away. They developed negative attitudes for three main reasons. Firstly, the style of teaching did not engage them; as Brian said, “可能是老師的關係吧，我覺得老師，如果他有帶起你興趣，你就會學，但他沒有帶起我的興趣。” [Maybe it’s because of the teacher. I think if the teacher can motivate you, then you will learn. However, they didn’t make me feel engaged.] Secondly, they disliked the extra workload; as Barbara put it, “很煩，真的很煩!” [Just annoying and tiring!] Mark reported on his experience of losing interest.

Mark: 從很小的時候他們就送我們去英文補習班哪!

Grace: 兒童美語?

Mark: 對!剛好就都把我的興趣全部摧毀了,哈哈哈!

Grace: 為什麼?

Mark: 我們想要學很多東西,英文只是其中一個。對,但是對英文就很沒有興趣, 應該是有一些幫助,但是我覺得它的壞處是更多。就是我兒童美語學當然是有學到東西,所以我在國中的時候英文就是還蠻 OK 的,但是我對英文就是完全沒興趣。

Grace: 他們不是都會玩很多遊戲嗎?

Mark: 但是還是要寫功課跟考試阿!我去佳音美語,對,不要去佳音啦!

Mark: Since we were very young, they [parents] sent us to an English cram school.

Grace: Children's English cram school?

Mark: Yes! And it just ruined all my interest. Hahaha!

Grace: Why?

Mark: We wanted to learn many things, and English was one of them. But, I was just not interested in it. Maybe cram school helped a little, but I think it had more drawbacks. I'm sure I did learn something from the cram school, so I was doing OK in junior high school. It's just I wasn't interested in learning English at all.

Grace: Didn't they [the cram school] play a lot of games?

Mark: Yes, but we were also asked to write homework and take tests! I went to X school. Don't go there!

Thirdly, they experienced the frustration of being unable to absorb what was being taught and doubting they could acquire the language. Kimberly said, "補習的過程我有嚐到苦果。因為我就覺得說這個語言我就學不起來。…老師人很好，老師還讓我一直 pass,就是一直讓我 Level up,但我根本吸收不了。" [Going to cram school had a negative effect on me. I felt I could never acquire this language…. The teacher was nice, always letting me pass, so I could move up to the next level, but I simply couldn't digest it.]

The narratives of these participants with negative experiences have a commonality in the experience of learning English as an additional mental and physical burden; therefore, instead of enjoying the learning, they lost interest at a young age. Success and enjoyment are missing from the experiences of those who attended children's cram schools but detested it.

Without preliminary learning

Apart from the 21 participants who received pre-compulsory English learning, 9 participants did not have any. Six of them are in their mid-30s (34–38 years old, see Figure 5); going to children's English cram schools was not very prevalent when they were growing up. However, the other three younger participants felt that their exposure to English was relatively "late". Daniel said: "我沒有上過兒童美語，我算是起步非常慢的那一種。" [I didn't go to children's English cram school, so I had a fairly late start.]

As presented above, such diverse trajectories resulted from different learning resources utilized (or not) by the parents at extra expenditure. Private tutoring does not come cheap. According to private communication from a business and market analyst, English cram schools in 2011 charged tuition fees of between TWD$34,000 and TWD$57,800 per year. Compared with a GDP of TWD$592,846 Per Capita in 2011 (The Directorate General of Budget Accounting and Statistics, 2012), the expense of an English cram school for one child would thus take up 5.7–9.7 percent of the parents' yearly income.

For the participants in this study who had an early start and enjoyed being ahead in their learning, it would seem that their parents' approach and investment not only ensured that they did not start out at a disadvantage, but that they already enjoyed a significant advantage from the beginning. This finding is consistent with Yang's (2004) quantitative research on 255 sixth graders in Taiwan which found that the average English academic achievement of students who attended cram schools was significantly higher than that of students who did not. In addition, students performed better in accordance with the length of their attendance at cram schools. Further, Yang (2004) found that students who attended English cram schools possessed more cultural capital, such as having a better English learning environment and better learning habits, and more social capital, such as greater parental support and higher parental expectations. Before they continued to high school, where the provision of formal English courses began, the participants had already generated different attitudes toward English learning and had a widely different level of English. Some had already learned almost all the material and found it extremely easy to perform well on school exams; others had no prior learning and as such were at a disadvantage.

Private English learning as response to compulsory learning

English cram schools did not just disappear after the commencement of participants' formal English learning. With the orientation of English as a school subject and the focus on performing well in exams, cram schools again obtained their niche market by offering a curriculum geared toward helping students to succeed in exams, in college or university applications, and later in tests such as TOEFL and IELTS for overseas study.

Kimberly talked about the orientation of the cram school in her high school years.

Kimberly:	…高中三年有補般非凡。那是臺灣很出名的。呵呵…
Grace:	對，呵呵呵…所以在那裡上課你覺得？
Kimberly:	他們是比較針對考試跟學校教的那些內容，嗯，考大學的時候，就是高中老師教得東西文法又更深，然後那些文法是從口語上不太會用的。….
Kimberly:	… I went to X cram school during the three years of senior high school. Yes. It is a very famous cram school in Taiwan. Heheh…
Grace:	Ha. Yes. How did you find it?
Kimberly:	They mainly focus on the content taught at school and on helping you take tests. Especially for the college entrance exam, the grammar taught in senior high school was very advanced and difficult, and would rarely be used in daily conversation…

As for Mark, although he lost interest in learning English from a young age and did not do very well in high school, he felt he had to pick it up and master it for his professional development and overseas study requirement. He talked about how the cram school helped him prepare for the IETLS test.

Mark: [大學時]我自己想要學之後,其實我是還蠻有目標的，每天都要看!就是每天...我一開始就是每天看一個文章，然後一行字大概有 4 到 5 個單字，然後這樣念我又覺得我念不進去，我就用抄的!就一開始抄文章，就一本書一本書這樣抄。然後抄了之後就是對那些字有印象啦!然後就是慢慢的就多記一些單字，然後去參加那個...,然後我覺得去參加考試的英文又會像以前佳音一樣,會讓我覺得...太沒有興趣。所以去參加了科見的!不是跟科見有關，只是口語的，就只是他教你怎麼講而已，就不是很注意你的考試,文法什麼的，我覺得還蠻有用的就是...是外師。然後在當完兵之後就去參加 IELS 的那個考試，然後他又要分級,他又要檢定你是不是有資格參加他們的保證班。然後就考,然後又剛好過了!!

Grace: 所以你在保證班?

Mark: 對,然後就去保證班，然後保證班就繼續讀，考 IELS 的補習班是非常有用!你的英文程度當然是會進步，文法那些都會變好，但是更重要的是，他教你怎麼考 IELS，對，所以你會熟悉他的做題方式阿!然後他的那些題目，就包括那些 SPEAKIN 跟 READIN 的那些題目，還有作答技巧。然後就去參加 IELTS 考試,然後我只考了一次，就 6 分,就非常幸運，然後六分之後就剛好可以來這邊參加這裏的語言班。

Mark: [In university] I started to want to learn English seriously, so I made myself read English every day. Every day I read an article and there were already four or five new words in each line so I couldn’t go on. I then started to copy by hand word for word from articles and books. By doing so for a while, I slowly memorized some words. And I wanted to join a cram school, but I didn’t want those which focus on tests, so instead of X school I went to Y school, where foreign teachers taught conversation class. I felt it was more helpful for me because it did not focus on tests and grammar so much. …After I finished my military service, I went to a cram school again for the IELTS test. They first tested me to see if I could be in the “guaranteed” class [which guarantees that the student can pass the IELTS test]. I was lucky enough to pass.

Grace: So you were assigned to the guaranteed class?

Mark: Yes. I studied in that guaranteed class. The cram school helped me a lot to prepare for IELTS! Your English improves, for instance grammar, but most importantly, they taught you how to take the IELTS test. It familiarizes you with the test, for example you know how they will test your speaking and reading, and you know the strategies to do well. Later I took IELTS and I was lucky to get a 6 first time, which was good enough for me to come to study at the language school here [in Australia].

As evidenced by the participants’ narratives of their English language learning trajectories, they experienced English as a high-stakes exam subject. The narratives also demonstrate what English is not for them: throughout their school years they did not experience English as a means of communication.

Private tutoring thus is a response to the perceived limitations of compulsory English language teaching. Chang (2013a) suggested that the reason students feel the need to look for additional resources is to help them learn better and oftentimes the costly cram schools are desirable because they help students to achieve this task by providing strategies to memorize grammar and vocabulary, tips to get high marks on various tests, native-speaker teachers for practicing conversation, and many other benefits.

Short-term overseas study

In addition to sitting in a classroom, there was another popular approach to English learning, namely 遊學 [travel-study; short-term overseas study program]. Yarymovwish (2005) terms this “language edutourism”, that is, language learning activities coupled with tourism. According to the statistics of the Tourism Bureau of Taiwan (2009), short-term study is among the main reasons for R.O.C. citizens’ outbound travel besides sightseeing, recreation, business, or visiting friends or relatives. In 2008, short-term study accounted for the largest expenditure per person per trip, on average TWD$ 92,886 (p. 149), with the longest stay per trip being 26 days on average (p. 138). Most of these travelers (34 percent, p. 139) hired agent companies based in Taiwan, which offer information on programs provided overseas, assist them in registering in a program, apply for a visa, find a host family or accommodation, and generally prepare them for the trip. The study is mostly intended for language learning without the award of a diploma or degree, normally having a duration of between three weeks and two months and thus often timed to coincide with the summer vacation.

When I was searching destinations for summer study trips on Yahoo and Google, the most frequently accessed search engines in Taiwan, the "hottest" five destinations, as the websites put it, are: America, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, usually presented in this order of popularity. The following advice from an overseas study agency on how to choose the destination for summer study trips is typical:

> 如何選擇國家？
> 美國、加拿大的英語口音在台灣廣為接受；英國歷史悠久，人文氣息濃厚，也是遊學的好選擇；澳洲和紐西蘭費用較低，自然風景壯麗，氣氛輕鬆悠閒。端看您喜歡在什麼樣的環境之中學習及遊憩 (GogoEnglish, 2012)
> How to choose the country?
> American and Canadian English accents are widely learned and accepted in Taiwan. The United Kingdom is also a good choice because it offers a rich history and culture. As for Australia and New Zealand, tuition fees are lower, and the natural environment is magnificent with a relaxing atmosphere. It depends on what kind of environment you would like to learn and travel in (GogoEnglish, 2012)

Takahashi (2006) pointed out that such media discourse of overseas study serves to legitimatize the ownership of English on the part of the Inner Circle countries by overlooking the position of other English-speaking countries such as India, Singapore, Hong Kong, the Philippines, and countries in Africa, namely, the Outer Circle countries.

Similarly, bloggers' opinions may also contribute to this construction of overseas study discourse. Sabrina, a blogger who finished her master's degree in the United

Kingdom and often goes on business trips to the United States, Australia, and New Zealand, writes a series of posts and pieces of advice on overseas study. Language accent was among many factors she used to compare the advantages and disadvantages of each country.

> …in UK one can learn standard British English because England is the origin of standard BBC English; while in Scotland, one can sharpen her/his listening skill because the diversity of the accents. In U.S.A., students would have little problem adapting because they are used to American accent. In Canada, the accent is very similar to American so it is also easier for the students. (Sabrina, 2007)

As for Australia and New Zealand, the emphasis was mostly on the wonderful natural environment. Such construction of legitimate English accents was effective in that some readers were concerned about picking up a heavy Australian accent. She replied, "Don't worry about it. It is not likely to pick up the accent in such a short period of time…. If one can understand Australian accent, they might feel even much easier when they hear American English again" (Sabrina, 2010). The country options for study trips are thus not random, but construct and are also constructed under the implicit ideology of which are the "core" English-speaking countries, who are authentic English native speakers, and what accents are advantageous or not to students in Taiwan.

Seven participants in this study had joined a summer study trip at least once while in high school or university. Put in Sophia's words, "那時候很流行" [It was trendy then]. The destinations they went to were also those Inner Circle countries: the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, as Table 7 shows.

Table 7 Participants who had been on summer study trips

Participants	Where	When
Sophia	United States	University
Gigi	United Kingdom (Cambridge)	Senior high school
Alice	Canada	Junior college
Kimberly	Australia United States	Junior high school Senior high school
Barbara	United States (UCLA) United States (UCLA)	Senior high school University
Mark	Australia	University
Vincent	Australia Australia	Senior high school University

Their experiences were generally pleasant and positive, mixed with elements of the excitement of travelling and forming cross-cultural friendships, and the experience of learning English in an English-speaking environment. Study travel is described in a nutshell by Barbara.

Grace: 那中間你去過留學還是遊學嗎?

Barbara: 遊學，有

Grace: 去那裡？

Barbara: 我去過那個 UCLA，對，就是那種

Grace: 什麼時候呢？

Barbara: 我高中去一次，大學去一次，因為我媽媽會讓我們選，像我哥哥是去英國，我是去美國，因為我比較喜歡美國，然後二次都是去 UCLA，然後就是參加那種遊學團

Grace: 給妳的印象跟經驗如何？

Barbara: 就是交朋友跟好玩，那是因為我們上的課其實是 intensive，就是一整天的那一種，就是可能我前面十五天都在上課，一整天從早上八點到下午五點，但是之後的五天就是在玩，對，那有些遊學團，他們是早上一半是在上課，那下午全部都在玩，但是我覺得就是交朋友之外，我就是可以比較知道他們，就是那個口音那一些，因為他們都說要常常聽，你才會了解，就是多去看看不同的世界…

Grace: Have you studied abroad before?

Barbara: Yes. I did short-term summer study.

Grace: Where did you go?

Barbara: I went to UCLA. Yup. That kind…

Grace: When was it?

Barbara: I went once when I was in senior high school, and another time when I was in university. My mom let us choose. Like my brother went to the United Kingdom and I went to the United States. I liked the United States better so I went to UCLA twice for the summer study program.

Grace: How was that experience for you?

Barbara: It was fun to make friends. Our classes were intensive, running the whole day. For example, I had fifteen days of classes first, every day from eight to five, and the last five days were all for fun [sightseeing]. I know there are some other summer programs where they have classes in the morning and free time for fun in the afternoon. I think besides making friends, I came to know more about the people, like accents. Because it's said the more often you listen, the better you will understand, and you have to see different parts of the world.

Mark talked about how this short-term study greatly influenced his English learning.

Mark: …然後我大概是到大學的時候,才開始讀英文,那我爸媽先讓我來澳洲那個...遊學了一個月!

Grace: 恩~有幫助嗎?

Mark: 有!增加我對英文的興趣...來玩的就對了!那我覺得最重要的一個進步就是我有感覺到英文是一種語言...,是一個工具,就我覺得在台灣很多人會學不好英文的一個原因是因為他們認為英文是一個科目,像數學一樣,反正就是讀,然後背,然後考,把它寫出來然後得到一個分數這樣。…

Mark: …It wasn't until university that I wanted to catch up my English, so my parents let me come to Australia for a study trip for one month!

Grace: Was it helpful?

Mark: Yes. It made me more interested in English. It was fun! One of the main ways I made progress was that I got a sense of English as a [real] language, a tool. I think many people in Taiwan don't learn English well because they see English as a subject, like Math, and you just study, memorize, and take a written test to get a mark.

For Mark, who lost interest in learning English from a young age in children's cram school and did not do well at English in school, this particular short-term overseas experience made a strong impression on him and gave him a sense of English as a "real" language. In addition to the fact that the language is not being used in daily activities, a possible explanation for this realization is that the learning experience was never imbued with personal meaning until the overseas study trip, during which the sense and functions of a language were realized through genuine communications with people and the formation of personal relationships; furthermore, one could experience agency by using the language to achieve tasks including ordering a meal, taking transportation, and performing other daily activities.

This short-term mobile experience again does not come cheap, being another and even larger financial investment by parents in their children's acquisition of cultural capital. In the case of the school UCLA in the United States, one of the participants went twice, for instance. Four weeks of study, involving fees such as registration, tuition, textbooks, homestay or dormitory, visa, air fare, and sightseeing tours, would cost roughly TWD$200,000 (D&S Education Consultancy, n.d.; Dreamer Overseas Study Agency, 2012), which would take up 33 percent of the average annual income of a Taiwanese. The expense is similar for study trips to the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. Not everyone, therefore, could afford it, as Emma explains.

Emma: (那因為我們是幾個人 share 那個鐘點費。)… 其中有兩個女生有寒暑假有跟加拿大遊…遊學過。…只…只有我，我那個時候都沒有去過遊

學。因為我大概十四十五歲，那時候有...有，家庭經濟有產生變化，所以沒辦法 afford 那個費用。

Emma: (I and other girls were sharing the fee of hiring a private tutor.)… Two girls went on summer and winter study abroad programs in Canada…It was only I who didn't get to do that, because I was only fourteen or fifteen years old and my family's economic situation changed so my parents couldn't afford it.

Summary

I have presented participants' English learning trajectories in compulsory education and diverse private learning and the extra monetary investment involved. The intensive study of English is tightly bound to the economic capital (e.g., paying tuition fees, going on summer study trips) and the social capital (e.g., access to certain teachers and schools) of the parents. Prior to receiving English teaching in the formal curriculum, participants had different levels of learning gained in the private sector if the parents had the financial capacity, social network, or aspiration to cultivate their children's English competence. Between high school and university, some of the participants had extra tuition outside school or went on short-term overseas study trips if their parents were willing to continue to invest in this pursuit and were able to afford it. The trajectories toward learning with native speaker teachers and using English in natural settings were accompanied by increasing economic investment.

4.3 Overseas study

Overseas study can be seen as the ultimate means of investing in education and language learning, given its considerable financial and non-financial cost (Carmichael & Sutherland, 2005). Financial costs include tuition fees, travel costs, living expenses, text books, and additional outgoings; non-financial costs may involve reduced balance with other areas of life, high stress levels, deterioration of relationships, reduced contact with existing networks, non-financial opportunity costs, and loss of self-confidence. Therefore, it is important to understand participants' expectations of investment in overseas study. In order to do so, I draw on Bonny Norton's concepts of "investment" (Norton, 2000; Norton & Gao, 2008; Norton Peirce, 1995) and Kanno & Norton's "imagined communities" (2003), both of which help extend the concept of motivation in the field of second language learning (SLL) (see Section 2.2). The term "investment," inspired by the work of Bourdieu, better captures the complex relationships between power, identity, and language learning than the concept of motivation in SLL, which largely focuses on language learners' personality, cognitive styles, and their characteristics: "Learners not only exchange information with other speakers but constantly organize and reorganize a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world" (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 18). Language learners are not single-dimensional, but rather have an intricate social history and multiple desires for economic and social advancement. In other words, "investment" in the target language is an investment in one's own identity. In addition, "Imagined communities" refer to "groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination" (p. 241). Such a concept is powerful in understanding language learners' perception across time and space.

In this section, I firstly examine what drove the participants to invest in overseas study. I then present why the participants decided to study in Australia.

4.3.1 Participants' narratives

The forces pushing participants to leave Taiwan and pursue higher education overseas are manifold, fluid, and complex. However, the participants' narratives generally fell into three major areas: internationalization, self-fulfilment, and relationships. All comprise investment in identities and imagined communities.

Internationalization

The idea of leaving one's familiar land to see the world outside for the purpose of gaining more knowledge and a broader perspective is not new. There is a Chinese proverb, 井底之蛙 (frog in a well), referring to those who have a narrow vision and know very little of the world. As another old Chinese saying goes, 讀萬卷書不如行萬里路 [You can learn more from travelling a thousand miles than reading a thousand books; He that travels far knows much]. Such ancient idioms are still widely known and given further emphasis in the present globalized world. Participants generally had a conviction that the experience of studying, living and working overseas, holding an international perspective, and being able to communicate cross-culturally were desirable and beneficial. Sometimes I had a surreal sense when I heard one participant after another tell me their motivations that reflected the pursuit of the higher central goal of "internationalization". Internationalization is interconnected from a broad upper level to a very personal local level such as one's life dreams, advanced English competence, life-changing experience, and infinite possibilities. Yvonne's description serves as a good example.

Yvonne: 就是想要出國念碩士。對，然後…是希望能夠…有國外的經驗，然後嚮往海外生活，呵呵。就是希望可以多跟不同國家的人接觸，然後可能會有多一些文化交流吧，就是認識不同背景的人。然後工作的話，就是當然希望可以有工作經驗那更好。

Grace: 嗯嗯，所以你覺得留學對你的以後工作會有幫助？

Yvonne: 我是覺得多少會有一點。就是起碼眼界跟…那個眼界會不一樣。

Yvonne: I wanted to study a master's program overseas. Yes. And I wanted to have overseas experience. I was longing for overseas life. Heheh. I wanted to meet people from different countries and have some cultural exchanges by knowing people from different backgrounds. As for work, having overseas working experience is certainly better.

Grace: Mm.. So you think studying overseas will benefit your future career?

Yvonne: I think yes, more or less. At least my vision [perspective] will be different.

A global and cosmopolitan citizen identity and global participation was what the participants were longing for. As Appadurai (1996) writes, "More people than ever before seem to imagine routinely the possibility that they or their children will live and work in places other than where they were born" (p. 6). By studying overseas, they could enter the imagined community of the world outside Taiwan. This concept and goal is quite vague and elusive but they believed that experiencing a transnational life would be important at a personal level.

Self-fulfilment

Besides internationalization, most of the participants had the desire to pursue further study and to obtain a higher degree. These aspirations to reach the very top of the education hierarchy resulted not only from traditional cultural values and beliefs in education but also from the competitiveness of the job market in Taiwan, as Barbara describes.

Barbara: 其實，那時候在台灣大學畢業，工作了將近快二年，然後我覺得現在台灣大街，就全部都是大學畢業，然後碩士畢業的也越來越多，我覺得沒有一個獨特性跟競爭力，那我就覺得我就是需要出國深造

Barbara: In fact, I had worked for nearly two years after I graduated from university in Taiwan, and I felt I had no uniqueness and competitiveness compared with so many people walking around Taiwan with bachelor's and master's degrees, so I thought I really needed to advance my study overseas.

Although participants were uncertain how an overseas degrees could actually benefit their future career, they generally believed that the degree, improved English competence, and the experience gained overseas would help them to stand out in their home country, where local graduates have been multiplying. Just as Norton and Gao (2008, p. 110) pointed out "If learners 'invest' in the target language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital."

For those who came for PhD degrees, their major goal was much more concrete: to secure their jobs back home, or to seek jobs in academia and universities since a PhD degree has become a prerequisite for full-time positions, and overseas degrees conducted in English possess higher currency, as Sophia points out.

Sophia: 我工作過三年，待在外文系。動機呀，一方面是因為一直在大學的環境裏面，所以如果不一直努力往前進修的話，就一直是兼任的嘛。然後兼任老師在那時候其實壓力還蠻大的，因為人家隨時有專任老師，專任助理教授過來，就是會把你的課拿走。所以其實課是不穩定的，而且因為一直沒有出過國，就是一直在台灣學英文，然後就會覺得說，越來越多同事是出國後回來的，然後感覺上就是地位會比人家低一級，因為在外文系一定的，人家就是說，欸，我英國回來，馬上就是…就是好像比你厲害，這樣子。

Sophia: I had worked for three years (in Taiwan) in a foreign language department. Speaking of motivations, in the university environment if you don't advance your study, you can at most be a casual lecturer. It was stressful being a casual lecturer because it's not stable. If a full-time lecturer or associate professor arrives, your teaching hours may be taken away anytime. In addition, I had never studied abroad and all the English I had studied was in Taiwan, so I felt inferior especially when compared with colleagues who had studied abroad. Moreover, because I was in the foreign language department, colleagues coming back from the UK appeared superior right away.

From a broader perspective, the phenomenon may also reflect the expansion of tertiary education and the result of over-education. Educational reforms in Taiwan since 1987 rapidly expanded the university and college sectors in order to respond to strong demand for higher education, support political modernization and democratization (R.-J. Wang, 2003), and help drive the economy; economic growth rates on average rose above 6 percent during the period 1986 to 1997 (L.-C. Zhang, 2009). Many vocational colleges were upgraded to technology universities to promote the development of high technology. The number of universities mushroomed from 28 in 1986 to 147 in 2008 (Ministry of Education, 2008), with participation in higher education rising sharply since 1994 in particular. According to the statistics from the Ministry of Education in Taiwan (see Table 8 below), the number of bachelor's graduates in 2010 was 3.4 times more than that in 1994, the number of master's graduates 5.1 times more, and the number of PhD graduates 4.5 times more. In 2011, the population holding master's degrees and PhD degrees reached one million, while those holding bachelor's degrees reached 4 million (Ministry of Interior, 2012). The population of higher education receivers in Taiwan is extremely high relative to the total population of 23 million.

The expansion of higher education may cause a "crowding-out" effect (OECD, 2007, p. 29). Examples provided are crowding out others (increasing the unemployment rate of people without higher education degrees) and crowding out selves (inflation of higher education degrees and decrease of wages). The ratio of high income was positively correlated with higher education in 1979, 1990, and 2000 in Taiwan (Liu & Zhao, 2004). However, the average income has been decreasing since 2000, which indicates that the phenomenon of inflation may have begun (L.-C. Zhang, 2009). The transition from elite to mass higher education in Taiwan (R.-J. Wang, 2003) has created an imbalance, or devaluation, of higher education in the job market. Instead of bringing advantages, a higher education degree has become the basic qualification for new graduates searching for jobs. Moreover, the industrial structures have not changed to accommodate and utilize these well-educated graduates; thus, university leavers are experiencing unemployment and underemployment.

Table 8 Number of higher education degree holders in Taiwan

Year	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Ph.D. degree	Total	Population of Taiwan
1988	41,406	5,039	319	46,764	19.96m
1994	67,823	11,706	848	80,377	21.17m
2010	228,878	60,024	3,846	292,748	23.16m

(Ministry of Interior, 2012)

In other words, over-education is an imbalance between education and adequate employment: the number of jobs available at a particular level is fewer than the number of graduates at that level. The duration of the phenomenon depends on the adjustment of adequate positions offered by employers and on government policies. If neither the availability of adequate job positions nor educational policies change, over-education would continue (Tsang & Levin, 1985).

While aware of the inflation of higher degrees, people have been and still are actively pursuing higher education degrees – such as the participants in this study – because a degree is one of the major references for employers to choose their employees (Hong-Tai Consultancy, 2004). In Taiwan, higher education is seen as a way to achieve upward mobility; and is very affordable with the help of government subsidies, which in turn increases the motivation of the general public to receive higher education. However, over-education causes a decrease in productivity (Tsang & Levin, 1985) and is a waste of social and educational resources (Hung, 2008). As for individuals, over-education is as much a serious concern as under-education (Hung, 2008). People may feel frustrated and unfairly rejected when they suffer from under-employment. The expected outcome of their investment in terms of time, energy, money, and effort does not materialize, which impacts their overall happiness.

The participants in this study were aware that the value of their higher education degree obtained in Taiwan had been deflated and decided to invest in prestigious overseas degrees to pursue a professional identity that may be valued more highly than that of a locally trained professional.

Relationships

Rather than an individual matter, the decision to study abroad as well as the process to make it come true was often a collective family affair, as Daniel and Yvonne explain.

Daniel: 其實像我爸媽的話來講，我爸說說他這一輩子就一個夢想，就是希望能把小孩子送出國去念書。所以我爸平常其實還蠻省的。然後他要有朝一日希望我們能夠努力然後考取國外的學校。然後錢的事他會解決，所以家庭的話就是很支持。而且也希望我們說要自己要認真這樣子。

Grace: 你剛剛說這是你爸媽最大的夢想，那是你自己的夢想嗎？

Daniel: 我覺得也是耶，因為其實這也算是我爸很久以前都會這樣講，所以他會給我個期望。那他給我的期望就變成是自己很想要的。嗯，好像真的不錯。出國走走的話你眼界會比較開啊。那你以後找工作也都比較

好找啊！聽了之後我也會覺得，嗯，好像真的是這樣子。就想說跟著爸媽走， 我就說，好，那我要好好努力這樣子。

Daniel: In fact, for my parents, my dad once said his life dream was that one day he could send his children to study overseas. So my dad was thrifty. He hoped one day we would study hard and obtain admission to universities overseas. And he would take care of the money part. So my family was supportive, and expected us to strive hard.

Grace: You said it is your parents' biggest dream – is it also your own dream?

Daniel: I think so. Because my dad used to talk about it and that created expectations in me, which then also became what I wanted. Hmm, that would be good [I thought to myself]. Traveling abroad will open your eyes and help you find a job. Having heard that, I started to feel maybe it's true. Then, following my parents' wish, I wanted to do it. Yes, I was willing to work hard and go for it.

Yvonne: …因為我們家就是長輩有出國留學回來的，然後…然後同輩的姐姐，也有出國。我高中畢業的時候，去看我表姐，她在英國念書，去之後感覺很好。

Yvonne: …because some older relatives in my family once studied overseas and a sister around my age was also studying abroad. When I graduated from senior high school I visited my cousin who was studying in the UK, which left a good impression on me.

It was a family identity the participants wanted to fulfil and make their parents and relatives feel proud. They wanted to join the imagined community of overseas students that their family was longing for or actually experienced. The close family relationships they enjoyed molded the participants' positive attitudes toward overseas study and then motivated them to take action, make the investment, and embark on the journey.

In sum, investment in overseas study is not only for the purpose of education and subsequent career but also for participants' social identity (a global citizen identity, a professional identity, and a family identity) within several imagined communities (a world community, an elite community, and a proud family member community). This finding is in line with Kuznetsov & Kuznestsova's (2011) survey of Chinese students studying business in the United Kingdom. They found that students place significant value on "meta-competencies," or non-financial benefits. "Self-development" came on top, followed by "increased confidence," "enhanced ability to understand the world around you," getting an insight into a new culture," "increased ambition for achieving career goals," "control own destiny," "improved self-esteem," getting new social skills," "getting a different perspective on things," and lastly "greater job satisfaction." Students are looking for experiences that will enrich them as individuals. These meta-competencies that the students are pursuing relate to their education, employment, life-long learning, and long-term personal development. In other words, they not only look for knowledge but place primary importance on personal interaction between individuals. Such invisible but fundamental desire is stressed by many participants, which I present in Chapter Five, after they embarked on their overseas life.

4.3.2 Why Australia?

As elaborated above, the motivations to study abroad were multi-faceted and fluid, while the language desire is discursively constructed and intersecting with various areas. The decision-making process, therefore, was not easy, requiring participants to address concerns in various dimensions. Between dreams and realities there was struggle and compromise. The main two reasons identified for participants to choose Australia were the English language and financial considerations. I now discuss each in turn.

An influential reason for participants to choose Australia was the English language. As described in Section 1.2.2, Australia is listed as one of the top five student destination countries for English learning. Participants expected to improve their English competence in a recognized English-speaking Western country and Australia fitted that expectation. The focus on English narrowed their choices invisibly. Several participants mentioned that they had considered going to Europe such as Germany, Switzerland, or Scandinavian countries, but later gave up the idea because of language concerns.

Brian: 之前有，有想去德國，但是，德國德文太難，就我學一年之後就發覺太，就是，嘖，還是有點難度，然後就是，你去那邊生活，大部分還，還是講德文。你講英文其實人家會，有點歧視，所以想說，還是過來這邊念，就是說，說再選擇這邊，嗯。

Brian: I thought about going to Germany. However, German is too difficult. I studied German for one year and still found it challenging. Also, if one wants to live in Germany, one generally needs to know German. Speaking only English may be despised. So I gave it some thought and decided to come here [Australia].

Betty: 那大學的時候我就決定我要去別的地方，然後，我之前有考慮要去美國。但是要考 SAT，呵呵…所以，那我想，哎，算了，那我去別的地方。然後，後來再考慮去瑞士 Switzerland，是讀那個 hospitality。然後，嗯…後來我覺得，嗯，還是我應該要去就是講英文的地方，呵呵呵…因為我那時候，我…我的英文也不好，就是我的 writing 很爛。嗯。然後我就覺得，啊！我應該加強我的英文。不然的我都去學別的語言，就是變成說什麼都學那什麼都不專精。所以後來想說，嗯，好吧，那澳洲感覺不錯啊，就是不同的地方。

Betty: [Betty had her secondary education in Vancouver] I decided to go somewhere else for university. I thought about the United States, but it requires the SAT test so I gave up. I was thinking of somewhere else. I thought about studying hospitality in Switzerland. Heheh...and then...later I still felt like I should go to an English-speaking country. Heheh...because my English was not good, my writing was bad, so I felt like I should advance my English rather than learning another language and not be proficient in any of them. So later I felt Australia should be a good alternative.

The rosy picture of how much one could learn and benefit from overseas study was often tempered by the reality of the huge financial costs that overseas study involved. More than half of the participants forthrightly admitted choosing Australia as their destination due to financial considerations, although they would have preferred other countries, especially other Inner Circle countries. They seemed fully aware that the most highly regarded education degrees were from the United States, as well as the United Kingdom. Financial compromise was the most prevalent reason among all the participants for their decision to come to Australia. Affordability and opportunities to obtain scholarships steered them down under.

Sophia: 那時候為什麼會想要來哦，其實最主要的原因是便宜啊！嗯，因為那時候…那時候澳幣…我要來的時候，澳幣對台幣差 22 塊。就是其實我的第一志願是…我也是對美…台灣的人都是對美國系統比較熟一點吧！可是那時候其實就是去美國真的有困難吧！因為那時候算一算，去美國一個一年至少要 200 萬，而且我是讀文科嘛，你知道文學的東西基本上拿獎學金是不可能。後來就是也是很 lucky，拿到獎學金…

Sophia: Why did I want to come? Mainly because it was cheaper! Mm, at the time I came [2006] the exchange rate was 1 AU dollar to 22 TW dollars. Actually my top choice was, I preferred the United States like other people, since people in Taiwan are more familiar with American systems! But it was unlikely that I'd be able to go there. I calculated that one year studying in the United States would cost two million (TWD). Plus it's far from likely I could get a scholarship due to my major in literature. Fortunately, later I got a scholarship to study in Australia.

The PhD student participants, in particular, were often holders of scholarships provided by Australian universities and sometimes funded partly by the Ministry of Education in Taiwan. Some of them had declined offers from the universities of their top choices in the United States or the United Kingdom because the expensive tuition fees were beyond their financial means. One participant, Steven, was awarded a one-year scholarship by an American university but he turned it down. The offer placed him in an awkward situation of anxious uncertainty, concerned that he might not be able to continue after the first year. After some consideration, he chose to come to Australia where a full scholarship was provided. In other words, those who accepted the scholarships provided by Australian universities secured their chances to be able to complete their study without financial predicament.

By contrast, postgraduate student participants were all self-funded because there are very few scholarships at this level. Their financial support mostly came from their parents, with the remainder coming from student loans and part-time jobs. Many of them chose Australia because of the lower tuition fees. However, the affordability of study changed unexpectedly and severely due to the exchange rate of the Taiwanese dollar to the Australian dollar peaking during the time of research in late 2011. Studying and living in Australia now became as expensive as in the United States and the United Kingdom. As a result, financial concern extended to include the required duration of their study programs, creating a scenario of "time is money."

David: 因為…其實因為我有經費的考量，美國他至少都要念兩年，對不對，而且真的要念好的學校的話，那些像..其實學費是差不多的，但我還要多付一年，然後到還沒有算生活費阿甚麼的，那這樣子我可能沒有辦法負擔，所以我就選澳洲這樣子。

Grace: 那時候已經 30 了嗎?澳幣

David: 對我出去的時候是結 31，有結到 32 耶

Grace: 哇

David: 超高的阿!

David: Actually I had financial concerns. The programs in the United States take at least two years, right? And if it's a great university, the tuition fee would be similar but I have to pay for one more year, not including living costs. I couldn't afford that, so I chose Australia.

Grace: Was it (the rate) 30? AU dollars?

David: Yes. At the time I started my study, it was 31 and sometimes even 32!

Grace: Wow.

David: The rate was extremely high!

Besides the two major influential factors – linguistic and financial concerns – participants also mentioned other factors that led them to study in Australia such as legitimate status for their same-sex partners, the easier animal quarantine process for their pets, the good reputation of the intended study area, and the recommendations and experiences of others. Only two participants originally chose Australia because they wanted to immigrate to Australia via the means of studying. Other participants only engaged with the idea of immigration after they came to study here and were constantly asked by others whether they would like to stay as migrants.

4.4 Summary and discussion

This chapter has presented the pre-departure trajectories of participants in terms of their language learning. Of the thirty participants who participated in the initial interview, twenty-one participants' private English learning preceded their formal English learning in secondary education. Being at the time, pre-school or school age, the decision to start learning English was made for them by their parents. In line with Phillipson's (1992) concept of English linguistic imperialism and Bourdieu's (1991) concept of investment (see Section 2.2.2), the parents of the participants were appropriating the discourse of English as a way to internationalization and competitiveness in Taiwan, and more generally in the world; they were thus taking the initiative to invest their economic capital to gain cultural and symbolic capital for their children.

As for the participants, their initial perception of English language learning was shaped by their parents or other family members as well as by their experiences in the private English schools. This paints a rather diversified picture. A couple of participants had learned what they had to learn in the formal curriculum in high school and considered their head start a success. Most of the participants considered themselves to have gained a positive attitude towards learning English in a fun environment rather than acquiring substantial language knowledge. For other participants the experience had mostly offered a social function and had given them the chance to play with other children. A few participants lost their interest in learning English right away.

In exploring participants' early experiences of English language learning, motivational theories have relatively limited explanatory power because at the young age at which the participants then were, English was obviously neither needed in order to integrate to a target community, nor did they learn English for an ideal self. Their attitude towards learning English was largely shaped by their relationship to other people, especially to those with whom they were close. Those participants whose parents and relatives thought English was important simply were surrounded by the idea of English since they were young without knowing where it had come from. The participants' attitude towards English language learning was also formed by the immediate social context they were situated in: whether the children's English cram school was fun and interesting, and whether they enjoyed the companionship of other children. This finding corresponds well with the theory of identity, which highlights the relationship between the individual learners with the larger social world. As Norton (2000, p.5), notes second language learning is related to "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space."

For those nine participants who did not learn English prior to the formal curriculum provided in secondary education, their experience of learning English as a school subject was not much different from those who received prior instruction. It was fairly monotonous for most of the participants to describe their English learning as test-oriented in secondary education. Except for a few participants who went to private schools where they had more opportunities to practice speaking English, most of the participants' learning was mainly about achieving academic performance outcomes and passing qualification tests. Private learning outside school at the time also shifted the focus from having fun learning English to performing well on exams. Participants' relationship with the English language kept changing along with the practices in which they were engaged. Given that English was neither a language that operated in daily communication nor a medium of instruction in education, participants tended to describe their English learning by how they performed in exams and whether they had interest in learning English. These two factors often linked with each other.

The meaning of English continued to change from merely a school subject to a means of communication when participants obtained experiences of applying English in natural conversations and settings with English speakers. However, obtaining such experiences oftentimes involved the much greater effort and expense of attending English cram schools, hiring private tutors, going on overseas study trips, or finding other ways to go overseas. The notion of investment kept being tightly bound to English learning in the participants' learning experience.

The desire to improve English skills became much more prominent when participants were at a transition period from studying into the job market, facing the discourse of English as a doorway to the world and as a competitive edge in their career. Such linguistic desire was in line with participants' decision to invest in studying overseas. Participants' motivations to study overseas, although complex, generally fell into three major areas: internationalization, self-fulfillment, and relationships. Pursuing experiences centering internationalization such as meeting people from different countries and acquiring an international perspective was a salient theme across participants' accounts. In addition to internationalization, pursuing an overseas higher degree was hoped to increase participants' competitiveness in the job market. In contrast to many other Asian countries where the impetus to study overseas was due to a gap between local supply and demand of higher education (Ziguras & McBurnie, 2011), the participants' accounts show that the expanded provision of higher education in Taiwan since the education reform in 1987 rather devalued the higher education degrees, which the participants along with many other local graduates had obtained. Longing for more cultural and symbolic capital enhancing their career development, participants considered studying overseas a pathway worth investing in. As considerable cost was involved in studying overseas, participants' family support both financially and emotionally was also a major factor for participants to realize their dream.

These findings seem to generally be in agreement with the study by C.-H. Chen and Zimitat (2006) on Taiwanese students' decision making in studying in Australian higher education (see Section 2.2.3). However, the current research takes a step further by showing that the participants' choice of Australia was particularly relying on the interaction of two main factors: the English language and financial considerations. On the one hand, the desire to improve English made Australia a potential destination where participants expected to find an English environment to immerse themselves in. On the other hand, for several participants the English language was limiting the choices of study destinations, as several participants mentioned that they were interested in going to a European country but considered learning another new language would be too difficult. This linguistic desire, or sometimes a constraint, was interacting with another practical concern, namely finance. Financially most participants relied on scholarships or family support, and a few participants also partially relied on student loans. Many participants explained that if it was not for a financial compromise they would have chosen to go to the United States for the established reputations in Taiwan and the American English that they were familiar with as it was American English that was predominantly taught in Taiwan (J. Chang, 2013b).

By examining the participants' prior English learning experience, we see that the meaning of the English language to the participants has been changing and evolving through the different social environments they were situated in and the different practices they were engaged in. This is in line with identity theories, discussed in Section 2.2.2, which argue that language learning relates not only to individual motivation but also the learner's relationship with the larger social world (e.g., Norton, 2000, 2013). Language learner identities can be viewed as multiple and constantly changing (Norton, 2013). As a result, language learners' desire to invest in learning the language and the outcome they expect may change, too. The construction of the target language in the society also affects learners' desire to improve their English skills, as proposed by Piller and Takahashi (2006). The link between language learners' desire to learn English and the imagined communities they wished to join was also evident in participants' decisions to study overseas. In addition, observing participants' investment in learning English ranging from attending cram school as children to moving to Australia for higher education also brings in the dimension of resources, which should not be overlooked. Different cultural and economic capital possessed by each language learner also has a substantial impact on language learning.

At the time of the research interview, tuition fees and living costs in Australia were unprecedentedly high and influenced participants' experiences and expectations. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the participants' life experiences in Australia and explore whether their overseas study sojourn met their expectations and whether they deemed the investment worthy of what the sacrifice they had put in.

Chapter Five: Moving down under: Temporary transnationals

5.1 Introduction

As explained in Chapter Four, participants come from a context where English is largely a school subject for assessment purposes but not used for daily communication. Consequently, participants have a gap in this particular skill, which they expected to master by studying overseas. Against this backdrop, studying in Australia becomes a linguistic adventure. In this chapter, I outline participants' study trajectories in Australia. I firstly explore participants' language desire and the choices they made in terms of who they intended to interact with after they landed in Australia. Secondly, I investigate the intersections between ideologies of language learning and practices that participants engaged in, and the response of participants. Thirdly, I present how the participants participated in the community and why they stay in a peripheral position throughout their time in Australia. This is followed by PhD participants' study experiences, as their journey was quite different from that of coursework participants. After presenting participants' university experiences, I probe into their language use and participation outside university. Finally, I discuss a number of positive incidents involving an important person (or people) who served as a bridge to connect some of the participants to Australia. Overall, I argue that language is a manifestation of participation, which is a dynamic and contested process.

5.2 'Do as the locals do': Participants' language desire and choice

This section explores participants' language desire and their choice of social network. Participants' language desire can be observed from at least two aspects: first, how they respond to the influence of L2 on their L1; and second, who they decide to interact with or not. Many participants noticed their regression in their L1, Mandarin, after coming to Australia. For instance, they would mix many English words into their utterances. They would blurt out a Mandarin sentence with English grammatical structure. They might forget some Mandarin characters when they were typing or writing. When they were talking about their study field, they found it hard to deliver in full Mandarin since some terminologies or concepts were learned in English and the logic of flow was also in English. They felt as though they were somewhere in-between, sometimes even feeling "stuck." As Sophia, a recent PhD graduate in English Literature, described, "英文也沒有像 local 那麼好，可是中文好像又越來越爛" [My) English is not as good as the locals' and (my) Mandarin seems to have gone backwards]. However, apart from one participant majoring in translation, most of them did not give it a thought or worry about it as they believed their Mandarin would always be there and they would always belong. "再怎麼樣，大家都還是會接受我的" [No matter what, people will still accept me], said Yvonne, a master's student of Food Studies. In this case, the sense of security about Mandarin proficiency relates to a sense of belonging. As a result, participants focused their attention wholly on English proficiency and improvement, which influenced their friendship preferences.

Many participants mentioned that for the sake of the linguistic environment they tried to avoid making friends with Taiwanese, at least "at first". Endeavoring to advance in English by avoiding anything associated with Mandarin, Steven, a science PhD student, said frankly, "其實我有一點點的刻意，沒有找臺灣人" [Actually I kind of did it on purpose by not looking for Taiwanese]. The language desire urged him and other participants to avoid entering a Mandarin-speaking social network, which seemed to detract from their English learning as well as losing the purpose of overseas study, for which they left their comfortable home behind and in which they were financially and emotionally invested. "不然我幹嘛大老遠來" [Otherwise, why should I come all the way here?], Steven added. The temporariness of being overseas also helped such decision-making easier and made it seem reasonable. Brian, a master's student of Photovoltaics and Solar Energy, jokingly suggested that if one wished to make more Taiwanese friends, the way to do it was back home in Taiwan. In addition, several participants mentioned a particular idiom "入境隨俗 [enter-area-follow-customs; Do as the locals do; When in Rome, do as the Romans do] and considered that operating in English is the way to live in Australia. Thus, associating too much with Taiwanese would seem like a failure to integrate into Australian society and a failure of the overseas study experience. “好像除了所有的標誌變成英文以外，好像跟生活在台灣沒有太大的區別” [Then it would feel like living in Taiwan not overseas, except all the signage is in English], commented Gigi, a master’s student of Marketing. However, after a period of time in Australia, participants became aware of a gap between their imagined lifestyle and English learning, and the reality of their experience, which is presented below.

Language desire and choice of the participants mediate where they believe they belong, what they invest in, and what community they hope to get access to and integrate into. For language learning, they chose an imagined community over the Taiwanese community, which could potentially have offered them resources to help them settle down when they first arrived. For example, Taiwanese friends could be very helpful in sharing local knowledge such as renting accommodation, taking public transportation, and dealing with daily life; they could also lead to an extended social network. However, for the purpose of linguistic gain, most participants placed more weight on English over Mandarin in order to participate in an imagined community. To the surprise of all the participants, their linguistic journey turned out quite differently to what they had expected. The Mandarin language not only operated within Taiwanese-related networks but also in the large Chinese communities they encountered in Australia.

5.3 When monolingual ideologies meet multilingual realities

The strongest and most common comment I heard from the participants was almost unanimously: “Too many Chinese!” This succinct comment indicates a linguistic conflict much more than a political one. “Am I really overseas?” Feeling puzzled, participants were extremely disappointed in the linguistic environment in their universities and living environment, and concerned for their English improvement. At university, apart from 7 PhD students, who did not have to attend classes, 13 out of 23 participants indicated that between 50 percent and 90 percent of their classmates were from China, depending on the courses, with their majors covering a wide range of areas, including arts, business, science, and engineering (Cultural Studies, Human Resources, Accounting, Marketing, Commerce, Finance, Food Studies, Health

Promotion, Information Technology, Photovoltaics, and Solar Energy). Chinese student enrolment in Australian tertiary education in 2008 was 82,144, which formed the largest group of foreign students compared to the total enrolment of international students, which was 389,373 (Gürüz, 2011) (see also Section 1.1). The prevalence of Mandarin-speaking classmates largely changed the linguistic environment of educational settings which participants had imagined prior to coming to Australia. Only 5 out of 23, studying in Government and International relations, Linguistics, Fine Art, Social Work, and International Trade and Commerce Law, had few Chinese classmates and considered their study in university to be entirely in English. However, like the other participants, they noticed that the Mandarin language could be heard and "seen" frequently outside campus. The linguistic environment, a dynamic and constantly changing field, became full of conflict and compromise. On the one hand, resources mediated by Mandarin were easy to access, a fact which facilitated their settlement; on the other hand, such ease made them worry about their English learning improvement. This ambivalence indicates a clash between monolingual ideologies that English as the target language and multilingual realities that diversities of languages are exuberant. In the following section, I describe how participants responded and interacted with large numbers of Chinese students as well as other international students.

5.3.1 Meeting Chinese

Lacking English speaking opportunities ironically became the most common feature of participants' study experience in Australia, just as they had faced in Taiwan. Having a great impression of Australia from her working holiday experience where she made a lot of foreign friends using English, Gigi talked about the shock she encountered in her master's program of Marketing.

Grace: 那你剛才說同學是比較讓你出乎意外的。

Gigi: 因為太多中國人了，呵呵，看你選課，可是普遍就是還蠻多，中國人真的很多，大概八成吧，我猜，七成，八成。

Grace: 嗯嗯…那你覺得?

Gigi: 我覺得口說在這邊一直在退步。還不是沒有進步，是退步哦嗯…就是一直在退啊，因為其實在學校，你也不太會講到…說真的，不太會講到英文耶。因為大家都會講中文，你也不知道跟人家講英文幹嘛。都是用中文討論啊，根本沒有人要跟你講英文。你就覺得，欸，在這裡根本就不用用到英文也沒關係…就寫報告的時候要用到。

Grace: You were saying that you were surprised by your classmates.

Gigi: Because there are too many Chinese, heh. Depends on your courses but generally there are a lot, seriously. Maybe eighty percent, I guess, seventy percent, eighty percent, depends on courses.

Grace: Mm...What do you think about that?

Gigi: I feel my speaking is regressing. It's not only not progressing, but regressing…keeps regressing. Because in uni, you don't really need to speak English. Everybody speaks Mandarin, and you wonder what the point is of insisting on speaking English to them. So we all discuss in Mandarin. No one wants to speak English to you. You feel like here you could live without English at all, except when you have to write assignments.

For Gigi, the linguistic environment changed significantly from the working holiday setting to the higher education setting and from English to Mandarin as the major lingua franca in her classes. Besides the desire to learn English, the socially and culturally constructed idea that English is the language spoken in Australia makes the reality of the prevalence of Mandarin a major ambient conflict that was difficult to accept. It was in Australia that most of the participants first met people from China in person rather than hearing about them through the media. This could easily cause misunderstanding as to which language to use for communication on campus. Vincent, a Biomedical Engineering graduate, talked about his experience in language school: "你就算跟他們說英文，他們也是跟你說中文" [Even if you speak to them in English they still speak to you in Mandarin]. Participants soon gave up the idea of speaking English with each other because it would seem "很假" [fake], pretentious, and meaningless. The misunderstanding seemed to be caused by discrepant ideas: one party thought they should use English based on the occasion and the environment they were in; the other party thought they should use Mandarin, the language in which both parties feel most confident, in order to ease communication.

Despite sensing a linguistic conflict, many participants were nonetheless willing to make friends with Chinese classmates, seeing it as positive international experience as long as the taboo topic of the political status of Taiwan was not raised and argued aggressively. Two thirds of the participants made many Chinese friends, coming to know them as individuals with all sorts of personalities, attitudes, values, and behaviors, rather than as a homogeneous group. Some participants admired those Chinese students who were earnestly studying and working, and disliked those who they considered to be fooling around. Some even learned a bit of Chinese dialect. Some were surprised by Chinese students' admiration toward Taiwanese people and culture, and friendships formed quickly. However, there were also occasions where participants were made to feel uncomfortable by arrogant attitudes and rude political comments on the matter of Taiwan's belonging. Lisa, a master's student of Marketing, described her experience.

Lisa: 除了一直爭台灣是大陸的，我還有遇過另外一個，他會直接說，你們的民主有甚麼好，選舉有什麼好，他說在他看來都不好，他就講一大堆他的理論，反正講來講去就是他們的比較好。然後我聽了就三條線。所以我一開始會反駁，可是後來發現其實不管你反駁他甚麼，他就是把你壓下去，而且他根本不想讓你講話。所以我後來就學乖了，他只要一講這個問題，我就不想跟他談。他每次想要找我講話就是要講政治的問題。所以我後來就開始避開他。然後我遇過一個也是罵的，也不是罵就是咆哮。

Lisa: Besides those who argued that Taiwan is part of Mainland China, I also met someone who argued straightforwardly: 'What's good about your democracy? What's good about your election? In my opinion, they are not good at all.' Then he started his own theory to, anyway, show what they have is better. I felt speechless. At first, I would defend and then I realized whatever I said he would argue and suppress my opinion. He didn't even want to listen. So I learned that every time he mentioned this topic, I would stop talking to him. All he wanted to talk to me about was politics, so I started to avoid him. I also had another classmate who reproached me for it. Well, more shouting than reproaching.

The shared Mandarin language made communication easier but did not bring rapport when the taboo topic of the status of Taiwan was raised. Despite the conflict of lack of opportunity to speak English and having to defend their political stance, one third of the participants regularly cooperated with Chinese classmates because of a shared attitude toward and style of learning.

Vincent: 念 Master 我反而跟中國人在一起比較多。這樣子來說好了，這個學校的 Business，就占了 80%。我們學院的佔了 50% 。50，是相對來說少一點，可是還是蠻多。那不曉得這 50%就剛好是班上成績前 20%到 30%的。他們很有方法。他們就是有辦法拿到 HD，就是 85 分以上。他們就是很有辦法去應對考試這種東西。所以我就從這個地方去多跟他們學，怎麼樣去去把書念好，怎麼樣不讓，首先當然第一個條件啊，首先不讓自己 fail 嘛。第二個，也是要學到點東西啊。所以我就跟他們交集比較多，因為外國人的個性算是比較不太一樣，不是那種會經常性的念書啊。他們是到考試期間才會開始真正在念書。中國人就是，其實他們是從學期開始就開始念書。因為我自己念書遇到的問題，問他們，有時候問外國人，外國人都跟我回答說，他不知道。對，這樣子來說，我的問題還是沒有解決，那我就問中國人。那他們也會有答案。就比較不一樣。

Vincent: Uh, in my master’s program I ended up being with Chinese classmates mostly. Put it this way, Chinese students accounted for 80 percent in business school and 50 percent in my school [Biomedical Engineering]. 50 percent seems less than 80 percent, but it is still a lot. And these students’ academic performance happened to be in the top 20 to 30 percent. I would say they have strategies. They have a way to get HD, or above a score of 85 marks. They were good at taking exams, so I was learning from them. Of course, the first priority for me was not to be failed. Also, I really wanted to learn something from

> the program, so I spent more time with them. The local students were different. They didn’t study very often, only before the exams. While Chinese classmates started to study when semesters began. Sometimes, I had questions. I asked local students and they would tell me they don’t know. My problems were not solved. Then I asked Chinese students and they would tell me. That’s how it was different.

With the common goal of academic performance, using Mandarin to discuss university study was effortless and much more efficient, and the study results were satisfying. However, while the Mandarin language was actually benefiting their study, it was not recognized or appreciated as a legitimate means because of the prevailing monolingual ideology that recognizes English as the only legitimate language of higher education in Australia (Group of Eight, 2007). Ambivalently, some participants frankly told me that if they could choose again, they would have picked other countries or a small rural environment where they might be able to meet more English speakers, although they were not sure where such places exist due to the prevalence of Chinese overseas students. The comment “Too many Chinese”, therefore, implies at least a threefold connotation: first, participants’ language desire for English; second, an imagined community that they wish to gain access to and participate in; and third, a negotiation between ideology and practice, and a conflict between imagination and reality.

5.3.2 Friendship with other international students

Contrary to the ambivalence of linguistic conflict, meeting other international students and forming cross-cultural friendships was deemed the most valuable and cherished experience to all the participants. There are at least three reasons which facilitated their interaction: linguistic practice, shared status, and bilateral interest.

Firstly, English serves as a lingua franca between participants and other international students who are neither native English speakers nor Mandarin speakers. Before beginning his master’s program when his classmates became mostly Chinese, Brian felt happy and satisfied that he was meeting other international students in his language school: “因為大家混在一起，日本人啊，法國人啊，俄國人啊，巴西人啊，什麼

人都有。我那時候很快樂，就是你可以透過不一樣國家的人，去瞭解他們的國家，風俗習慣。” [Everyone mingled together. Japanese, French, Russian, Brazilian, all kinds of people. I was very happy at that time that, by mixing with people from different countries, I got to know their countries, customs, and manners.] His girlfriend by his side added: “他有很多朋友是那種不是英文母語的外國人，就是他們什麼法國人啊，他們講英文也很慢，大家一起講很慢” [Many friends of his are not native speakers of English, such as French people. They speak English slowly and everyone speaks slowly]. Therefore, secondly, they share a status – second language learner – and none holds a higher power position in Brian’s case. They learn English from each other by using the language to gain mutual understanding and build up friendships. Moreover, learning English became one of the common topics of conversation for them. Barbara, a master’s student of International Trade and Commerce Law, mentioned that because of these cross-cultural interactions, she came to understand why people from certain linguistic backgrounds have more difficulty learning English than others due to the dissimilarity of their language systems. Such understanding caused her to feel more admiration for other international students. Thirdly, they also shared the status of being overseas, which led to an important factor, voiced by many participants: “他們比較有意願交朋友” [They have desire to make friends too]. They found themselves in the same situation: far away from home, alone, and wanting to form connections. A mutual willingness to spend time together and make an effort to build relationships was the key to their friendships. They were able to easily share their feelings about their stay in Australia and their experiences of interacting with the locals, as well as help each other to deal with nuanced issues of daily life.

Among international students from various countries, those from Singapore and Malaysia were particularly mentioned by several participants who made good friends with them. For example, Steven, pursuing a totally English environment by avoiding Mandarin-speaking people and activities, indicated friends from Singapore and Malaysia as his compromise choice.

Steven: 如果我可以融入當然最好啦，可是我覺得是有困難的，所以變成我就折中。新馬地區的人，基本上我覺得整體平均來說啦，他們英文

能力也蠻好的。然後他們對西方文化的瞭解，我覺得我可以透過他們知道很多。我覺得澳洲人對我還是有距離的。跟那些新馬地區的人我覺得跟臺灣人比，對我來說那個距離感其實差不多。對，就是我講什麼東西他們都還是知道你講什麼東西。他們他們對臺灣也很熟，他們有的還會講福建話，跟我們閩南語很接近，其實基本上雖然他們大部分都會講中文，可是大部分場合我我會跟他們用英文交談。

Steven: It would be the best situation if I could integrate, but there are some difficulties for me, so I compromised. People from Singapore and Malaysia on average have a good command of English and I can also learn from them about the West. Australians seem distant to me but with Singaporeans and Malaysians it's closer to how I feel about Taiwanese. They understand a lot of things I talk about. They are familiar with Taiwan. Some can even speak Ho-Kien, which is similar to Taiwanese. Many of them can speak Mandarin too. But in most scenarios I can converse with them in English.

To Steven, Singaporeans and Malaysians became his ideal interlocutors and friends. First of all, talking to them was not opposed to his language desire of immersing himself in English. Secondly, they have more cultural knowledge and linguistic knowledge in common and thus feel closer and more approachable. Thirdly, they were able to offer different perspectives and enrich his overseas experience.

In this section, I have presented the struggles and negotiation of participants facing multilingual realities, where their linguistic environment was not homogeneously Anglophone. By contrast, Mandarin predominates among the languages other than English. Participants had ambivalent feelings toward using their L1, Mandarin: they felt surprised that they could use Mandarin in many aspects of their daily lives but at the same time worried about their English stagnating. Their social network, though intended to open to all encounters but is actually intertwined with language desire. The frequency and quality of interaction with local students and local people was disproportionately low in participants' narratives and experience, which is the focus of the next section.

5.4 Peripheral participation: Dynamics in interaction with Anglophone local students

The research participants were entitled to become international students after fulfilling academic requirements, acquiring university admission, paying their fees and other financial obligations, and obtaining student visas. On paper, this made them legitimate participants in their Australian higher education institutions. According to Lave and Wenger's (1991) term "legitimate peripheral participation", these "newcomers" have the same right to access resources and opportunities as the "old timers" (p.29); in the process, they gradually move from peripheral participation toward full participation in the community, with a concomitant increase in the time, effort, and level of responsibility demanded of them. However, in this study, peripherality was not found to be the positive situation described by Lave and Wenger, since participants did not move from the periphery to the center in the period of their study. This section outlines the experience of participants interacting with old timers and local students yet remaining at the periphery of the Anglophone community, revealing how language intertwines with participants' socialization and participation in educational settings.

The large population of Mandarin-speaking students complicates the dynamics of the linguistic field in universities, but did not change the dominant status of English and of Anglophone local students, whose dominance was enacted in class and during group projects.

5.4.1 Classroom settings

David, a master's graduate in Linguistics, acknowledged the subtle division in a shared classroom space.

David: 雖然說我的同學都對人很好，但是我還是覺得白人跟其他國際學生還是有一個隱形的牆在，就像是上課的時候，他們白人都會自己坐在同一桌，那我們國際學生就會自己坐在一桌這樣子。有一次老師把我們打散，他們下課之後就會自己坐回去同樣的那一桌。對，那你就想說好像不是應該要再坐在同一桌裡面嗎?怎麼你又回去了?但是

他們不會表現出討厭你的感覺，只是有時候你會感覺他們好像沒有很想要跟你講話，或者是他們講話就是比較敷衍這樣子。

David: Although generally my classmates were friendly, I felt there was an invisible wall between the White and the international students. For example, in class white students would sit at one table and international students at another. One time our teacher mixed us up, but in recess time, they went back to the old table right away. You were puzzled: shouldn't we sit together? Why did they leave? They didn't act like they dislike you but you felt they did not want to talk to you, and they talked to you in a perfunctory way.

A mutual interest in interaction and conversation was lacking and embodied in a subtle way; a covert boundary was delineated in the atmosphere.

During class discussions when everyone had to participate orally, the Anglophone dominance of local students was particularly palpable. The intensity of discussion left participants no chance to catch the tiny intervals to throw in a response. Barbara, a master's student of International Trade and Commerce Law, described the situation: "當他們你來我往的時候，你根本插不進去，當已經想好，終於架設好你想說什麼的時候，人家不知道話題已經到哪裡去了" [When they all jumped into the discussion, you couldn't interpose at all. After you've organized your idea and structured your sentences in your mind, they've already moved far away from the topic]. In this case, although most participants indicated that they could understand and follow discussions well, their classroom behavior would be deemed as much more quiet and passive than they actually intended to be and that they actually were. This situation is similar to the findings of Nakane's (2007) study of Japanese students in Australia, whose keeping quiet resulted from their lack of confidence in English and constant interruptions by the more outspoken local students.

When participants did give opinions, unfortunately it was even more challenging for them to be heard, as was evident from David's description.

David: 有時候像小組討論的時候有沒有，每個人都講話，都發表意見，但是他們就好像不會理你，他們會忽視你的意見，他們會停下來聽你講，然後你講完之後，他們又回到自己的話題裡面，那你自己就會覺得好像不是很好，我那時候想說奇怪是我英文不好還是…?結果我發現好像不是，我跟其他國際學生聊的時候說他們也都是這樣子，有這種感受。所以不是只有我的問題，是其他人也是這樣。我發覺可能有一點種族歧視吧。

David: Sometimes in group discussion everyone was talking and giving opinions. They don’t notice you. They ignore your opinion. They would stop when you are talking, but after you finish they go back to their own discussion. You feel bad about it. I had doubts about my English being good enough. Later I found, nah, other international students told me they all felt it. They felt the same. So it was not only my problem. I thought it may be a bit racist.

David was actually one of the few participants who used the word 種族歧視 [racist], while most participants were left puzzled, wondering what this was all about and whether racism was common in Australia. The identity of a second language learner often obscures the question of the real source of the problem. They would attribute such situations to their lack of English competence unless they knew other students felt the same or their feelings were backed up by someone who has ethno-linguistic ownership. As Mark, a postgraduate student of Environmental Management, eventually realized, he was not the only one having trouble understanding an Australian student’s 機關槍［machine-gun] rapid-fire speaking: his American classmate had to ask for things to be repeated constantly.

5.4.2 Group work

Anglophone dominancy also contrasted with scenarios when no English native speakers were present. Donna, a master’s student of Accounting, described her autonomy.

Donna: 有一門課因為我們這一組裡面一個印尼人一個韓國人，我們不可能用中文交談，一定是講英文，我發現我是很吵的那一個，因為我覺得，我對我的口語還滿有信心。就是跟一般都是第二語言的來說，當然不是跟 local 比，我對我的口語滿有信心的，我不怕，我怕的就是英文是母語的那種，我會比較有壓力

Grace: 那妳們班上幾乎沒有 local 的學生

Donna: 不是幾乎沒有，是沒有。對，我是會自動講話的那一種。

Donna: In one course, I was in a group with an Indonesian and a Korean so we couldn't speak Mandarin but English. I found myself very talkative. I think I am pretty confident of my speaking. Compared to other second language learners, of course, not to locals. I feel confident and I am not afraid. I am afraid of native speakers. With them, I feel stressed.

Grace: You have few local classmates in class?

Donna: Not few. There were none. Yes. So I am very talkative.

Oral ability of these participants, therefore, was not fixed. Instead, it is a co-construction with interlocutors. Whether an interlocutor has the intention to converse, gives the chance to talk, and attends to listeners all have a great impact on a second language learner's speaking performance. At the same time, how a second language learner perceives their interlocutors in a particular setting and how they exercise their agency to speak also influence their speaking performance.

English dominance also asserted itself in group work. Group work was a common assessment for postgraduate coursework students. Different combinations of group members generate intricate and dynamic linguistic interactions. Some participants especially mentioned that leadership usually goes to Anglophone local students right away among group members with mixed linguistic backgrounds, with they being the ones who were assigned tasks. The following scenario was elicited from several participants:

Yvonne: 有 local 學生一組的時候，馬上他們就會當起組長，分派工作給我們。

Grace: 是什麼狀況呢?

Yvonne: 大家找好組一聚在一起，都沒有人講話，local 就會先說話，然後我們自己就想說也許我們沒有聽得很清楚老師的每一個規定，怕影響小組的表現，所以不敢搶先說話。

Yvonne: When there is a local student in our group, he/she would take up the leadership and assign us tasks.

Grace: How did that happen?

Yvonne: When we got together as a group, everyone was silent. The local would speak first. We were thinking maybe we didn't understand all the details from the teacher and might mislead the group, so we were hesitating to speak.

The very moment when someone initiated the discussion determined the hierarchy of the group. Language proficiency acted as a major factor: native speakers precede second language learners. The dominancy was largely determined by the belief in someone's language competence than other ability such as knowledge in a particular subject. Meanwhile, the hesitance of second language learners was also complicit in the process. Beliefs in native speakers' language competence significantly surpass other abilities. Alice, like Yvonne, also noticing that the leadership role always went to local students, indicated that she would actively take up leadership if the group members were all Mandarin speakers, giving opinions as to how to advance the project.

A case study of group work experience

Continuing with group work, I present in more depth a memorable experience of the group work of Chloe, a postgraduate student of Project Management. Out of the desire for linguistic gain and active participation, Chloe decided to ask local students to cooperate with her in a group project. She gathered all her courage, walking toward three local students, one man and two women. She asked them whether she could join their group. The man said he had no opinion and turned around to see the response of another woman, Natasha. Natasha "表情非常的勉強" [looked very reluctant], saying she had to ask the other girl and suggested that she see if other students were still looking for group members. After recess time, the teacher was asking if everyone had a group and stressing again that she was expecting the groups to be multi-national in order to enrich the project. Chloe and another Chinese girl were the only two left in class, so Natasha "表情不悅的把她的 iPad 遞過來請我們填我們的聯絡方式" [with a displeased face handed over her iPad to let us fill in contact information]. After class, Chloe sent a message to her brother overseas, telling him how bold she had been.

The following cooperation turned out to be rather stressful, as Chloe explains.

Chloe: 過程中澳洲組員的冷態度與我自己語言上的弱勢讓我相當不安，譬如說老師要我們開始分組自我介紹熟悉對方，OZ 介紹自己完後，另一個 OZ 還會繼續延伸問問題，但我自我介紹完後什麼事情也沒發生。OZ 就自己三個在聊天。

Chloe: In the process, the cold attitude of the Aussie group members and my disadvantage in terms of language made me feel very uneasy. For example, the teacher asked us to introduce ourselves. Whenever an Aussie student introduced him/herself, another Aussie student would ask follow-up questions. However, when it was my turn, there was only silence. The three Aussies just chatted among themselves.

Unfortunately, the cooperation did not create more chances for Chloe to interact with them because "組長就說他不愛開會碰面，很浪費時間，而且他們很忙，所以他們一致認為下課後馬上討論完大致分配後回去就開始動工，一切後續連絡都是以 Email" [The group leader said he did not like meeting, as it was a waste of time and they were all busy. So the Aussies all agreed that they would have a discussion right after class and assign tasks to each one. The ensuing contact was all by Email.] Longing for face-to-face interaction, she was disappointed, but nonetheless kept trying hard to participate.

Chloe: 在討論過程中，我覺得，澳洲人不論在說與寫，用字遣詞跟外籍生(澳洲人除外)的用法頗有差距，他們會用自己的方言與方法，是一般外國人我們不常用的。我盡全力的去聆聽揣摩他們要表達的意義，也努力勇敢發言，全力配合所有組長要求並轉換成最後的文字報告，心中壓力不小，但一股不願意認輸，不想要台灣人被看扁的情懷壯志卻很強烈。。

Chloe: During the discussion, I felt there was quite a disparity between the language usage of International students and Aussies when it came to speaking and writing. Their use of slang and ways of speaking are not what we are used to. I tried my best to listen and figure out what they were saying as well as to be brave and express myself. I did all I could to meet the group leader’s expectations and turned it into a written report. The pressure was huge. However, I did not want to give in. I don’t want Taiwanese to be looked down upon. That emotion was strong.

At the end Chloe’s group received an excellent grade, which made her Australian group members very happy. Such achievement proved Chloe’s abilities but the relationship with Australian students was short-lived: “我覺得有建立起關係，但是不深入，畢竟相處時間很短，課堂結束後他們也不會找你” [I think some relationship was built but not deep. After all, the time of interaction was very short, and they wouldn’t approach you after class]. Second language learners are often expected to be the ones who initiate conversation and interaction with native speakers and assume responsibility for their language practice. However, in the case of Chloe and many participants, the experience of working with local students not only involved linguistic challenges but also struggling with social identities: “as ‘other’, as an international student, as a second language learner, as an Asian, and as a Taiwanese.” Besides participating in academic work, the gaining of respect, recognition, and acceptance was no less a vital part of the whole process.

5.4.3 Summary

Moving overseas in order to study, participants have shortened the geographical distance to the minimum so that they can join the community; however, the social distance seemed considerable all along. Participants' interaction with local students turned out to be mostly fragmented, shallow, and stressful. The shared space was not neutral and equal but predisposed and unequal. Second language learners desired to enter the social space where the target language was used; however, they ended up encountering boundaries where the target language was used to keep them out. Before they opened their mouths to speak, they were already placed in a disadvantaged position. Such invisible boundaries are created when the social actors call into play the status of old timers, language ideology, language dominancy, and some ambiguous covert elements such as race and ethnicity. The game was played in an implicit manner.

Consequently, many participants continued to hold peripheral status and did not feel that they were connected to Australia throughout the duration of their study period. Only a few participants considered they had formed a bond with Australia and participated in Australian life because of some important person or people acting as a bridge. Those few cases are presented in the next section.

5.5 A lonely journey

In contrast to postgraduate coursework student participants, who had to attend courses and meet classmates, PhD student participants were facing a relatively lonely journey. In this section, I first explore the structure of Australian PhDs and how it affects participants' experiences in the light of social participation, language use, and scholarly identity formation. I then present the PhD student participants' academic trajectories from two interwoven strands: personal agency and supervisor-supervisee relationships. I describe characteristics of quality supervision that the participants experienced, followed by a close look at a case study of one participant's trajectory at the end of the section. Due to the relatively small number of Taiwanese PhD students in Australia, I only state their general fields of study (i.e. Humanities, Social Sciences and Sciences), in order to ensure anonymity. Further relevant details of their background are presented in Section 3.4 "Participant" Tables 4 and 6. There are seven main participants and four secondary participants in this group: ten of them were enrolled in a Higher Degree Research program at the time of data collection; one had already been awarded a PhD degree prior to the data collection period.

5.5.1 Independent research and autonomy versus loneliness and lack of support

Australian Higher Degree Research – as PhD study is called in Australia – consists predominantly of independent research, the requirements of which are essentially the same in all universities in Australia. Taking the 2014 HDR Prospectus of Macquarie University as an example, PhD candidates are expected to demonstrate their capacity to conduct research independently and make a contribution to the knowledge of their chosen subject with evidence of coherence and originality. The minimum period of candidature is two years and the maximum period is four years for full-time candidates. Full-time candidates are expected to commit, on average, a minimum of 40 hours per week to their research study program. PhD candidates' research will be supervised by at least two academics. Depending on the discipline, PhD candidates are required to submit a thesis that is 75,000 to 100,000 words in length for a written assessment by three examiners external to the University (Macquarie University, 2015).

The nature of Australian PhD studies resulted in certain problems for the participants. The major challenges were in the areas of social participation, language use, and academic identity formation. Firstly, loneliness was a pervasive phenomenon among most of the participants. They felt lonely in their research field when they did not find the vibrant research culture they had expected. As Sophia, a PhD student in Humanities, said, "我覺得最不習慣的應該是呃…沒有朋友吧！" [The thing I was not used to was…no friends!] She explained, "除了跟 supervisor meeting 以外，不會遇到任何的人，大家都各自在寫自己的論文" [Except meeting with my supervisor, I hardly met anyone. Everyone was busy working on their own theses]. Steven in Sciences also expressed his foremost difficulty as "空" [emptiness] in his social life in Australia. The structure of Australian PhD programs results in small network size and low network density. For international students who leave their existing networks behind when relocating to Australia and who thus need to build up new networks in the university environment, this lack of opportunities to build networks is a significant problem. This issue is not uncommon, as research on international students in Australia (Sawir et al., 2008) has shown: this study found that two thirds of the 200 students from more than 30 different nations at nine Australian institutions interviewed had experienced problems of loneliness and/or isolation (see also Section 2.3.1 and Section 2.4.2). The loneliness they felt after losing contact with their network back home was worsened by their experiences in Australian institutional settings. The researchers noted that "PhD students need attention because the isolated character of the project carries social costs, as testified in this study." (Sawir et al., 2008, p. 23) While shared cultural and linguistic networks could lessen the pain, the students in the study still could not replace the loneliness of not engaging with local culture and local students. In recent years, some PhD programs in Australia have adopted a coursework component; however, to the best of my knowledge, no literature has investigated the effect and compared it with the common practice. None of the participants in this study had experienced a coursework component in their PhD study.

Secondly, in addition to limited academic community participation, small social network size and fewer occasions of interacting with others led to fewer chances of speaking English in university settings. The scenario of low frequency and depth of interactions in English affected the language development that the participants desired. Many of them were concerned about this issue. For instance, secondary participant Da-wei in Social Sciences indicated that most of the interactions with other colleagues were not much deeper than greetings, which affected his confidence in speaking English: "以前覺得我是會講英文的，但來這裡反而覺得我不會講了" [I felt I could speak English well before I came, but I felt I could not after coming here]. Similarly, Sophia was shocked by the reduced linguistic exposure after she started her PhD: "剛來的時候，會覺得英文退步了，完全沒有跟人家講話的機會，我在台灣的時候在大學教書反而一天到晚都在講英文，然後來到這裡以後，沒有人跟我講英文" [When I first came, I felt my English was regressing. I had few opportunities to talk to people. When I was in Taiwan teaching at a university, I spoke English all the time, but after I came here no one spoke with me]. As a consequence, despite the fact that the participants conducted their research and wrote their theses in English, they felt diffident about their improvement in spoken English.

Thirdly, the lack of a supportive academic community of practice also hindered the development of their academic identity. Sighing, Da-wei shared his frank opinion with me: "這幾年在這裡覺得很沒有成就感" [These past few years here were devoid of any sense of achievement]. Working independently throughout his candidature without recognition from other researchers in the field made Da-wei wonder what concrete achievements he had made throughout the process. In the same vein, he had little information and few connections to guide him in developing himself in academia in Australia if he wanted to. His experience was common to the other participants. In other words, the development of academic identity is also vital for one's career development and career mobility in the long run. According to Carlone and Johnson (2007; see Section 2.4.2 for details), three components are necessary for developing a successful science identity: competence, performance, and recognition. Competence is performed in relevant academic practices to others and others recognize the performance as credible (p. 1190). Recognition by members of a local scholarly community is crucial to a PhD candidate's development of an academic identity. However, infrequent academic interactions among PhD candidates and between PhD candidates, department researchers, and professors gave little chance of performing one's competence so as to obtain recognition. Recognition was largely lacking in most participants' experiences.

Against this background of virtually non-existent institutional community practices, I next present their trajectories in two strands: personal agency and supervisor-supervisee relationships.

5.5.2 Personal agency

When discovering that academic interactions did not meet their expectations, some participants decided to actively search for resources to fill the gaps of their academic and social isolation as well as to enrich their overseas experience. Some sought out chances to participate in their institutions. For example, Sophia audited her supervisor's class with other Honors students. Steven actively requested opportunities to teach tutorials, which led to him obtaining tutoring work when his department was in need of tutors. Wendy in Sciences had a part-time job as a research assistant for her supervisor's project. Opportunities to engage in coursework study or to obtain work were not, however, available to all the participants, but rather depended on timing and the resources available to their supervisors and their departments.

Some participants also sought involvement in activities outside university by entering into communities based on common interests, religious beliefs, and social preferences.

For instance, Steven participated in a choir, a meditation group, and a German language study group to fill in his otherwise empty evenings. Ann in Social Sciences joined a local dance workshop and a yoga group on weekends. Johnson in Sciences preferred small but close relationships so he found his circle of friends through his queer network. Tim in Humanities regularly went to church on weekends, and Linda in Social Sciences turned to family and friends back home for support. She used a relatively cheap telephone card to call her parents and nephew almost every day to sustain and support herself.

Despite using strategies to cope with loneliness as well as to feel a sense of belonging, the participants were facing two significant constraints with regard to their implementation. The first of these were time constraints resulting from the pressure of their PhD tasks, and the second were financial constraints. For example, Linda found the student kitchen a good place to talk to people; however, she later realized that she could not afford to spend too much time doing so: "又不是太閒了， 我後來不會想再刻意那麼做了" [I am not one of those people who have nothing important to do, so later I stopped doing it on purpose]. Ann and several other participants also mentioned that social activities such as going out with friends and having fun was sometimes too expensive, given that the cost of living in Sydney, where she was studying, was extremely high. Therefore, she had to carefully budget for her social activities. Although the participants used their agency in seeking involvement and networks both inside and outside university, which were vital to their social participation, language use, and identity formation, these activities also competed with the time and energy they had available to spend on their PhD theses. Therefore, most participants could only afford to engage in quality interpersonal relationships to the extent that allowed them to sustain themselves and survive in a foreign land, while still meeting expected completion deadlines. This dilemma was common in the experiences of the participants as well as their PhD colleagues, and was also one of the reasons why their relationships at university were usually not deep, resulting, as secondary participant Da-wei put it, in "一種疏離感" [a sense of alienation].

5.5.3 Supervisor-supervisee relationships

As well as relying on personal motivation, the structure of the Australian PhD program makes supervisor-supervisee relationships vital as a way into academic community participation and the conduct of research. Supervisor-related topics were often brought up in the PhD participants' narratives. As Sophia said, "因為在這邊就是，我覺得最重要的應該就是我們跟 supervisor 之間的關係吧！" [Because here the way is that the most important thing is the relationships between supervisors and us!] However, whether a PhD student has a supervisor who they "click" with and who gives them the support they need seems to depend on a certain degree of luck, since little is made clear or guaranteed in this asymmetric power relationship. One participant indicated that when she had just started her candidature and wanted to know how much of her supervisor's time and attention she could legitimately expect to receive, the reaction from her department was unclear and the focus was shifted to asking, "Do you have any problem with your supervisor?" In order to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings and risk damaging the relationship from the very outset, she simply gave up asking such questions. This participant revealed many difficulties with her supervisor to me but asked me to keep them confidential.

Participant L:	因為人家都說，啊，你念 PhD，沒有找好老師你就來了哦？那是你的不對
Grace:	可是我覺得你還沒來你不會知道那個老師，你要怎麼跟他 work，你不會知道。
Participant L:	對！但別人會覺得是學生的問題。
Participant L:	Other people would say, "Ah, you are studying for a PhD, and you came without making sure you have a good supervisor? It's your own fault."
Grace:	But I don't think you would know what a supervisor is like until you come and work with him or her.
Participant L:	Exactly! But people tend to think it's the student's problem.

This participant was the only one who in the end did not obtain her degree. During her candidature, she sought help from her department but not much help was forthcoming. Her concern with keeping her experiences confidential is evidence of the power relations that continue to operate between an established professor and a young PhD student even after the student has left the institution and is no longer pursuing an academic career.

Quality supervision

Other participants considered themselves very lucky to have had supervisors who worked well with them. In the following, I present the elements of quality supervision that the participants mentioned in terms of academic community networking and the conduct of research.

Some supervisors helped students to form connections with each other and with other researchers. For example, Tim in Humanities said his supervisor at the time had eleven PhD students, so they often gathered together to discuss research or to have dinner. Johnson in Sciences shared with me a recommendation letter he wrote in passionate support of his supervisor for a best supervisor award. In the letter he mentioned that when he first started his degree, his supervisor anticipated that he might feel too shy to socialize with other researchers at conferences, so she often introduced him to people she knew, giving him an opportunity to present himself and his work. Such facilitation did not stop after he graduated: supervisors can also contribute to a young researcher’s future career. Johnson wrote about how his supervisor supported him in finding a job to develop his career.

> “She was extremely supportive to me after I completed my PhD thesis and started job seeking. She mentored me on how to revise the research proposals for my job applications and wrote reference letters for me. Because of her great reputation in the field that benefits all her students and colleagues, I was able to be short-listed in all of my applications and eventually obtained a job offer at X University as a post-doctoral research fellow.” (Facebook message exchange with Johnson)

In addition to academic community networking and future career development, in the course of three to four years of PhD candidature supervisors can be very helpful if their availability is well communicated to their supervisees, if they give timely feedback and support, if they give constructive comments on students' thesis writing, and if they give encouragement and show genuine care to their supervisees.

Availability

Being able to have supervisors' attention and time on a regular basis was a constant source of support to participants. Tim indicated that his experience of working with his supervisor met his expectations. He said, "就是兩個禮拜跟 supervisor 見一次面然後把我做的東西給他看，跟他討論方向，想法，然後有問題問他，沒問題就閒聊" [I would meet my supervisor fortnightly. I would show him what I have been working on and discuss my direction and thoughts. I would ask him questions if I have questions; if not, we just chatted]. It was unavoidable that his supervisor would take leave or go abroad for conferences, so they would communicate in advance and agree on how they would work during such periods and when the next meeting would be. Mutual agreement on the frequency of meetings and knowing their supervisor's availability helped him and other participants plan their progress. This could also be achieved in a flexible way. Steven said, "經常我就是完全按照自己步調走，譬如我最近有新的 idea，我就跟 supervisor 約時間討論，他就說好你去把那個新的 idea 寫成一個像 proposal 的東西。proposal 修到某個程度以後然後我就開始，好我準備做實驗。" [Most of the time I follow my own pace completely. For example, I had a new idea recently and made an appointment with my supervisor. He said OK and asked me to write something like a proposal. After the proposal was formed, I started to do experiments.] Since supervisors' availability is not regulated, it could work to a supervisee's disadvantage if they are not sure what they can ask for and how, as it did in participant L's case mentioned above. Availability is especially important when academic guidance and administrative support is needed, since time is vital for a PhD student to reach every milestone and successfully complete the program. Good supervision gives supervisees a clear picture of the frequency and nature of interactions.

Constructive feedback

Writing may represent the most intense task for the PhD participants. This task had to be performed in a second language, which is no small feat. Different disciplines have different traditions and expectations of academic writing. The participants in Humanities and Social Sciences revealed more challenges than those in laboratory-based Sciences, since the research was more individualized and the language and writing was not as templated and structured as that in the Sciences field. However, constructive feedback shares some traits: it needs to be timely, encouraging, and dialogic.

The participants whose experience was positive usually received comments and feedback on their writing from their supervisors within one or two weeks. Such immediacy enabled them to maintain the momentum of their writing and make revisions promptly. In addition, the comments were embedded with an encouraging attitude that motivated them to keep going. Sophia's field was highly related to the English language, and she mentioned how encouraging her supervisor was.

Sophia: 我覺得他是一個很好的老師啊，他在寫的方面，也對我下了很大的功夫，他看過我的東西，應該看過不下數十次，就是說他會修會給意見，我有時候就會跟他說，真的很抱歉，害你這樣改。然後他就會說，不會啊，你進步得很好啊，永遠都是鼓勵我這樣子。所以真的很感謝他啦！

Sophia: I think he is a wonderful professor. He devoted so much effort to my writing. He read my drafts dozens of times. Every time he would revise and give comments. I sometimes told him that I was sorry that this took him so much time. But he always said to me, "Don't be. You are progressing very well." He always gave me encouragement. I'm really grateful to have him as my supervisor.

Accepting and appreciating a supervisee's second language learner identity constitutes an important aspect of encouragement. Given that language is a representation of one's academic performance and knowledge, for the participants the challenges of taking PhD studies were not only academic but also linguistic. Supervisors are closer than anyone else in terms of familiarity with supervisees' linguistic representation; therefore, how supervisors accept supervisees' second language learner identity, how they react to supervisees' linguistic challenges, and how they assist their supervisees in their academic writing to generate quality academic outcomes was vital. Johnson in Sciences indicated that in his field the goal was to describe complex experiments in a very simple way using very simple language; therefore his writing challenge was not as severe as those studying areas other than Sciences. Even in this context, he still sensed his supervisor's tactful awareness of his second language learner identity: "她沒有跟我討論過語言的部份，我覺得整體都還算是很正面的，會耐心挑我的錯誤，也可以體諒我不是母語者。" [She never discussed language issues with me. I feel the whole experience was very positive. She would patiently proofread and pick out some errors; she understands I am not a native speaker.] Sophia indicated that she was learning and improving from her supervisor's earnest revision and comments: "我就是一直在學，所以我覺得這也是我很 lucky 的地方吧！因為很少老師會這樣做的。…不敢說現在英文有多好，可是覺得至少寫作的部分比來的時候好很多。" [I kept learning. I considered myself very lucky; I guess not many supervisors would do this. Maybe I shouldn't say how good my English is but I believe my writing has improved greatly since I came.]

Constructive feedback is timely, encouraging, and also dialogic. Ann in Social Sciences was also very satisfied with the way her supervisor worked with her, which was interactive and dialogic. Each time after she received her supervisor's written comments on her thesis section they would make an appointment to meet up. They would then sit together in front of a computer and discuss the writing and the comments. Therefore, Ann could, if necessary, clarify comments her supervisor had made, and she could explain her thoughts and the logic behind her writing. The process of producing a thesis was therefore one of dialogic cooperation. The efficacy of face-to-face meetings in clarifying points and exchanging opinions made Ann feel that the relationship with her supervisor was more egalitarian and equal, rather than asymmetric. She kept mentioning that she really enjoyed the autonomy her supervisor allowed her while at the same time receiving the support that she needed.

Genuine care

In addition to academic study, the participants were also holistically encountering all sorts of happenings and challenges in their lives, such as family relationships and responsibilities, health, accommodation, and finance. As Araujo (2005) argues, the doctorate must be understood as a "phase" in a student's life and career trajectory. Therefore, the relationship between the candidature and a whole range of other aspects should be recognized. Because being overseas with limited networks and resources made life particularly challenging, genuine care from supervisors often meant a lot to the participants. For instance, during the three-and-a-half years of his candidature, Johnson lost two members of his family – his brother and then his father. His supervisor helped him deal with many research and administration problems, and asked him not to worry about academic matters while he hastened home upon the loss of his father. "Without her generous support and kind understanding, I would not have been able to complete my PhD," Johnson recorded gratefully. That layer of genuine personal care and support, although not required in any form by the university, was definitely what made the supervisor-supervisee relationship a unique and quality one.

In the following, I present a case study of the role of the academic supervisor in the PhD journey of secondary participant Da-Wei, because this particular case has all the traits of quality supervision identified across participants.

Case study: Da-Wei's Academic supervisor and his voice

Da-wei and his wife came to Australia in 2009. Their journey was full of challenges. "這幾年在這裡覺得很沒有成就感" [These past few years here were devoid of any sense of achievement], Da-wei told me frankly. Having two degrees with an English major, he felt especially embarrassed and inadequate when he could not eloquently chat about all sorts of topics with others as he had expected to do. However, the time and energy that could be devoted to practicing English and chatting with others was limited, especially after he and his wife had their first baby in 2010. Both of them were conducting PhD research and had to take turns looking after the baby. They also moved house a few times due to accommodation issues. Later they had their parents come and help with the baby. The financial burden was heavy all along, although both of them were scholarship holders. Despite all these challenges, Da-wei graduated in September 2013, while his wife was in the final year of her candidature. I excitedly joined his graduation, where I also had a chance to meet his academic supervisor.

In spite of all sorts of frustrations in a challenging environment without much support offered, Da-wei was particularly grateful to have an important anchor throughout his candidature: his supervisor. Da-wei said, "她是在澳洲最重要的人，幫助我，影響我最大的人，幫助我發揮，找到我的特質，我的聲音與風格" [She is the most important and influential person to me in Australia. She helped me to develop, find my strength, and have my voice and style]. Da-wei could not remember anything but a positive attitude and encouragement from his supervisor throughout his candidature. In the first year, Da-wei and his supervisor had regular meetings fortnightly. In the one- to two-hour meetings, they discussed ideas freely without feeling constrained by the hierarchical relationship between professor and student. The supervisor helped him to identify his interests and ideas, assisted him in finding research participants, and introduced him to other researchers. In terms of academic writing, the supervisor always gave him timely feedback and revised his writing within one or two weeks. "奇怪的是她都一直跟我說很好，她不是用糾出問題的心態，而是鼓勵我說這個想法很好，繼續寫，雖然我自己不覺得有那麼好" [What was interesting was that she always said 'good' or 'great' to me. Her attitude was not to detect my problems, but to encourage me and want me to keep writing. Though I really did not think my writing was that good]. Although doubting himself, Da-wei thought he had to work even harder to make his supervisor proud. The supervisor never criticized Da-wei's English but kept proofreading and revising for him so that the expressions and sentences would flow more smoothly without grammatical errors or ambiguity that might invite criticism. As an expert in social studies, the supervisor embraced the idea that people's knowledge systems are different as are their ways of delivering knowledge. She put her ideas into practice, which freed up Da-wei's academic voice.

Da-wei: 她對我說，你的英文當然不是 native speaker 的英文，但就是這樣你才呈現了自己的特色，她是鼓勵我有自己的聲音，而不是要去 follow 別人的思考邏輯

Da-wei: She said to me that my English is of course different from native speakers' English, but it is just that I present my own style. She encouraged me to have my own voice, rather than following other people's logic of thinking.

Da-wei said that his supervisor was the top researcher in their research area internationally. Despite her achievements, the supervisor still remained humble and respectful in all interactions with him, which also manifested with regard to language:

Da-wei: 她還很客氣的問說:我這樣改可以嗎? 她很客氣很尊重，說如果你不滿意可以再改。

Da-wei: But she was always so polite and respectful, asking me if I was happy with her change, and if not, I could also make changes.

The supervisor embraced Da-wei's second language learner identity in the process of producing a thesis. Da-wei learned how to reflect his own ideas and organize his thoughts, and in the end he made a breakthrough in his research, which his supervisor was pleased about as well.

Da-wei: 論文主要都是我的聲音，references 只是輔助而已。想法上是傳承她的，所以我的想法來自田野調查，我再去看她的東西，是吻合的，覺得沒錯。。

Da-wei: My thesis is mostly my voice. References are only supplementary. The line of thinking follows that of my supervisor. But it was only because what I found in my research matched hers.

The influence of his supervisor was so profound that Da-wei used a family analogy to describe her: "她就像是我澳洲的媽媽" [She is like my Australian mother]. This fits the widely-known Chinese idiom “一日為師，終生為父” [Once a teacher, for life a father]. The expression reveals the huge impact a mentor can have on a student. The influence is not limited to an academic relationship but extends to genuine interactions, filled with respect, admiration, and friendship.

Da-wei’s supervisor also provided holistic support that went beyond the academic relationship. When he and his wife first came to Australia, the supervisor offered her place for them to stay while they were looking for somewhere to rent. When I visited Da-wei and his family, he showed me a few pieces of furniture in the living room that had been given to them by his supervisor. I also saw a picture of Da-wei and his supervisor, sitting on a sofa, joyfully reading a Taiwanese novel together. The touching image brought me a deep appreciation of their positive relationship and highlighted what an important person his supervisor was for Da-wei and his family, both academically and during the temporary settlement phase of their lives in Australia.

5.5.4 Summary

In this section, I began with a description of Australian PhDs and how their structure affects participants’ experiences in terms of social participation, language use, and scholarly identity formation. I then outlined the participants’ academic trajectories from two interwoven strands: personal agency and supervisor-supervisee relationships. Following this, I highlighted the experiences that made participants’ supervision experience a successful and quality one. Finally, I exemplified these characteristics in a case study of a good supervision experience, which helped the participant’s language development, academic progress, identity formation, and temporary settlement. Overall, the postgraduate participants faced peripheral participation (as demonstrated in Section 5.4) and PhD participants faced a lonely journey. In the next section, I explore participants’ experiences outside university.

5.6 Participation outside university

In this section, I present participants’ experiences of English language use and community participation outside university. Participants’ life outside university was also an integral part of their overseas experience and participants expected their

English learning and communication skills to improve substantially through their everyday lives and social interactions. Three domains have been identified as access points for participants to attain local knowledge and local culture as well as to practice the target language. The three domains are church, accommodation, and romance. Church emerged as an important site of language use and social network when nine out of thirty participants mentioned church as a part of their social life outside university. This ratio seems particularly high, given that the Christian population in Taiwan is only 3.9% against the most popular religions such as Buddhism (35.1%) and Taoism (33%) (World Population Review, 2015). Accommodation, which is indispensable to each and every participant, is another important linguistic site for participants to use the target language for social purposes. Finally, romance was the most important access to practicing speaking English for a few participants. For these, the intensity of language use and learning was particularly prominent. These three domains provide participants with access to an English-speaking community although not every participant found such a community. Therefore, I first present participants' experiences in each area, and I focus on those few instances where participants met an important person (or people) who served as a bridge to connect them to established communities. Through such a mediator, the participants were welcomed into local networks and enabled to participate in social activities, where they were shown respect and encouraged to practice English.

5.6.1 Church

Nine participants mentioned church as a major site of social interaction outside university. The main reasons they went to church were personal faith, community support, and language practice. The decision of which church to join was often the result of weighing and choosing among these factors.

For those participants who had been regular churchgoers in Taiwan, joining a church in Australia was an extension of their faith and way of living. Thus, more participants chose to attend Taiwanese churches rather than non-nationality based churches because they felt that community access and support would be easier to find within the same ethnicity/nationality group. For instance, Tim, a PhD participant, said, "我剛來的時候都是那幾個教會的朋友照顧我，所以後來我大部分的朋友都是在教

會那邊” [When I first came, a few church friends helped me a lot, so later most of my friends ended up being from church]. Bert, a postgraduate of Medicine, emphasized how informative and helpful the people in church were to him.

> 我覺得在這裡，真的很快樂！跟弟兄姊妹多交流，才發現這裡大家都很好，可以幫忙我很多，提供我們很多information。學校對我career沒有提供任何advice，但是教會的長輩提供了我不下十種的方式去試，真的很感動。[I feel very happy in church! From interacting with church brothers and sisters, I found that everyone was very nice, helping me a lot and giving me a lot of information. For example, my university did not give me any advice on my career development in Australia, but the elders in church offered me dozens of ways to try. I was really touched.]

Choosing a church was oftentimes a linguistic choice, as well, as was also documented by (Han, 2007; 2011; see Section 2.5.2 for details). Sophia explained why she preferred a Taiwanese church over a monolingual English church: “覺得禱告還要想著用什麼英文字，很不自然” [I didn’t feel very comfortable when I was praying to God and had to think about what English vocabulary to use]. By contrast, Michelle, Daniel, and Lisa saw church as a resource for English learning so they chose English-language churches. As Michelle said, “也是一個方式讓我維持我的英文！” [(It’s) also a way to maintain my English!] Daniel went to free English classes offered by a church on weekends. Lisa decided to change to an English-language church from a Taiwanese church in order to gain more English exposure: “我對學英文這一點還蠻失望的，所以我想要回去我之前的那個教會” [I felt disappointed in my overall English learning so I wanted to go back to my previous church].

There was only a single case of all three aspects of personal faith, community support, and language learning coinciding. Alice first visited an English-medium church due to language learning desire and later moved to a Taiwanese church because of its strong community support. Interestingly, Alice’s English learning was not compromised but rather was improved through attendance at a Taiwanese church. People in her church recognized her need to improve her English and were proactive in helping her. As a result, this participant found that the church served as her bridge to social participation in local activities as well as to language learning.

Alice first arrived in Melbourne in January 2009 and began her studies in a university-affiliated English language school. There she met a classmate, who introduced her to a Bible study group run by Australians in a nearby Christian church. Because of her language desire, Alice stepped into a church for the first time in her life. After a few months, another friend introduced Alice to another church, thinking that she was going to stay for a long period of time and might need some additional support. Alice then moved to this church, where the majority of the congregation was second-generation Taiwanese. At church activities, the Taiwanese language was used to communicate with the elders; both Mandarin and English were used among the younger people. Some of them tried to help Alice with English by speaking English to her. However, Alice still felt uneasy and tended to reply in Mandarin: "不知道為什麼我面對東方臉孔就是下意識的想說中文，很害怕我說的英文會被他們笑，雖然我知道他們不會" [I do not know why when seeing their Asian faces I just wanted to speak Mandarin to them subconsciously. I was worried they would laugh at my English, although I knew very well they would not]. Alice was experiencing this psychological conflict, which stopped her from actively taking opportunities to practice speaking English. Nevertheless, church members continued to help her with English.

Alice: 他們很熱心地知道我需要在英文上面的成長，所以都會特別關心我的學業，有兩個固定的會友會幫我檢查我的作業和修改，也會對我提的 idea 給很多意見，我要上台報告前，朋友會在前一晚特別到我住的地方，幫忙我修飾講稿，當他們覺得太不口語化或者用錯單詞，也會跟我說。也會分享他們以前大學時期在學校上課的情形。

Alice: They were very compassionate, knowing that I needed to improve my English. They especially cared about my study. Two of the church friends would regularly check and proofread my assignments, and they also gave me opinions about my ideas. When I was going to give an oral presentation, they would drive to my place the night before to revise my notes. If there were some expressions or word choices they considered not very natural or proper, they would share their knowledge with me. They also shared with me the experiences of their university life.

These people at church became the major support and help for her study and her life in Australia. It was not only Alice's language learning that church members contributed to; they also helped her form bonds and connected her to local social networks. They would give her a lift to church or to outings. They often showed their care for her by calling her and inviting her out for coffee or other activities. When I met up with Alice in Melbourne, she was going to join the wedding of a church sister as a bridesmaid. Seeing these helpers as "天使" [angels], Alice said, "澳洲學到最大最棒的收穫除學業以外，就是認識上帝" [Besides my study, knowing God has been my best reward in Australia]. Such a sense of belonging and connectedness made her long to stay in Australia after her study.

5.6.2 Accommodation

Accommodation is an area that is vital to international students' overall educational experience in terms of physical environment, social relationships, and language use. However, the availability of accommodation for international students is a well-known problem across the nation, and authorities have been unable to improve the situation (Obeng-Odoom, 2012) (See 2.5.1). Difficulties in this area were reflected in research participants' living experiences. The main problems they encountered were the low supply of and high demand for affordable accommodation, high rental costs, international students' disadvantaged and vulnerable status, and different lifestyles of and conflicts with share mates. I present participants' experiences of living in campus dormitories and in private rentals.

Contrary to the accommodation experience that participants were used to in Taiwan, where campus university dormitories were widely available to new students at much lower rent than off campus non-university accommodation, Australian universities only provide accommodation to a small number of students, and university-managed accommodation is usually more expensive (International Student Support Unit, 2011). The University of Sydney offers an example: in 2011, the university had the capacity to house a mere 2,582 students out of a total number of more than 47,000 students; that is, 95 percent of the students had to stay in non-university accommodation (Obeng-Odoom, 2012). The generally low availability of university accommodation is also reflected in the participants' experiences. Only four participants were living in university dormitories at the time of interviews. However, their experiences were all varied because of different living styles. Kevin and Steven did not enjoy living in the dormitory mainly because of the prevalent drinking and partying culture, so they tended to stay in their rooms. Kevin described his unpleasant feelings.

Kevin: 我住在學校，就是晚上回來，九點十點，到處都是喝醉的人，然後哇，四五六的晚上，十點，十一點，天吶，那是超恐怖的啊！

Kevin: I live on campus. And wow, especially around ten or eleven o’clock on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings everywhere was all drunken people. My goodness. That is horrible!

By contrast, Daniel enjoyed the atmosphere in the dormitory after moving out from a private rental, and felt more connected to his university as a result:

Daniel: 有時寫報告寫累了，就上去屋頂跟他們喝點酒，真的喝酒很容易跟 local 認識，馬上他們就跟你搭肩聊天了。

Daniel: Sometimes I feel tired from writing assignments and I go up to the roof to drink with them. It is true that drinking is a way to know local students. Right away they put their arm around my shoulder and start chatting with me.

Kimberly did not mind going to parties from time to time for the sake of meeting new friends, but she was annoyed by her roommate’s untidiness:

Kimberly: 我必須還是要說她是一個好人。只是她就是髒亂到我比較令我無法忍受。不過我還是會跟她聊天，就是碰到她就會跟她寒暄一下。

Kimberly: I have to say she is a nice person but her messiness is hard for me to put up with. But I still chat with her whenever I see her.

Apart from a small number of participants who stayed in the university dormitories, most participants had to look for private accommodation; however, finding a suitable place to settle down was much harder than they had expected. Their international student status seemed to disadvantage them in the rental market, and moving places many times was not uncommon. First of all, high rental costs limited the participants' choices and chances. For lower rents, some participants had to look for places far from their universities. However, in the states of New South Wales and Victoria, the two states with the highest number of international students, student public transportation concessions are only available to local students, not international students (Marginson, 2011). Consequently, participants were struggling to find a compromise between the costs of rent and transport, as well as trying to deal with the time cost of distance.

Second, their low economic status as students disadvantaged them when they were applying for a rental through a real estate agency. The applications of Da-Wei and Shiou-Ping, secondary participants studying in PhD programs, were often rejected because of their student status and their low income, despite the fact that they both held university scholarships. Under time pressure to find accommodation, they ended up renting a unit which was 70 kilometers away from their university. Da-Wei described the year living in that remote place as a "灰暗的經驗" [dark experience] because the distance resulted in social isolation.

Third, the participants were vulnerable as tenants to unreasonable or illegal treatment. Landlords did not always follow the law to deposit tenants' bonds with the fair trading office, made excuses to confiscate bonds, or did not provide facilities as promised. The participants encountering such issues often not only lacked information about how to deal with such problems but also could not afford the time, money, and effort to take legal action. They often had to put up with the monetary loss and quickly look for another rental in order to be able to focus on their studies as soon as possible. Daniel, a postgraduate student in Engineering, had a disappointing experience. After his brother graduated and left Australia, Daniel continued to live with the same landlord.

In the three years of renting since the brother first started living there, they had built up a good relationship with the landlord, so Daniel was happy to stay. Daniel was also happy about the linguistic opportunities afforded by the arrangement. The landlord often chatted with Daniel which gave Daniel opportunities to practice his English. However, things went sour when Daniel was about to move out at the end of a semester:

Daniel: 從我講完我要搬走之後，他就有點不斷的在找我麻煩。他就說，那你表弟之前有時候會來我家裏住，所以我要跟你收錢，那一天是收五十塊澳幣。不是吧，五十塊!?他說，對，五十塊，我是房東，我說什麼是什麼。以前啊，你都會找朋友回來開 PARTY，都很吵啊，然後我沒有收你 PARTY 的場地費啊。什麼!以前啊，你哥在這邊開 PARTY 然後什麼房屋的油漆有點掉了，所以他要重新粉刷過，所以這個錢他決定要扣下來。那時候我是覺得很難過。我真的沒有辦法，對，然後那個時候我還要期末考，我是覺得很煩，也讓我突然間覺得有點對於外國人有點失望。因為他是我最親的外國人。我每天都看到他，而且我每天都跟他在一起聊天。就覺得怎麼這麼現實？最後我只好算了 Whatever, if you want, just keep it 就給他扣了。那時只想要安然的回臺灣。

Daniel: Ever since I told him I was going to move out, he started to make things difficult for me. He said, “your cousin stayed over a few times, so I have to charge fifty dollars a day” “What? Fifty dollars!?” “Yes. Fifty dollars. I’m the landlord. I said so. Oh, actually sometimes you invited friends over to your party, I didn’t charge you for site rent expense.” What! “When your brother was living here, he held some parties, and some paint on the wall was peeled off. I have to repaint, so I have to deduct money from your bond.” I was shocked and sad, but there was nothing I could do. And at that time I was doing my final exams, I felt truly bothered and stressed, and also disappointed with foreigners. He was the closest foreign friend to me. I saw him every day; I chatted with him every day. Why did he end up being so greedy? I just let it go and told him, “Whatever, if you want, just keep it.” So my bond was taken. All I wanted was to go back to Taiwan peacefully.

Possible troubles not only came from exploitative landlords but also roommates or neighbors. Participants had no way of knowing whether their roommates or neighbors were easy to get along with until they moved in. Once they discovered difficulties, they were not able to get out of the unpleasant situation quickly because of the rental contracts they had signed. Annoying situations could be small things such as roommates being messy and noisy to things that created a sense of lack of personal safety, such as in Johnson's case.

Johnson: 我第一個住的地方是遇到一個壞鄰居，他就是一直寫信去投訴我們，在半夜的時候一直敲敲打打，然後一開始的時候我們很緊張，我們想說是不是關門太大聲，然後我們就去問每個鄰居說，不好意思，請問你是有被我們打擾到？那每個人都說沒有，就只有問到他有。然後之後我們就終於做了一個結論，就是他可能是…是精神病患，他有問題，他就很生氣，他就開始一直拿東西敲牆壁啊。我們有個牆是相鄰。有一次我在樓下遇到，他就跟我罵三字經啊，然後我就趕快跑，快閃，蠻恐怖的。我想他有精神病。

Grace: 你住了多久搬走？

Johnson: 一年，因為那個 contract。

Johnson: At my first rental place, I had a bad neighbor. He kept writing complaints about us and he kept making noise in the night. At the beginning we were very careful, thinking whether we closed the door too loud. We went to ask other neighbors whether they heard any noise from us. No one did except him. He had problems. He was angry and started to knock on our common wall. One time I bumped into him downstairs, and he cursed me. I just ran away. It was scary. I think he is a psycho.

Grace: How long did you live there?

Johnson: One year. Because of the contract.

Accommodation, or "home", is often portrayed in the media as an ideal site for social networking and language learning for overseas students as Takahashi (2013) observes; however, the participants' experiences often told a different story: they were in a vulnerable and disadvantaged position, rather than having the autonomy to choose and design an ideal environment for their social participation and language improvement.

In this context, those who had a smooth and pleasant experience of accommodation and could make the best of it seemed especially lucky, such as in Alice's case.

Alice was very fortunate because she has another bridge other than church to connect her to social participation in Australia: her landlady. Alice was the first person her landlady had ever rented out a room to. She showed her care and friendliness by frequently chatting with Alice, sharing her cooking, sharing her work and life experiences, and introducing Alice to her relatives and friends when they came to visit. She even took Alice to her holiday house. In terms of communication, Alice told me: "一開始的時候,我常常有一種挫折，我說的她聽不懂，她很鼓勵我說,說錯也沒關係，她會引導我說出我想說的" [At first, I often felt frustrated when she could not understand what I said. But she encouraged me to speak and let me know that it did not matter if I made mistakes. She guided me to express what I wanted to say]. By lucky coincidence, the landlady was working in the medical field and so took a personal interest in Alice's major in Health Promotion; therefore, they often discussed Alice's study at university. In their daily interaction, one event was still vivid to Alice:

> …之前我在tram上面和朋友有遇到一個澳洲人罵我們說，"這裡是澳洲，不要說中文!" 回來後我就跟我房東說這件事情，他還代替那位無理的澳洲人跟我們道歉。她的親切會讓我覺得很舒服，後來慢慢和他聊天就沒有那麼大的壓力.。
>
> …One time I was on a tram with my friend. An Australian passenger scolded us, "This is Australia, don't speak Chinese!" After I came home, I told my landlady about it, and she even apologized to me on behalf of that rude Australian stranger. The landlady's attitude made me feel very comfortable and speaking in English with her was not stressful anymore. (Email exchange with Alice)

Other participants who had had similar unpleasant, offensive, or even threatening experiences were often left feeling small, unwelcome, and excluded from Australian society; however, Alice was able to overcome such hurt feelings, because of her connection with her landlady and the latter's positive response. The bonding and interaction also brought Alice new understanding: she realized that although language was a challenge which takes time and effort to improve, it cannot hinder her from surviving and settling well in Australia. In Alice's case, her church friends and landlady actively accepted Alice into their social life. The acceptance and respect preceded language performance, which thus promoted language use and practice in real social interactions. In addition to language learning, their relationships were long-term. They kept in contact with each other even after Alice graduated and left Melbourne.

5.6.3 Romance

Another area that leads to social participation in the target society and language learning outside university is romance (See Section 2.5.3). As described in Takahashi's study (2013), media discourses often presented a glamorous picture that linked English learning with white, Western males as ideal English teachers and romantic partners. Such social construction influenced the researched Japanese women's language desires, their romantic pursuits, and overseas study experiences. In contrast to Takahashi's findings, the majority of study participants were attracted to romantic partners who could speak their native language more than to monolingual native English speakers. In other words, language remained an important factor in considering a romantic relationship, but the participants valued the benefits to their relationships of speaking the same language more than the benefits to their English learning of dating a native English speaker. For instance, Mark, a master's student of Environmental Management, was in a relationship with a Chinese girl despite the fact that he longed for more English learning.

Mark:	中國同學太多了只是影響到我的學習環境,但是我只能說,跟中國人溝通還是比跟外國人溝通方便。其實我覺得交女朋友的話,我還是沒有辦法跟一個講英文的人,因為我覺得就像在溝通上,理解上不是那麼方便,表達一件事情就打折扣了,變 80%
Mark:	It is true that too many Chinese classmates had an impact on my learning environment, but I can only say that communicating with Chinese is still easier than with foreigners. Actually, I think for a girlfriend, I still can't be with an English speaker because I think in communication and comprehension it's not that easy. The meaning might be reduced to 80 percent

Similarly, Wendy, a PhD student in Science, expected her private romantic space to be a stress-free linguistic zone.

Wendy:	我每天就已經要面對那麼多英文了，如果回家面對我男朋友或老公還要想著英文要怎麼講，我不是累死了，還是一樣會講中文的比較好溝通吧。
Wendy:	I have to face so much English every day. If I go home to my boyfriend or husband and I still have to think how to say things in English, I would be dead tired. With someone who can speak Mandarin, communication would be much better.

Even being more open to potential romantic partners linguistically, Gigi, a master's student of Commerce Marketing, did not think having a romantic relationship with Australian males was possible or an attractive option for her.

Gigi:	沒辦法耶，找不到，呵呵，我不是澳洲人的菜吧，只有遇到搭訕，沒辦法遇到認真的，還有一個我覺得印象很深刻的事，我發現這裡很多是為了身份跟金錢結婚的，因為我聽了好多故事，我覺得有點可怕。
Gigi:	Hah, no way, it didn't happen to me. Heheh. I guess I am not their type. I was flirted with sometimes but nothing serious. Another thing that shocked me was that I found that here many people get married for citizenship and money. I heard of that a lot and I think it's awful.

A genuine romance, like any other social relationship, does not happen according to plan as a result of a one-sided effort; however, one's language desire does play a role in entering into a romantic relationship. For one participant, romantic chemistry, language learning, and social participation happened to coincide. Donna was one of the few who thought that she could only find access to these three aspects by having a white Australian boyfriend; however, instead of dating a monolingual English speaker, Donna found her ideal English teacher and boyfriend in her bilingual Australian-born Taiwanese boyfriend.

Donna arrived in Australia alone in late 2010 for her master's program of Accounting. Studying overseas and experiencing life in a foreign country had long been her dream. Her English learning had started early, attending a children's English cram school, and English had always been her strongest subject at school. She believed native speaker English proficiency was achievable and one of her goals in Australia was to keep improving her English until she reached that level. It turned out that student life in Australia was what she had anticipated except for the fact that most of her classmates were from China and Mandarin was used much more than English. She found herself picking up various dialects of Chinese to build up friendships. Without local students present in her classes, she was actually full of confidence in her speaking and was active in discussions. However, she was also concerned about her lack of English improvement due to little interaction with local students, finding it hard to make Australian friends at university in spite of her very lively, active, and easy-going personality.

It was at a Taiwanese Student Association (TSA) welcome event in early 2011 that I first met Donna. Amongst other things, we chatted about English language learning and Donna told me about another Taiwanese acquaintance she met, who impressed and inspired her deeply with her high level of fluency and native-like Australian accent. Of course, I was curious how that friend had managed to reach the easy conversational proficiency in English that every Taiwanese overseas student longs for and cannot quite reach. It turned out that that girl's secret English language learning tool was her native Australian boyfriend. Donna was so inspired by her friend's success that she also had high hopes for achieving "perfect" English language proficiency through romance. In fact, it did not take long for her dream to come true. At the same TSA event where I met Donna, she also met an Australian-born Taiwanese, who later became her boyfriend and ideal English language learning resource.

Grace: 因為他的英文所以讓他比較有吸引力嗎？

Donna: 我覺得算。不說謊。對，算。因為我愛英文。我有跟他說過，他其實不在意，他也覺得他可以練中文，我可以練英文。

Grace: So his English made him more attractive to you then?

Donna: I think so. Honestly speaking, yes. I agree. Because I love English. I told him this, and he did not mind. He thinks he could practice more Mandarin and I could practice more English.

The boyfriend was benefiting Donna's English learning because the language became part of her daily life. The role of English in Donna's life changed from some use with Chinese classmates at university to living a major portion of her daily life through English.

In contrast to the Japanese women in Takahashi's research (2013), who preferred white native speaker men as their ideal interlocutors and lovers, Donna was appreciative of the fact that her boyfriend was bilingual. His knowledge of both English and Mandarin turned out to be helpful and Donna felt it constituted an additional bonus.

Grace: 所以妳覺得他扮演了一個英文老師的角色嗎?

Donna: 是，因為跟他溝通，都是生活上的事，我覺得這會讓我比較有印象，可能我們一起常常做什麼事，他跟我說這個字要怎麼講，我會比較有印象，那總比自己翻開書在那邊一直背的好，我覺得那有情境，所以我會記住，會比自己唸的來的效果好。我學到比較多他們年輕人的用語，可能書上沒有學過的東西。

Grace: So you think he is like your English teacher?

Donna: Yes. Because it is everyday life that we communicate about and I think that helps me to memorize. When we do things together, he tells me how to say certain words, and I memorize them better. It's much more efficient than memorizing words from books by myself. The actual situations help me to remember and have better learning results than studying on my own. I also learned many young people's expressions, which are not written in books.

Her boyfriend also served as a bridge for Donna to join a social network, the TSA, which most of the other research participants chose not to join. The reasons they were not interested in joining the activities held by TSA included time constraints due to heavy study loads and ambivalent feelings about meeting even more Mandarin speakers. However, contrary to expectation, the TSA at Donna's university consisted mostly of Australian-born Taiwanese and Taiwanese who had migrated to Australia at a young age. To a few participants who also studied in Donna's university, this fact seemed to form an obstacle rather than an attraction. It was not only the different experiences of growing up but also the pressure from the discrepancy in English proficiency that made them assume it would be hard and stressful to connect. Therefore, they often stopped joining activities after visiting once or twice. However, for Donna, she saw this situation as an exceptional opportunity for her to learn English. Although she did feel stressed initially interacting with other TSA members, as the relationship with her boyfriend developed and her circle of friends expanded via her boyfriend she was able to put away any embarrassment, conquer her fear, and gradually make friends with other members of the TSA.

Donna: 我覺得應該我是比較幸運吧，因為有這樣子的，算是橋樑吧。像他朋友講話，一開始我真的聽不懂，太快，他們一開始都跟我講英文，我都回中文，他們講太快，我知道他在講什麼，但是我沒辦法同步的回答，所以我就用中文回答，我不喜歡做沒把握的事，如果妳講的又慢，到時候又講錯，就還是會選擇講中文比較保險一點。可是到現在我已經八九成，我聽得懂了，我覺得還是有差，聽習慣了，久了，嗯。所以說我來，如果沒有認識他的話，我想我可能去一次就不想再去。

Donna: I consider myself luckier because I have such a… bridge. I guess. Like I couldn't understand what his friends were saying at first. They talked too fast, speaking to me in English and I would reply in Mandarin. I

> knew what they were talking about, but I couldn't keep up the pace to reply, so I chose to speak Mandarin. I don't like to do things I don't feel confident about. If I spoke slowly and with mistakes, I would prefer speaking Mandarin. Just to be safe. But now I can handle eighty to ninety percent of the conversations. My listening is better. I think that's the difference. I'm very used to it now, after a while. Yes. So I guess if I hadn't met my boyfriend, I might have stopped joining them after the first time.

Because of this connection with her boyfriend and the TSA, Donna was living her overseas study dream, experiencing what she had been expecting, such as partying, watching ball games, going to the beach, and enjoying many fun activities. Her original plan was to obtain a master's degree and an Accounting certificate, and to go back to Taiwan to work. However, she eventually decided to stay in Australia. In late 2013, Donna graduated with her master's degree and soon applied for Australian permanent residency. I visited her at her boyfriend's parents' restaurant where she was working happily while waiting for her visa. The desire for language learning was proven to be linked with migration desires in Takahashi's study (2006). As described above, Donna's language desire propelled her to start a relationship with an "ideal" speaker. She was struggling with her identity while encountering communication difficulties with other speakers. However, her boyfriend served as a bridge for her to constantly access this community and to overcome language hurdles. This bilingual relationship served as a way into language learning, into social participation in the second language community, and into settlement in Australia.

As Norton (2000) points out, two components contribute to mastering a second language: first, learning the language in terms of its grammatical and lexical properties; and second, obtaining access to social interactions in the language. Since the participants had studied English at school in Taiwan, they were longing for the latter to be fulfilled in overseas study. However, only a few participants were lucky enough to have such encounters and to be included in social interactions. The three cases presented here, of important bridges found through church, accommodation, and romance, share some commonalities. First, an important person (or people) welcomed and accepted the participants with a friendly and respectful attitude. Second, the participants' language proficiency was not used as a pretext to keep them out; instead, their second language learner identity was recognized in the way that they were encouraged to speak and they were heard. Last but not least, the relationship was personal, high-quality, mutual, frequent, and long-term, which led to wider local social networks and participation, and promoted language learning in real-life situations. These features contributed to a sense of connectedness and belonging as well as language development and confidence.

Those who never had the luck to have such a bridge during their study did not enjoy and value their overseas experience as highly as those who did. The value of the investment in overseas study was rated low. As Gigi, a master's student in Marketing said, "這個投資不成比例啊!" [The investment (and what I experienced) is disproportionate!] These participants were likely to go back directly to Taiwan with a strong feeling of still being in a peripheral position in the host country, never touching the core of Australian culture nor connecting to Australians. As Toby, a postgraduate student of Commerce, put it, "很表淺" [very shallow]. Many participants showed their disappointment in an indirect manner, saying, "我不會推薦我認識的朋友來" [I won't recommend my friends to come]. Participants usually kept the unsatisfying side of overseas study to themselves, because the stories people wanted to hear were the satisfying and glamorous ones, and because the responsibility for the outcome of overseas study was often solely placed on students themselves in terms of personal achievement. However, what was actually offered to the participants was a peripheral position; those who were able to have a bridge and connect to a local network in academia and social life just seemed to be luckier.

5.7 Summary and discussion

In this chapter, I have presented the participants' study trajectories in Australia after I explored their language desire and choices. The participants invested in overseas study for symbolic and cultural capital including overseas degrees, language proficiency, and international experiences. Such goals affect their desire to interact with English speakers rather than Chinese speakers. Entering a Taiwanese community was seen as working against their English language learning. Consequently, many participants deliberately chose to avoid fellow Taiwanese. This finding serves as counter-evidence to a prevalent misconception that international students, especially Asian students, tend to “stick together” and “do not want to mix with local students”, as noted in Chalmers and Volet (1997, p. 92, see also Kell and Vogl, 2006). Overseas students’ high levels of motivation to interact with English speakers can be easily overlooked, especially when the reality of multilingualism the participants encountered in Australia seemed to offer the participants quite the opposite to what they had expected linguistically.

One point has to be made before further discussion continues. As the analysis is based on interview data of 30 participants who had many differences – as is inevitable given that they were studying in different disciplines in ten different universities in four different states – the focus of the analysis is on shared linguistic experiences and salient themes occurring repeatedly in participants’ narratives rather than on the different characteristics of individuals. This choice reflects the orientation of ethnographic research, as described in Watson-Gegeo (1988). This is not to suggest that individual differences are not important; instead, when an individual participant’s accounts and experiences are reported, the individual is usually treated as representative of the participants. This is particularly the case in Section 5.4 on coursework participants’ experiences in classroom and group work. Naturally, each class or study group has different combinations of people and different activities which create different dynamics and outcomes; what is presented in Section 5.4 is the most common experiences stated by the coursework participants. The finding is not used to generalize and homogenize participants’ experiences in Australian universities but to provide “a description and an interpretive-explanatory account of what people do in a setting, the outcome of their interactions, and the way they understand what they are doing” (Watson-Gegeo, 1988, p. 576) . In other words, the main interest of the study is to explore how participants interpret their interactions with others and how language is involved in these meaning constructions. This is the rationale behind the presentation adopted in Section 5.4 and elsewhere.

Despite the agency the participants utilized to improve their language skills by socializing with native English speakers, learning did not necessarily happen in the communities of practice. As Lantolf and Pavlenko state (2001), “agency is never a ‘property’ of a particular individual” but “a relationship that is constantly co-constructed and renegotiated with those around the individual and with the society at large” (p. 148). In other words, agency is contextual. Inaccessibility of the desired interlocutors and resources in their communities of practice should be recognized and examined beyond focusing on language learners only.

As much as participants’ desire to interact with English speakers by avoiding making Taiwanese friends, the presence of large numbers of Chinese classmates, with whom the participants share the same first language, provides a linguistic environment that conflicts with the participants’ interests and desires. “太多中國人” [Too many Chinese] is the most salient theme across participants’ accounts, and this is the expression the participants unanimously used to sum up their study experience in Australian universities, especially in respect of their language use. Participants’ interactions with their numerous Chinese international student peers could easily be misinterpreted as if the participants intended to “stick together” with their co-ethnics, preferring to speak in their own language, and not wanting to step out of their comfort zone. However, this research complicates this facile explanation and adds nuances to the picture of Taiwanese students’ meeting large numbers of Chinese students present in Australian universities, which has not been explored in the literature.

As presented in Section 5.3.1 meeting Chinese students from China was new and unexpected to a majority of the participants. Being able to communicate in the common language, Mandarin, carries advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, the use of Mandarin actually made their studies more efficient and facilitated their academic performance. At the same time, these benefits often had an emotional downside, with the participants worrying about their (lack of) English improvement especially in speaking. Misunderstandings often occurred when one party wanted to use English and the other wanted to use Mandarin at university and in various occasions. Uncomfortable interactions arose when personal views were targeted at the participants about Taiwan’s political stance and the identity of being Taiwanese. However, positive interactions took place when they helped each other in their study, appreciated each other’s strength, and started to see individuals’ characteristics rather than a homogeneous stereotype. Some participants ended up considering meeting Chinese students an important part of their international experience. Other participants preferred to avoid Chinese students as much as possible and prioritized interactions with local students and exposure to the English language.

Meeting other international students and building up friendships using English was considered the most rewarding and memorable experience. With both groups being international students and second language learners of English, their similar motivations and mutual interest in making friends facilitated communication and rapport building. On the contrary, interactions with local students were not as easy as expected. Even if physically close, local students still seemed socially distant. The participants were not welcomed, which manifested in subtle ways in class participation and group work, such as sitting separately, talking without being listened to or responded to, and not included in group cooperation. Such hidden exclusions compelled the participants to remain in a peripheral place in university settings, where English was dominant and the participants' second language learner identity and language proficiency often took the blame. Failing to gain access into the communities of the local students, also led to less involvement in social participation operating in English outside university. Therefore, English tended to remain in the public domain and Mandarin in the private domain for most of the participants.

Limited interactions between international students and local students have been reported in many Australian studies (e.g., Benzie, 2010; Rosenthal et al., 2006; Sawir et al., 2008; Yates & Wahid, 2013) (see Section 2.3). This present research confirms findings in these studies. Here, it becomes necessary to consider the effect of representation of international students' experiences. Sometimes findings such as these present participants in a negative light as powerless and disillusioned in initiating learning opportunities during their study. From there, the discussion could go on to examine, for example, participants' characteristics, their cultural backgrounds, and their strategies. Studies taking a culturalist approach are examples of this line of enquiry. By contrast, there are also studies highlighting all the strategies or capabilities of international students and showcasing their agency and resilience. As discussed in Section 2.2.1, these two perspectives tend to create either negative or positive images of international students. This research hopes to do the research participants justice by recognizing their perspectives and balancing the presentation between the exclusionary experiences they reported and the agency they claimed. At the same time the research recognizes the limitation and imperfection of representation built upon words. Nevertheless and more importantly, this research based on a social perspective extends existing findings by shifting attention to the participants' social context and the particular social constructions that impact their experiences.

In order to do so, one aspect has to be included in discussing the issue of separation between the research participants and local students: the practices participants were engaged in and whether the practices were constructive and effective to generate positive interactions between international students and local students. Overlooking this important aspect of practice can narrowly attribute the separation of local students and international students exclusively to characteristics of the students. A study by Cruickshank, Chen, and Warren (2012) shows that with careful planning and designing, international students can be given an equal footing and both cohorts of students are able to learn from each other. Section 5.4 shows that constructive practices which can serve as a bridge between local and intentional students were not evident in the accounts of the research participants. There were cases where some participants' teachers asked local students to sit together or work on a project with international students. However, strategies to assist their interaction afterward were not present. Consequently participants' experiences working with local students were often limited and unsatisfying. Some suggestions have been made by researchers such as Sawir et al. (2008), and Ryan and Viete (2009) that stress the importance of mutual respect so that interaction and learning are not only one way, and that it is not only international students who have to make efforts to adapt but also university staff, teachers, and students all have to cultivate a sense of mutuality.

As for the PhD participants, their experience was specific to the structure of Australian PhD programs, which emphasize independent research and autonomy. Institutional practices of community-building were by contrast largely missing. The finding is in line with several Australian studies (Benzie, 2010; Cotterall, 2011, 2013; Fotovatian, 2012). Although the level of isolation can vary due to different study disciplines as well as different practices of university departments, PhD projects carry an "isolated character" which makes expanding one's social network quite difficult, as noted by Sawir et al (2008, p. 23). This problem is reflected in the present research findings as well. Participants had only a small and low density network, which not only impacted their academic socialization and academic identity construction but also their English language learning. Although participants were engaged in English language practice through their study, they were particularly concerned about their English speaking skills. This does not mean that the participants have low speaking proficiency, but reveals that the structure of the PhD programs seems to pose more challenges for participants to keep advancing their English speaking proficiency.

In responding to the situation of lacking interactions and English speaking opportunities, some participants actively sought opportunities to work part-time at university or join activities outside university in order to increase their participation and their opportunities of speaking English; however, opportunities were not available to every participant. In addition, participants were often constrained by time pressure from their PhD tasks, and by financial constraints due to the high cost of living in Australia.

One point worth mentioning is that this display of agency has not been shown as much in the section about postgraduate coursework participants. This is because, first, master's participants generally have a relatively shorter stay in Australia. Depending on their course length, a typical coursework program usually ranges from one year to two years. By contrast, PhD participants usually stay for three and a half or four years. Second, postgraduate coursework participants' semesters were quite compact with classes, assignments, and examinations (see Chapter Six where academic writing is discussed for further detail). Therefore, the master's participants' narratives were often filled with expressions that they wished they could do more to improve their English but were confined by the limited time they had.

The need to continue to improve English speaking skills is easy to be neglected in discussing PhD international students, who are often considered already equipped with an advanced level of English. As shown in a study by Y.-J. Chang and Kanno (2010) the level of English language competence required for a candidature varies not only across disciplines but also sub-disciplines. In addition, even within the same disciplinary community, there can be a discrepancy between perceived linguistic demands and a student's linguistic needs (Y.-J. Chang & Kanno, 2010). This is evident in the cases where some PhD participants felt inadequate when they were not able to effortlessly chat with their PhD colleagues about all kinds of topics, despite the fact that the participants could perform well in their disciplines. Another reason for PhD participants' linguistic needs to be easily overlooked and not obtaining enough support is that trainings to fit their needs at their level seem not to be easily found. The situation then often depends on how supervisors think and respond to it such as in the instances where some participants' supervisors could appreciate the participants' effort as a second language learner and patiently worked on improving their academic writing skills in English.

The structure of PhD programs makes supervisor-supervisee relationships particularly significant. The PhD participants depended mostly on their own endeavors, with an emphasis on the supervisor-supervisee relationship. The supervisor-supervisee relationship is always one that is embedded in "structurally asymmetrical" power relationships (Green, 2005, p.154). This makes ineffective supervisory practices difficult to reveal and improve, as has also be found in other research (see Section 2.4.3). This is evident in a case where the participant was so concerned about the power relations that she asked me to keep her experience completely confidential. Luckily, most PhD participants considered that they worked well with their supervisors. The effective supervisory practices that these PhD participants experienced included that their supervisors' availability was well communicated and supervisors gave timely feedback as well as constructive comments on their thesis writing. In addition, supervisors' encouragement and genuine care significantly supported the PhD participants in their challenging journeys. Research into PhD supervision has not been progressing rapidly due to the diversity of supervision as well as the sensitive power relations involved. The research findings thus make a contribution to bringing in PhD students' voices as well as in highlighting the practices which are highly valued.

The next section (Section 5.6) probed into participants' language use and settlement experiences outside university. Three domains were analyzed, namely, church, accommodation, and romance, as these areas were identified to provide chances for community participation and language use. Participants' desire to improve their English language skills often intertwined with their decisions on which church to attend, which type of accommodation to seek out, and which type of partner to develop a romantic relationship with. However, oftentimes their other needs were placed above their language desire: there were also practical constraints limiting their agency. In only a small number of cases were participants lucky enough to find a community or a person to connect with. These people served as bridge for them to connect to an English-speaking network as well as local Australian life. The connection had a positive impact on their English skills, sense of belonging, and level of satisfaction regarding their temporary settlement experience. I now discuss the three domains respectively.

It is especially noteworthy that as many as one third of the participants mentioned going to church as a part of their social life outside university in contrast to the low rate of Christianity in Taiwan. Choosing which church to attend often involved weighing among personal faith, community support, and language practice. Some participants chose to attend Taiwanese church for easier access to community; while others chose to go to English-language church as a way of seeking more opportunities to practice English. There was one case where all three aspects fortunately coincided for a participant. It was in a multilingual church the participant built up her faith, found her community support, and improved her English. This finding is in line with Han's study of a Chinese migrant couple who found their way of integrating into Canada through a Mandarin-English bilingual Christian church (Han, 2007, 2009, 2011). Both cases serve as examples that inclusive ideologies and practices benefit language learning. Moreover, this finding supports Han's argument that multilingualism can be more operational and accessible, as evident in the instance that the participant benefitted from church members who could switch between Taiwanese, Mandarin, and English, and were able to help the participant to express herself in English. When the idea of immersing in an English-only environment has prevalently been assumed as the best way to master a language since the 1970s (Walker & Tedick, 2000), practices which adopt multilingualism to open up spaces for language learning and participation should also be taken into consideration in respect of the language learning of international students.

Following the analysis of language learning through going to church, another social domain crucial to participants was examined: participants' accommodation. A small number of participants stayed in student dormitories, where they found drinking and partying to be common. Some participants felt that drinking was a way to make friends with other students; while other participants felt uncomfortable about drinking. Different living habits also affect their interaction with their roommates. Most of the participants were staying in private accommodation, but not many could easily exercise their autonomy to create an ideal environment for language use and social participation. In Takahashi's study (2013), research participants expected a temporary home shared with local Australians to provide ideal English use opportunities but their decision was often intersected with changings needs and conditions. Showing a different aspect, this research presents the challenges of looking for an ideal accommodation due to the low supply of university student accommodation, high rental costs, and disadvantages of students' low economic status in the rental market. In addition, participants' vulnerability of being a tenant as an international student was also evident. The current practices of arranging accommodation make those who had a satisfying experience of living accompanied by language learning opportunities through interacting with local Australians stand out as particularly fortunate.

The final domain analyzed was romance in which language was also weighed. Different from Takahashi's finding (2013) that her female participants carried a discursively constructed idea that local Australian men were desirable as romantic partners as well as ideal English teachers, this research shows a different picture. Considering the impact of communication on the quality of a relationship, most of the participants were attracted to romantic partners who could also speak their native language rather than to monolingual English speakers. In fact, there was only one instance where a participant expressed longing for a monolingual Australian boyfriend. However, the participant later found her romantic partner as well as her English teacher in a bilingual Australian-born Taiwanese man. The relationship also helped the participant extend her social network and participation in Australia. This instance again shows that language learners can benefit from relationships that operate multilingually.

In sum, this chapter has covered many aspects of participants' experiences in Australia, highlighting the current linguistic environment and the practices which are (in)effective or (un)conducive to their language learning and social participation. This chapter also presented participants' agency in improving their language skills and extending their social network, at the same time showing the limitation and obstacles to their agency. Moreover, this chapter proposes inclusive ideologies and practices, which adopt not only monolingualism but also multilingualism to facilitate multilingual international students' language learning.

Chapter Six: Academic writing feedback

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter Five, I presented participants' social participation and language use inside and outside university. This chapter focuses on participants' participation in academic writing practice, which often operates quietly and invisibly despite the fact that academic writing plays a significant role in academic pursuits.

Academic writing undoubtedly dominated the academic life of my participants as well as translating into academic performance. However, the conventions of what constitutes good writing vary among languages and education systems. These differences can work to the disadvantage of learners who may not understand them or may not approve of them. As Kaplan (1966) suggested, logic, rhetoric, and thought sequence are not universal, but rather are rooted in culture, and vary from culture to culture, and even from time to time within a culture. Since Kaplan (1966) initiated contrastive rhetoric research three decades ago, rhetorical patterns and differences of written texts have been explored and studied among various languages (Connor, 1996; Cortazzi & Jin, 1997; Kaplan, 1966; Kubota & Lehner, 2004; Lea & Street, 2000; Loi & Evans, 2010; Matalene, 1985; Xing, Wang, & Spencer, 2008). Although contrastive rhetoric studies were intended to facilitate second language pedagogy, they have also had a negative influence as they have served to spread static binaries between English and other languages, implicitly reinforcing English as superior, and seeing students as culturally lacking and handicapped by the patterns of their L1 (Kubota & Lehner, 2004). Kubota and Lehner (2004) thus called for a critical contrastive rhetoric as an alternative conceptual framework by incorporating poststructuralist, postcolonial, and postmodern critiques of language and culture. I am responding to the call of these researchers by further examining in depth the discourses and power relations the participants were facing (see Section 2.3.3).

In this chapter, I first examine the challenges the participants faced in their academic writing. By incorporating critical discourse analysis and contrastive rhetoric, I discuss what ideologies of language and learning are implicit in the practices of academic writing, and how the participants responded to them. Second, I present the factors besides language proficiency that affect participants' writing process and performance. Third, I probe into why the participants' English academic writing did not improve as much as they expected and, indeed, as it would be reasonable to expect given the amount of academic writing they undertook. I particularly focus on the academic writing support they received (or did not receive) and finally look at the feedback they obtained from their teachers. Throughout, I argue that academic genre is not neutral but politically and socially situated, and that academic writing performance, as a social practice, goes beyond L2 language proficiency.

6.2 Academic writing as situated practice

Writing assignments or theses dominated the academic life of my participants. Many of the postgraduate participants in particular portrayed their university life in Australia in a very succinct way as consisting of going to classes, studying, and writing essays, writing essays, and writing essays. Kimberly, for instance, said, "在澳洲上課，就好像老師教東西可能只有一兩分，可是卻要求我們做到十分的報告" [I feel the learning in Australian higher education is like the teachers teach you 10 percent to 20 percent in class and expect you to write a 100 percent assignment]. Daniel described the intensity of assignments by saying, "我們作業好多，一個接一個，下一周的東西一交完，馬上就回到家裏，又開始作下一個" [We have so many assignments, one after another. I handed in one assignment, went back home, and started writing another assignment right away].

Assignments constituted a large part of participants' academic assessment, a fact that shocked and stressed many of them as well as dominating their study experience. On average, they took three to four subjects in one semester and were required to hand in eight to twelve assignments, producing thousands and thousands of words. However, despite so much effort put into written tasks, be it assignments, essays, or theses, they did not consider that their English academic writing was improving in a way that was commensurate with their practice.

Academic writing thus emerged as a key concern for the participants during Phase One interviews. Accordingly, Phase Two data collection and interviews focused on this issue. As explained in Section 3.3, for this phase of the study and in order to collect in-depth data about academic writing, I interviewed 17 students, aged from 21 to 33. Sixteen of them were master's students and one was an undergraduate. They had been in Australia from between six months to three years. No academic writing data were collected from PhD students because of confidentiality concerns. However, I include their opinions as secondary participants.

I first outline some challenges that the participants encountered in writing English academic essays. I also point out the bias of contrastive rhetoric studies in explaining students' writing based on a binary comparison. Following this, I explore how the linguistic differences are reduced largely to stereotypes.

6.2.1 Academic writing challenges

Many participants became aware of different expectations between their L1, Mandarin and L2, English, when they realized that their writing approach was devalued. Firstly, some participants noticed that they were expected to present their argument at the beginning of an essay. Natasha talked about a conflict she sensed in her writing processes:

Natasha: 英文學術寫作一開始就要決定要 argue 什麼，先把結果講出來，對我來講有點倒過來的感覺，中文是慢慢推演到結論。…記得剛來交東西給老師，他看不懂，但如果是中文，我想讀者是可以理解的。

Natasha: For English academic writing you have to decide what you are going to argue at the beginning by giving the thesis statement first. To me, it feels just like upside down. In Mandarin, we present the argument and move toward the thesis statement….I remember when I first came I gave a draft

> to my teacher and he couldn't understand. But I think if it was a Chinese reader, they would be able to comprehend.

Contrastive rhetoric studies explain that the difference lies in reasoning approaches: English writing adopts a deductive style and Chinese writing adopts an inductive style. Cortazzi & Jin (1997) suggest that English papers written in British or American style tends to be deductive, stating the main idea first and proceeding with background information and supporting arguments. By contrast, in Chinese rhetoric it is common to give background first to show why the topic is important and to move gradually to prepare readers to accept the main idea by giving reasons before results (because…so….) or causes before effects. This inductive way of delivering, which is more common in Mandarin, has previously been identified as a problem in the English academic writing of Chinese speakers. Connor (1996), for instance, found that Chinese students of ESL placed the thesis statement later than an Anglophone teacher expected and were therefore misjudged as inefficient or incoherent writers.

Although the comparison seems to provide an explanation for Natasha's conflict in her writing processes, one problem is that the focus is misplaced on language while the focus ought to be placed on academic writing conventions. Wang (1994) has pointed out that in Chinese writing the main idea, or thesis statement, can come at the beginning or the end of a paper. Furthermore, in Shi's (2002) study of contemporary Chinese academic writing, the researcher found that mainland Chinese scholars who were educated in the United States tended to use Anglo-American conventions of academic writing in their published papers in both English and Chinese. The study demonstrates that writing style is not internally fixed in a language and culture. The key point is whether international students are well acquainted with the conventions of English academic writing.

Secondly, some participants were advised by their Australian teachers that their writing lacks transitions, which are essential to form a coherent and cohesive piece. Donna expressed her confusion:

Donna: 我都已經寫的很完整了，但老師卻覺得每一段沒有連接，沒有一再的呼應題目。

Donna: I believe I have written a complete piece but the teacher still thinks I lack transitions between paragraphs and cohesion to the topic.

From the perspective of contrastive rhetoric studies, Connor (1996) suggested that English writing utilizes explicit discourse markers to indicate relations between sentences and paragraphs. These explicit logical words or phrases help readers make the connection between what has been presented and what they can expect next. By contrast, in Chinese writing coherence is realized in synthetic meaning and internal logic of the content rather than in explicit form. The beauty of good writing depends on delicacy and subtlety, using various indirect techniques to draw readers' interest, not straightforwardness (X. Wang, 1994).

Although this comparison of English and Chinese seems clear-cut and obvious at first glance, it is also problematic because it ignores genres and contexts of writing. If this comparison of the differences between the two languages referred to scientific writing, it could be pointed out that "delicacy and subtlety" are not expected or valued in Chinese scientific writing either. On the other hand, if this referred to poetry and the arts, "explicit discourse markers" would not be valued highly in an English poem either. Therefore, instead of attributing the students' writing performance to their L1 interference, the crux should be whether the student understands what is expected to constitute cohesion in English in the genre of their study subject.

Thirdly, some participants observed that they were expected to develop an English paragraph from no more than one main point. Natasha observed this difference in developing paragraphs.

Natasha: 中文可以在一個段落呈現很多個點，英文一段只能一個重點，承接上面。

Natasha: In Mandarin we can present multiple ideas in one paragraph; however, in English, only one point in one paragraph and they have to continue developing the point.

Similarly, Mark, who spent most of his time writing assignments for his master's program, also sensed this difference.

Mark: 我覺得是我們描述事情的方式是跟他們不一樣的…像我們的寫作，譬如一整個段落，可能圍繞著某一個重點，但是我們永遠都不會把那個重點寫出來，除非，我們用「開門見山法」。這是一個特別的方式才會這麼做，一般來講不會這樣，但是像他們的寫作就會這樣。

Mark: I think we have different ways of describing things. Take writing for example, if we write a paragraph on a particular point, we write around it but not directly state it, except when we adopt the framework "The door opens on a view of mountains" [Chinese idiom, meaning straight to the point, which is one of the writing patterns commonly taught in school]. That framework is used for some purposes, but generally we don't do that. However, that's how they [Westerners] write.

The pioneer of contrastive rhetoric studies, Kaplan (1966), suggested that Anglo-European essays follow a linear development, whereas Oriental writing such as Chinese tends to adopt indirect development; thus paragraphs would be "turning and turning in a widening gyre" (p. 10). The gyres, or circles, surround a topic and show it from different perspectives, but the topic is not addressed directly. This theory of contrastive rhetoric seems to accord with Mark's comment; however, it presents a picture that is partial and over-simplified. It is evident in Mark's description that Chinese writing adopts a direct pattern. The straight-to-the-point pattern is one of the commonly taught models in schools for students to practice Chinese writing. However, contrastive rhetoric studies seem to ignore the different patterns that Chinese writing adopts for different purposes. Again, the real problem should be whether the student knows which pattern and style they are expected to deliver in their writing for their study discipline.

In short, the linguistic differences in writing are not examined in a systematic way by contrastive rhetoric studies. The diversity of language conventions, genres, and styles has not been taken into consideration; therefore, to simply attribute students' writing performance to the internal logic of their L1 and culture becomes a partial and biased judgment.

6.2.2 Facing binary stereotypes of rhetoric

Contrastive rhetoric studies, however, have been widely applied in teaching and academic writing in order to facilitate second language learners' English writing. Unfortunately, the linguistic differences are largely reduced to a binary and stereotypical impression, where English is explicitly depicted as linear, direct, and logical whereas other languages, especially Asian languages, are circular, digressive, or even non-logical as I have described in Section 6.2.1. Such linguistic disparity has been further conveyed with a hidden political ideology that valorizes English style over students' L1. Some participants encountered binary stereotypes of rhetoric discursively constructed in various areas. Barbara explained how this imposition was placed on her in writing instruction and her response to it.

Barbara: 他們的思考跟我們不一樣，對，我們 [語言學校]老師就說過，亞洲學生的思考是這個樣子(手做螺旋狀)，對，而他們是(手做直線狀) 然後後來我寫文章就這樣子，我覺得真的是很白痴的的寫法，老師說不要這樣(手做螺旋狀)，要這樣子(手做直線狀)，我就喔，好，不然過不了。

Barbara: Their way of thinking is different from ours. Yes. My teacher from [the university affiliated language centre] said, "Asian students think like this (moving an index finger in a circular motion), however they are (moving an index finger in a linear motion). So I have to write papers like this (indicating linear motion), which I consider a very idiotic way of writing, to be honest. However, the teacher said, "don't do this (indicating circular motion), do this (indicating linear motion)", so I had no choice but to accept it if I wanted to pass.

Efforts to help L2 learners develop their own voice and their own style reflecting their identity through the medium of L2 are not evident in my data. Instead, the process of learning is narrowly focused on how to conform to highly generalized conventions. Barbara had to conform to a generic English style that her teacher expected; otherwise, she would risk being failed. As such, no real learning has taken place but the student is simply (making a show of) submitting to power.

In another area Mark sensed the difference in how he delivered narratives compared with his Anglophone classmate. He used humor to assert his learner agency and his positive relationship with his L1 identity.

Mark: …然後我就跟那個美國同學開玩笑說：我們英文老師說，你們西方人就是 stupid! 他就說我們為什麼不能夠就是告訴他一個很簡單的答案，為什麼我們就是不願意講那個答案?我說我們已經在回答了,只是因為你們 stupid!!你們每次都要我們 exactly 講出那個字，你才懂，那不是 stupid 嗎?我們講一整句話，全部的內容就是告訴你這答案，你還是不懂...。但是他們沒辦法了解，因為他們對答案的預期不一樣。

Mark: …I joked with my American classmate, mocking them as stupid! He then asked why we just don't want to give them a straight simple answer. I told him we were already answering you, but you were just too stupid to understand! [I said] "You always want to hear us say the exact words so that you could understand. Isn't that stupid? The answer is already there in the content of the sentence; but you still don't understand..." They cannot comprehend because it's different from what they expect.

Nevertheless, few of the participants revealed such confidence and assurance. Some participants started to doubt their cognitive and logical abilities and came to believe that English is more logical and advanced. As David, a linguistics postgraduate student, said, “我們的學生的確缺乏獨立思考” [our students indeed lack critical thinking skills]. Johnson, a PhD student in Social Science, described how he considered English more scientific than Mandarin.

Johnson: 我覺得以我的領域來講，我覺得中文是一個優美的語言，文學的部分，詩詞，或者散文，中文可以把一些場景，或者是心情描述得很好。但是在科學性的文章裏，我常常覺得中文不是那麼有辦法表達的確切。

Johnson: For my study area, I think Mandarin is a beautiful language. Like literature, poem, or prose, Mandarin can describe the contexts and the emotions very well. However, for scientific articles I think Mandarin is not capable of precise expression.

For a few participants like Johnson who had received their higher education in Taiwan using mostly English textbooks and had had substantial exposure to English in their professional area, the discourse of English as the international academic language has been internalized to form their “subjugated identities” in Kubota and Lehner’s terms (2004, p. 19). Another participant, Emma, a postgraduate student in Cultural Studies with her first degree in Taiwanese literature, said to me: “我知道這很難令人相信，但是，真的，中國文化幾千年來並沒有發展出論說的模式。” [I know it’s hard to believe, but it’s true that Chinese culture has not developed a model of argumentation in the past thousands of years.] Kubota and Lehner argue that language and the dominant English academic genre play an important role in the process of subjugation:

> Some ESL student writers believe that English is more logical or advanced than their native language… Critical examination of the connection between cross-cultural writing and discourses of dominant English academic genre can elucidate how linguistic and cultural relations of power influence not only language change as seen in shifts in preferred rhetorical structures for certain genres but also bilingual writers’ identities as writers and their perceptions of L1 and L2 rhetoric. (2004, p. 19)

The participants' experiences demonstrate that academic writing is far from neutral but rather a politically and socially situated practice (Lea & Street, 2000). The thinking of contractive rhetoric studies mainly focuses on persuading learners into adapting to L2 conventions rather than empowering learners to use the L2. Furthermore, the discourse of English as the norm is discursively constructed and empowered by the authority of educational institutions and the Englishized academic genre. Instead of simply learning a language shift in a study area, language learners are actually facing much more complicated power relations, within which they learn how they are evaluated; participants responded to the imposition in their own way, and evolved an understanding and a relationship with their L1, L2, and their identities.

6.3 Beyond rhetorical differences

In Section 6.2 I have pointed out participants' writing challenges; I have also discussed the binary and stereotyping fashion that contrastive rhetoric studies have created. However, to attribute the difficulties in academic writing to language only would be too reductive. For overseas students, as newcomers entering into a community, the role of mediator in cultural knowledge and professional knowledge in different contexts, the desire to display their identity, and the uncertainty of how others position them all affect their writing performance. In addition, local teachers, as educators having the superior ground in respect of academic content, in fact have different attitudes and preferences toward language usage, which also influence how students' writing will be evaluated and advised. These influential factors are presented in this section, supporting my argument that academic writing goes beyond language proficiency and that academic writing is far from neutral and transparent but a politically and socially situated practice.

6.3.1 Being a mediator of cultural knowledge

To begin with, overseas students have a role as mediator of cultural knowledge in the setting of international education. Student writers have to assume an imaginary reader in their mind during the process of writing so that they can decide what to include, how to structure ideas, how much detail and explanation should be offered, what example would be easily understood, and many other decisions based on imagining what their intended readers would already know and understand. This process involves a certain level of understanding with regard to the host culture, and to the perceptions held by people in the host culture, which again indicates that writing is a context-situated practice. Participant Natasha’s narrative serves as a good example.

Natasha: 要解釋比較多，研究主題在澳洲和台灣，不一樣是哪裡不一樣，是因為什麼不一樣，要講的很具體 譬如我跟他說動物收容所的地點，是大部份人覺得遠的地方，不方便去，像垃圾處理場，或天橋下，他問我有多遠，我說可能要二、三十公里，他就覺得很近，對遠近的感覺不一樣，我就得跟他解釋，對我們居住的環境來說遠近的感覺不一樣

Natasha: I have to give extended explanations, like how my research topic is different in Taiwan and Australia, what are the differences, and what causes the differences. Take animal shelters in Taiwan [her research topic] for example. I described the location was often too far and inconvenient for people to go, like a dump, or under a bridge. He [the supervisor] asked me how far it might be. I said maybe twenty to thirty kilometres. He thinks that is rather close. The perception of distance is different. I had to explain to him our living environment gives us a different perception

McCagg (1996) suggested that as long as cultural and linguistic knowledge is mutually shared by the reader and the writer, the texts can be well understood without extra cognitive effort. However, when Anglophone readers are confronted with unfamiliar foreign terms and contextual knowledge, the power relations between institutions and students as well as teachers and learners work in such a way that the extra effort required to fill in the gaps of cultural knowledge falls inevitably and exclusively to the students.

6.3.2 Being a mediator of professional knowledge

It is not only cultural knowledge but also professional knowledge for which the responsibility of being a mediator is borne exclusively by students. Chloe, a postgraduate student of Project Management, endeavored in every assignment to look up terminology, search for literature, and learn the language used by others in her field. She described her dilemma and the effort she had to expend in writing assignments.

Chloe: 專業知道的字彙，例如要講採購流程，合約用字，譬如：徵召廠商，公開招標，知道中文，但不知道英文有沒有這些類似的流程，如果有是哪些專業用字，也沒辦法問老師，老師也不懂你要講什麼，也不知道老師會想看的是台灣的方式或是澳洲的方式，要就在報告中特別去闡述台灣的方式，然後告訴老師兩地的比較，然後自己的看法如何，會非常冗長。

Chloe: I know the professional terms, for example, for a purchasing contract in Mandarin. However, what I don't know is whether there is equivalent terminology in English and an equivalent process in Australia. I couldn't ask teachers for they would have no idea what I was asking. Therefore, I have to search the whole world to find out the terminology and vocabulary for me to describe the Taiwan context, compare that of Taiwan and Australia, and offer my own opinion. It is always very laborious and lengthy.

Duff (2007) indicated a potential mismatch between local teachers, who have expertise, seniority, and native speaker status, and overseas students, who have different life experience and may have different or well-informed perspectives on issues related to their country of origin. Similarly, the extra effort required to fill in the gaps of professional knowledge again falls inevitably and exclusively to students

6.3.3 Teachers' individual preference on language usage and writing style

In addition to having a responsibility to act as a mediator of cultural knowledge as well as professional knowledge, participants faced the challenges of teachers' different preferences. Most of the participants did not consider that their writing proficiency improved and developed during the program because of the variety of task types and the accompanying criteria determined by teachers' preferences. The participants repeatedly gave me the same response as to why they were not able to make use of their experience with the previous assignment to improve their marks on the next one. Gigi, studying in Commerce Marketing, Abby, studying in International Business, and Chloe, studying in Project Management all said each assignment was rather different and had different criteria so the same strategies might not work. For example, Chloe's first assignment was to analyze a project, the second to analyze procurement, and the third a group simulation. Only one participant, David, studying in Linguistics, considered his academic writing improved because his assignments and requirements were fairly similar throughout his different subjects.

Instead, the participants stated that they usually obtained much better marks/evaluation if they happened to take another course with the same lecturer. They attribute the improvement in grades to their figuring out "what the teacher really wants", rather than to their academic writing ability. This shows that differences between individual teachers are a factor. One of the individual differences lies in their attitude toward language use. Some teachers consider language as a medium for ideas and care little about non-native uses of grammar and vocabulary as long as the student shows their original ideas or the knowledge learned. As Harry, a postgraduate student in Engineering Management, said, "只有在語言學校老師會糾正我的英文，到了研究所的課程，老師只有對內容的想法給評語。" [Only in language school did the teacher correct my English. In the master's program, teachers only comment on the ideas.] On the other hand, some teachers care greatly about correct and precise grammar and vocabulary and show less tolerance. It is up to the discretion of the individual teachers whether they pass judgment on the quality of writing and whether they choose to give advice in order to help students improve their English rhetorical writing. Furthermore, teachers may have their individual preferences in writing style, which would determine how a writing piece is evaluated. Donna, a postgraduate student in Accounting, expressed her confusion at how what she learned from a university affiliated language center was negatively judged by a teacher in her master's program.

Donna: 在文章中，我用 for example 來舉例子，但是我研究所的老師給我的評語卻是: 太無聊與死板，你應該直接舉例子而不需要說 for example。

Donna: I wrote "for example" to make an example in my essay, but my teacher in the master's program commented "That's too boring and rigid. You should just give an example without saying 'for example'."

Such personal preference shows not only in writing style, grammar, and vocabulary, but also in structure, content, examples, word limit, reference type, and many other details. Litowitz (1993) used the word "fantasy" to indicate that learning is taking place when the learner is becoming more like the instructor, who tends to give credits to work that they deem more academic because it is similar to their own. Teachers' attitudes regarding students' language precision and their preference regarding writing style influence how a student strategically tackles each assignment of a subject and what final mark a student is awarded. As a result, participants come to view academic writing as fragmented pieces of learning rather than as a cohesive whole.

6.3.4 Academic identity: A sense of insecurity

Overseas students also carry the burden of being "others" and are expected to explain where they come from, and to compare the differences between two contexts. The readers' expectation, perception, and sometimes imagination are often hard to grasp and respond to, as Natasha described.

Natasha: 有時候我希望我英文夠好，能把台灣講解的更清楚，有時候老師要我講台灣到底有什麼不一樣，我真的覺得台灣沒有那麼不一樣，當然有不一樣，但不是 exotic 的不一樣

Natasha: Sometimes I so wish my English was good enough to explain Taiwan better. Sometimes the teacher wants me to point out how different Taiwan is. I really don't think it's that different. Of course there are some differences but not the exotic kind that they expect

One might argue that it is an optional and personal decision to take up the role of transnational mediator if it is such a strenuous effort. However, it is through such action that the participants display their identity in terms of where they come from, what they identify with, what knowledge they have built up, and who they are. Natasha talked about her hope in respect of her academic identity.

Natasha: 我不希望的情形是別人把我當成 learner，外國人，因為傾向客氣，不多問，而能夠真的討論，溝通。我不知道做台灣的研究，他們是把你看成區域研究，還是我們在同一個 circle，只是我是做: a case study of TW，所以我們可以共同來討論批評或修正

Natasha: The last thing I would hope to see is others treating me as a learner, a foreigner. I hope for genuine discussion and communication, but they keep acting politely by not asking questions. I don't know whether they see my Taiwanese research as a regional study that doesn't interest them much or as a case study of Taiwan within the same sphere of research that we could discuss, criticize, and improve

Rather than simply knowing how to conduct their study, students need to participate in a variety of practices in their particular discipline (Benzie, 2010). This process is referred to as "academic discourse socialization" (Duff, 2007), "the development of academic literacies" (Street, 2004), or "participation in communities of practice" (Lea, 2005). However, some researchers have recognized that this is not an easy task and that more explicit teaching is called for to bridge the gap between the often implicit expectations of academics and the skills of students entering higher education (Benzie, 2010).

This section closes with Natasha's reflection and emotion on her writing experience in Australia.

Natasha: 我來這邊有個很強烈的感覺是，我不知道我的讀者怎麼想。我不知道別人怎麼讀，有一個可能是因為，我掌握的資源很少，大家都各自在寫，很少有大家互相看的機會。老師給我的幫助是學術寫作的態度，該如何去分析別人，該如何呈現自己，當然這些也有幫助，但當我一直在寫的時候，我不知道到底有沒有進步，還是我一直在犯重覆的錯誤，可是我一下找這朋友或那個朋友幫我看，都是零碎的意見，然後 supervisor 又不太管這些東西，所以寫作一直給我一個 insecure 感覺，你不知道自己有沒有 on track ，不僅是語言上面，還有包含 idea 上面，是不是這裡學術圈可以接受的

Natasha: After I came here to study, my deepest concern has been that I don't know how my readers would think. I have little idea about how others would read [my work]. This could be due to the little resources I possess here. Everyone [classmates] is busy writing their own theses, and there are few chances for us to read each other's work. My supervisor helps me with things like how to analyze others' research and how to present mine. Of course this is helpful; however, though I keep writing, I don't know if I am improving or not. Maybe I'm making the same mistakes over and over again. Sometimes I asked my friends to read my writing, but all I get are small suggestions. In addition, my supervisor doesn't care about this aspect much. So for me writing brings about a constant sense of insecurity. I don't know if I'm on track, not only with language use, but also with ideas, whether they would be accepted in academic circles here.

Rather than being a novice research student, Natasha had obtained a master's degree in cultural studies with both course and research components in Taiwan before conducting her Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Australia. With the change of context, however, she lost full capacity in her language use, as she had been able to flow freely and creatively in her thesis in Mandarin and was confident that her reader would understand and accept her work based on a shared language, academic culture, and social culture. She was faced with difficulties not only in terms of a change in language that implicitly forced her to adopt what was in her view "笨拙的方式" [a clumsy way] to arrange her writing in English, but also in terms of an identity change, in the context of which she was not sure how she was positioned as a learner, as an academic, and as an "other." The insecurity that she deeply sensed corresponds to what Hymes observed in another educational context many years ago:

> A latent function of the educational system is to instill linguistic insecurity, to discriminate linguistically, to channel children in ways that have an integral linguistic component, while appearing open and fair to all. (Hymes, 1996, p. 84)

Overseas students' academic writing is an issue that goes far beyond the matter of language change: these students face a new discourse that is politically and socially situated. On the one hand, they lose the advantage of being a local, who is equipped with abundant implicit knowledge that they have accumulated throughout their social and educational trajectories. On the other hand, they bear the disadvantage of being an "other", who has to constantly justify their knowledge using a language that operates differently in a context of which they may not necessarily have equivalent implicit knowledge. It takes participation and dialogue for them to enter the discourse. In the next section, I continue to probe into the question of what resources were provided to the participants and whether these were dovetailed to the needs of the students.

6.4 Academic writing support

In this section, I first explore resources provided by universities for postgraduate students who are non-native speakers of English. Next, I analyze whether these services meet the needs of participants and help them improve their academic writing.

Services provided by the universities to which my participants are affiliated usually come from a language center, international student center, library, or department. Ten out of seventeen participants were aware of the provision that was available to them; however, another four were not sure and the other three believed there were none. Thus, the provision was not communicated clearly or fully. The services may vary in name, but all have similar aims and means. Therefore, I categorize them by their approaches and functions, and present the ways in which the participants utilize and value them.

Language advice

Language advice is a type of centralized language advice, which may be called "academic advice" or "language and learning support" in different institutions. In this form of academic writing support, students make an individual appointment in advance and bring their essays or assignments to the advisor, who will check grammar and the overall structure based on the assignment criteria. However, surprisingly, among the ten participants who were aware of the service, none were actually using it. Four of them had used the service once or twice, but did not consider the advice helpful so decided not to go anymore. The other six participants never got the chance to make an appointment. One of the crucial reasons is timing. Being an earnest student who always began writing her assignments early, Chloe found it impossible to book the service. For example, she had to turn in an assignment in week 13 but was required to include content covered in the class from week 9 until week 12. This left her no time to finish her essay early enough to be able to make an appointment with the advisor. Billy indicated that the language advice center asked them to book an appointment two weeks before the assignment due date, which was impractical owing to his tight schedule. As mentioned in Section 6.1, most of the participants had to deal with multiple assignments simultaneously, and they all found it impossible to complete the assignments early enough to allow them to take the draft to a writing advisor and then incorporate the feedback they received in good time to meet the submission deadline.

The second crucial reason this service was not considered useful was that it is limited to checking grammar and structure. Feeling disappointed, Emma explained to me that any advice on content or ideas was beyond her reach. "They say it would be academic dishonesty." This seems to indicate that policies on academic honesty are in conflict with the literacy needs of these students. As I have pointed out in Section 6.2 and

Section 6.3, overseas students coming from different cultural and educational backgrounds need to know how readers in the host universities perceive and interpret texts so that they can adjust their writing. However, unfortunately, such a learning need is rejected and misrepresented as an issue of honesty or fairness. In the same vein, limiting the advice to only grammar and structure also resulted in hindering the learning of discipline-specific conventions.

A further problem with language advice is inconsistency of instruction. Participant Billy and his classmates stopped using the service because they still got low marks. They believe this was because different advisors have different ideas and concepts, which might not be appreciated by individual lecturers. The mismatch between centralized academic advice and discipline-specific conventions or individual teachers' preferences was responsible for the inefficacy of the service.

Workshop and writing class

Another type of service offered is organized workshops or writing classes, which teach basic skills for essay writing. Different topics are presented in workshops, accompanied by practice and discussion. Four participants indicated that their universities provided this type of writing support. Two of the participants gave positive comments about this support. David had a good experience, learning and benefiting from a class on academic discourse. The class was beneficial because it coincided with his thesis progress and he could actually have the teacher look at his own writing and get feedback on not only grammar but also content. The fact that the timing and content of the class fit into the student's learning trajectory is critical. As for Natasha, a master's by research student, her department offered a thesis writing class at the beginning stage which she considered valuable, as it clarified for her the conventions of English academic writing; for example, she learned what an "argument" was in the sense of English academic writing.

However, the workshops and classes started to lose their usefulness and effectiveness when it came to individual needs. While Natasha proceeded with her own thesis, she found that what she had learned was not enough. She described the experience figuratively as "在陸地上學游泳" [learning swimming on dry land]; "等到我自己下

水就發現水性不同” [When I went into the water myself, I found the water very different]. Similarly, Chloe said, “那個都太 general 了，問題是沒有人幫我看我的 writing 呀” [It (the learning material) is too general to be helpful. The problem is that no one was looking over my writing.] This finding suggests that participants need personalized assistance as they progress toward a higher level of academic writing.

Written guides, pamphlets, and website

Another service provided by universities is pamphlets and websites with information on writing, citation, referencing, study tips, and other guidelines. Two participants mentioned that their universities provide such writing resources. Being an earnest student working very hard on every assignment, Chloe considered the information provided useful. She made good use of a university pamphlet called “Cite and Write”, consulting this for citation and referencing conventions. Also Chloe often went to her university website “Study Well” for study tips. Toby, however, an International Business major, considered the pamphlets helpful but not adequate because they offered only basic and general information.

Writing hub and writing tutor

The least prevalent service offered to the participants were writing hubs, where writing advisors or postgraduate local students proofread one’s writing and give suggestions and advice. Only two participants once had access to this type of service, which is much closer to what they told me they were hoping for when they were writing long essays or theses. Emma considered this the ideal form of academic writing support. She explained: “I really need individual writing services since I am already a postgraduate!” Emma had a satisfying experience working on her essays with a writing tutor, who was a PhD graduate and postdoctoral scholar on the department faculty. The face-to-face discussions gave Emma chances to clarify her questions about both English language and academic writing.

Natasha also highly valued this type of mentoring scheme, as she indicated: “我想知道我的 writing 是不是 native speakers 可以看得懂” [I have to know whether my writing can be understood by native speakers.] Natasha used to have a local student in a similar field assigned to work with her on a weekly basis for a semester. They had face-to-face discussions so the tutor student would know what Natasha intended to express and whether Natasha's sentences conveyed precisely the intended meaning. They worked together to revise and improve the sentences. However, after one semester the peer mentoring scheme was changed to a different arrangement, which was called "writing hub." Similarly, writing hub offered appointments with a local student who would look over Natasha's writing. However, the difference lies in the fact that the helper would be a random person on duty. Each time, Natasha had to explain again to the new person her research topic and what she had done. With limited time, only a small piece of writing would be worked on. Sensing the inefficiency and limited value, Natasha eventually stopped going. The service lost the advantage of the tailored response that was most beneficial to students. This finding suggests that participants' writing skills need assistance of a long-term and consistent nature.

The provision of multifaceted language and writing support

I have presented above different types of services provided by universities and discussed how they work or do not work in practice for the students. While each of these services has its own purposes, benefits, and limitations, the provision of multifaceted services to students is suggested to allow them timely access to resources at different stages of their programs. As Emma told me, she was highly satisfied with the services provided to international students in the university where she was an exchange student because she had three places that she could ask for help. She obtained academic advice from a librarian to check on assignment criteria and essay structure. She received proofreading services from the English language center, which also helped in preparing for her oral presentation or IELTS exam. Also, she worked with a special writing tutor on the faculty who was familiar with her study field. By booking three appointments alternately every week, she felt supported to maximize her learning.

Summary

In sum, the academic writing support services that most participants experienced were untimely, general, and intermittent, whereas was they needed was timely, interactive, long term, and personalized assistance. Since most participants did not find general writing services efficient and helpful, the most direct and relevant help was the writing feedback they received from their class lecturers. In the next section, I continue probing into the feedback the students received from their assignments, essays, and theses. I also discuss how participants perceive the usefulness of the feedback.

6.5 Feedback[1]

The focus of this section is on the role of feedback in the academic literacy development of participants. Generally, a theoretical effective learning process would look like Figure 6. Teachers assign students a task with clear instructions and criteria. Students work on the task and hand in the assignment. The teacher then gives them a mark and some feedback. Students receive the feedback and reflect on their work, further their learning, and advance the quality of their next task. This learning process loop is familiar to teachers in universities. However, in actual teaching and learning the process may not be as ideal as it is in theory. My participants' experiences revealed that there was a breakdown in the middle of the process, namely at the feedback point. In this section, I describe the forms that such ineffective feedback takes. The major problems with feedback observed were the paucity of feedback, messy handwriting, and general comments. I discuss each of these problems in detail.

[1] A version of this section has been published by Chang (G. C.-L. Chang, 2014)

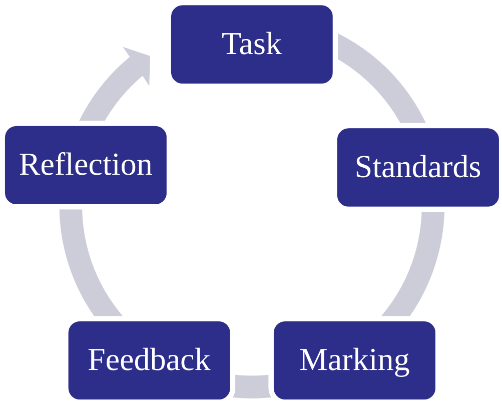


Figure 6 An ideal effective assessment (Wood, 2012, p. 8)

6.5.1 Ineffective feedback

Little or no feedback

While I was collecting assignment feedback data from the participants, I found that many of them were generous in their willingness to share. Unfortunately, however, they found that they did not in fact have much to show me. Shockingly, 9 out of 17 more than half – received little or no feedback. Betty, an undergraduate senior student, said she never got any feedback from her assignments, which were mostly essays, throughout her three years of a university Finance program. She considered that to be a huge drawback of the university because she could only tell whether she did well or not by the mark she received. Gigi, Abby, Cathy, Toby, Daniel, and Vincent, who are respectively master's students of Commerce, International Business, Marketing, Fine Arts, Biomedical Engineering, and Integrated Marketing Communication, all indicated that they seldom receive feedback for their assignments in their master's programs, even though the universities they studied at were reputable and had a high standing in university rankings. David, a master's by research student, said his supervisor was too busy to look over his thesis. Only once in his entire thesis writing process did he get feedback from his supervisor. Tiffany, a master's student of Human Resources, said she was not even told the mark for each assignment and received only a final – aggregated – mark. Some assignments were not even returned because the semester had ended. In some cases, assignments and feedback were posted in a grading system online, which could not be accessed after a certain period of time.

Marking tells the student what degree of excellence they have achieved, and is certainly a kind of feedback; however, the use of marking as the only form of feedback does not promote academic literacy and language learning, as it does not provide guidance regarding ways in which students may improve.

Illegible hand-written feedback

Among the eight participants who obtained some feedback, four of them indicated that they often found it difficult to understand the written annotations that lecturers made on their assignments because they could not read the handwriting (see Figures 7 and 8 below). Some of them blamed themselves for not being good at reading handwriting as a second language learner. Some participants went to the teachers for clarification, but they soon got tired of asking, especially when they were under time pressure to write their next assignment, or when the semester was about to end and the teacher was not easily accessible. If the mark was good, they did not even bother to decipher the comment(s), since a good mark already suggested they were doing well. Illegible hand-written feedback is largely a waste of time for both the teacher and the students; the students are using their time and energy in trying to make out the words rather than comprehend their meaning.

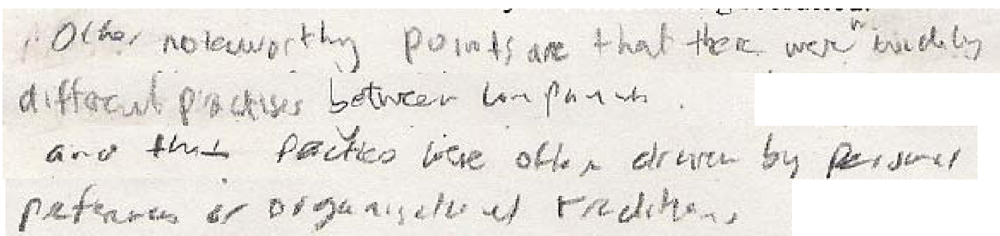


Figure 7 Feedback sample from Lisa, a postgraduate student of Finance, for her human resource paper

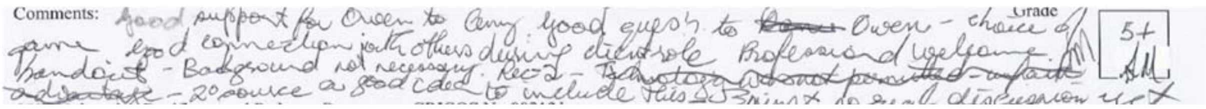
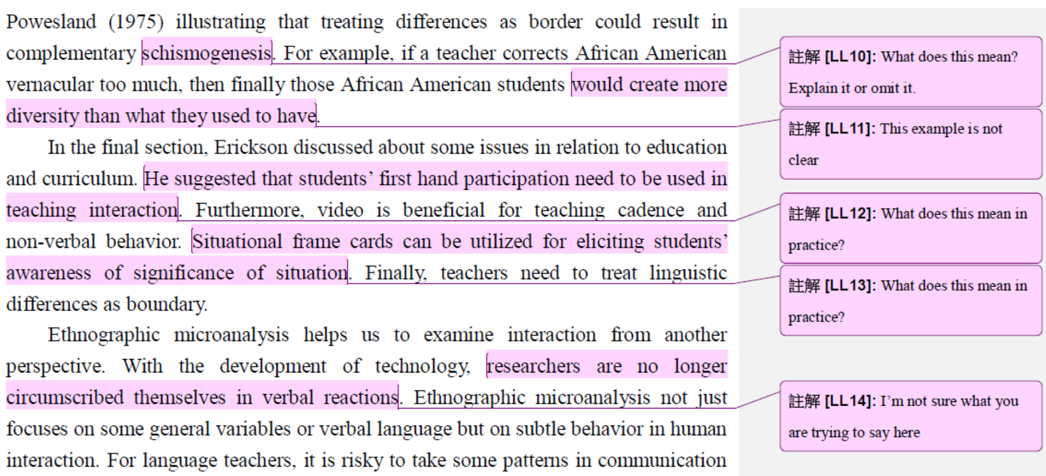


Figure 8 Feedback sample from Billy, a postgraduate student of Integrated Marketing Communication, for his project report

General comments that puzzled the participants

Apart from the illegibility of the comments, in many cases comments were too general to be useful. All participants who had received feedback reported this as the foremost reason why they did not consider the feedback helpful. Examples include statements such as “What does this mean?”, “This example is not clear”, “Not sufficient”, “Not done properly”, “I’m not sure what you are trying to say here”, as shown in Figures 9 and 10, and “More academic tone”, “Not specific”, “This could be more critical”, “Need to be coherent”, “Not a master’s/PhD level of analysis”. Participants receiving such general comments were often left in the dark, not knowing how the teacher had arrived at such judgment let alone knowing how to utilize the feedback to improve. As Tim, an Engineering Management student, said, “Comments such as ‘I don’t understand’ or ‘This is not clear’ are not helpful because I still don’t know why the teacher doesn’t understand.”


Powesland (1975) illustrating that treating differences as border could result in complementary schismogenesis. For example, if a teacher corrects African American vernacular too much, then finally those African American students would create more diversity than what they used to have.

In the final section, Erickson discussed about some issues in relation to education and curriculum. He suggested that students’ first hand participation need to be used in teaching interaction. Furthermore, video is beneficial for teaching cadence and non-verbal behavior. Situational frame cards can be utilized for eliciting students’ awareness of significance of situation. Finally, teachers need to treat linguistic differences as boundary.

Ethnographic microanalysis helps us to examine interaction from another perspective. With the development of technology, researchers are no longer circumscribed themselves in verbal reactions. Ethnographic microanalysis not just focuses on some general variables or verbal language but on subtle behavior in human interaction. For language teachers, it is risky to take some patterns in communication

註解 [LL10]: What does this mean? Explain it or omit it.

註解 [LL11]: This example is not clear

註解 [LL12]: What does this mean in practice?

註解 [LL13]: What does this mean in practice?

註解 [LL14]: I’m not sure what you are trying to say here

Figure 9 Feedback sample from David, a postgraduate student of Linguistics, for his sociolinguistics class paper

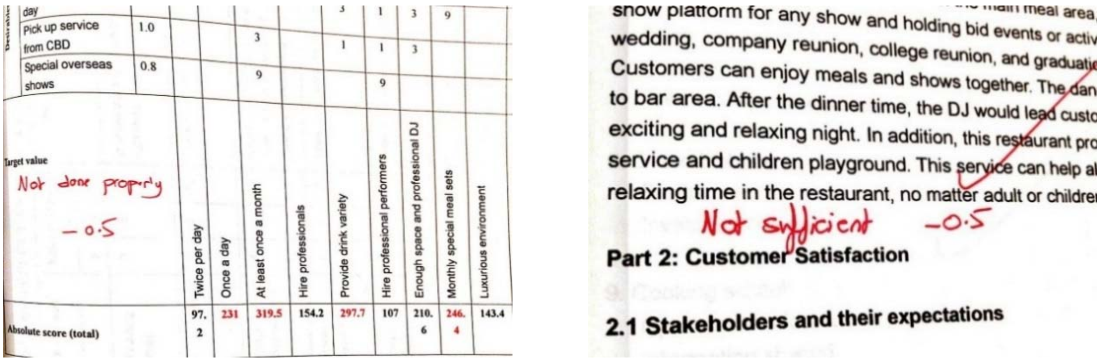


Figure 10 Feedback sample from Tim, an Engineering Management student, for his quality planning and analysis paper

Looking through his assignments with me, David told me his reaction when he saw the comment shown in Figure 11: “他說他看不懂，這句話也非常 general!” [The comment saying this is too general is too general to me too!]

> You have worked hard at this and tried to give a thorough account of this complex article. Sometimes your summary of point is worded very generally, and it’s not clear what you mean or how well you have understood the point you are making. Your critique at the end is intelligent and good.

Figure 11 Feedback sample from David, a postgraduate student of Linguistics, for his sociolinguistics class paper

Similarly, Mark, a postgraduate student of Environmental Management, told me what he thought of the feedback he received and what he had hoped to gain from it.

Mark: 我個人認為學習到最多的，還是過程，老師的評語，我自己是反而覺得沒有太大的用處，可能是我們的東西程度還不夠好吧，總覺得老師大多是講一些很籠統的東西，例如 reference 不錯之類的，分數也大多使中等，70 分左右而已，恩所以是因為評語大都不夠詳細，

所以好像無法從中學到什麼，通常沒有很能深入的瞭解我的想法的樣子，不太像在跟我對話，只是粗淺的評斷一下這篇文章。當然老師時間也有限，所以太 general 了，很難真的去瞭解比較細節的想法，況且人這麼多，再加上，也許我們的文章也不是這麼好懂，哈哈

Mark: I learned mostly from the process rather than the feedback, which is not very useful to me. Maybe it's because my work was not good enough, so the teacher mostly commented on the general things, such as references. My mark was average. The feedback is not detailed and specific enough for me to learn. It seems my ideas were not well understood so the feedback did not converse with me. Of course I understand how limited the teacher's time is, and there are so many students. Also, maybe our papers are not that easy to understand

A dialogue to discuss his ideas and arguments was what Mark was hoping for from the feedback, as was the case for many other participants. The general comments did not serve the function of intellectually responding to and conversing with the participants. The learning process thus stalled, and so did the inclusion in an academic community of practice. In other words, their opportunities to move from peripheral to central participation in their overseas education experience were largely missed.

Students like Mark were attributing such general feedback to their L2 learner identity. However, some time ago Lea and Street (1998) found that the feedback and guidelines provided to local students in the United Kingdom were similarly too generic and general for them to develop specific rhetoric for a particular field. Students felt they were trying to meet individual tutors' standards rather than developing a set of coherent skills to write academically for a specific field. That study indicates that general academic feedback is also puzzling to local students, who are following a familiar educational system in their native language. It is therefore not surprising that international students, who have shifted to a different educational system using a language that may not be their strongest, struggle to comprehend such feedback.

However, the quality of the feedback received was not all viewed negatively. There were a few instances where participants received helpful feedback that made them feel included in a valuable learning experience. My data suggest that high quality feedback is concrete and specific, forming a dialogue.

6.5.2 Effective feedback

Concrete and specific comments

Good and useful feedback is clear, concrete, and specific. As Figure 12 shows, this type of feedback begins with a summary followed by specific comments. The teacher demonstrates what is more acceptable. When she does not understand, she asks the student "do you mean a, b, or c", so the student knows the sentence is not clear due to multiple possible interpretations. The teacher also gives specific suggestions on how to improve grammatical accuracy.

> You make soem good points here but expression is sometimes problematic. I'm giving some examples here but I do mostly know what you mean here so it doesn't impact too directly on your mark. I'd like to have given you a higher mark for some fo the good points here but sometimes I really lost track of what you were saying.
>
> --"And 'colour' is constructed or essential?" Should be "And is 'colour' constructed or essential?"
> --"the other is the self-consciousness of being others." I don't know what you mean here - of being *among* others? of being perceived by others? of being *other* (rather than others)?
> --"the rediscovery is the essence of" I think if you put "that" between "is" and "the" this sentence would make sense

Figure 12 Feedback sample from Emma, a postgraduate student of Cultural Studies, for her key thinkers of cultural studies class

Inevitably, such feedback is lengthier and requires teachers to expend more time and energy. However, good and efficient feedback does not have to be in written form only.

Verbal feedback and model examples from students

Verbal feedback has the potential to work well as an efficient and genuine dialogue. Lisa, a postgraduate student of Finance, indicated that immediately after her first assignment the teacher chose two or three good assignments produced by students to demonstrate the standard expected and the principles to do well. In addition, the teacher would discuss general weaknesses of the assignments that did not meet the expected level. At the same time, students who had difficulties had the chance to express the difficulties they faced and ask questions to clarify their confusions.

> 雖然那個一看就知道是local學生寫的，我們大概不可能馬上寫出來，但至少我們知道老師期望的是什麼，所以我就比較知道要怎麼寫
> [Although those exemplary assignments were, obviously, written by local students, the level was too high for us to reach right away, but at least we realized what the teacher expected, and I knew better how to write future assignments]

Verbal feedback in class combined with model examples serves at least four important functions: first, it is time and labor efficient; second, it starts a conversation between teachers and students and allows confusion to be clarified on the spot; third, model examples contextualize guidelines and implicit expectations in a course-specific text; and finally, social inclusion in a community of practice is embodied in the interaction of teachers and students in the learning process.

Effective verbal feedback could also happen outside the classroom. Billy considered himself very lucky in one subject because his tutor was generously available. Being given opportunities for consultation, Billy could ask questions to clarify the teacher's expectation of the coming task. Billy also used consultation opportunities to discuss the teacher's feedback after an assignment. The accessible conversation meant that the written feedback became meaningful and was not simply filed away.

Peers

Another type of good feedback comes from peers rather than teachers. Oftentimes in group work the student who has higher language proficiency takes on the role of editor. The whole group gets together in front of a computer, and the editor student revises and edits for them by showing them how he/she does it and why. Gigi, a student of Commerce, indicated that "學到很多" [(she) learned a lot] from their group editor through this way of cooperation. However, not everyone had experienced working with an editor student in group work. As Toby said, "有朋友大都跟 local 一組，但

壓力很大，因為開會一兩次就各自寫好了” [I have some friends who mostly work with local students but it was stressful because after only one or two meetings the local students finished their writing individually]. In addition, there were participants who were concerned about the quality of the education if their learning is randomly dependent on other students.

Another useful practice also involves peers. Emma mentioned that her course was run in collaboration with a TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) buddy. TESOL students, that is, future English teachers, are given this task to proofread and give feedback to international students as a practical exercise. Emma said that she was once assigned to a TESOL student who happened to be Chinese. Initially Emma doubted if a non-native speaker could really help her, but after their one-on-one session, she considered she learned a lot. Coming from the same L1 background, the TESOL student pointed out the grammatical errors Emma tended to make and showed her the usage that was more proper. The student also gave Emma concrete feedback on content and ideas. This practice thus created a win-win situation for international students to improve their English skills and for TESOL students to practice English teaching and gain more understanding of language learning.

This section has shown that helpful feedback which participants’ received tends to be concrete, specific, constructive, interactive, and dialogic. This finding supports the idea that learning is fundamentally a social activity, which is relational and dialogic in essence (Vygotsky, 1962). The development of academic writing skills is a complex process. It cannot be mastered at the beginning of postgraduate education and be expected to look after itself, developing autonomously (Wellington, 2010). In terms of the kind of feedback that promotes learning and the kind that does not promote learning, the key would seem to lie in whether the practice is inclusive, and whether there is an accessible, genuine, constructive dialogue going on between teachers and students as well as among students, no matter whether the linguistic form is written or verbal.

6.6 Summary and discussion

In this chapter, I presented participants' experiences with academic writing practices. As Hyland (2013) points out, "universities are ABOUT [emphasis in the original] writing and […] specialist forms of academic literacy are at the heart of everything we do" (p. 53). Therefore, it is not surprising that academic writing played a significant role in participants' academic participation. By examining the challenges the participants were facing in this domain, I have shown that attributing second language learners' writing difficulties entirely to their L1 is partial and biased. For instance, contrastive rhetoric studies depict Asian languages as circular, indirect, and inductive, in contrast to the English language which is considered linear, direct, deductive, and more logical. Language learner's native language is then seen as a liability to their English learning. However, the diversity of genres, styles, and purposes that are at play in academic writing has been overlooked; binary stereotypes of L1 and L2 are therefore problematic, as has previously been demonstrated by Y. Kachru (1995) and Kubota and Lehner (2004).

Despite these well-known challenges to contrastive rhetoric, some of the stereotypes of contrastive rhetoric have become a discursive resource in academic writing. The chapter presented some cases where such binary stereotypes of L1 and L2 were accepted by teachers and were conveyed to the participants in class. The finding supports the argument made by Kubota and Lehner (2004) that contrastive rhetoric has been taken too far by including cognitive and sociocultural variables of writing, and that generalization has been embedded in constructing English rhetoric as a superior to other language rhetoric. In responding to the binary stereotypes of rhetoric, participants adopted what Tran (L. T. Tran, 2011) called "surface adaptation", and "committed adaptation". Some of the participants disagreed with the instruction they received but decided to conform in order to obtain good marks. Some other participants were convinced that the English language was more appropriate for scientific debates than their native language. Similarly to Tran's (2009, 2011) argument that international students' desires for alternative approaches to knowledge tend to be marginalized, this research has shown that spaces to discuss and apply different ways of writing knowledge were not available to participants or they were not aware of them.

The thesis thus proposes that a fundamental question of academic writing instruction needs to focus on whether students are well advised and introduced to English academic writing conventions and whether they understand what they are expected to deliver in their essays and theses. Practices which create a space for dialogue on English academic writing can work to improve students' writing rather than instilling international students with biased binary stereotypes, which valorize the English language and devalue the students' native language. In other words, the thesis argues that a sense of linguistic inferiority of one's native language should not be embedded in international higher education.

The following section (Section 6.2) revealed that participants' writing is not only about the challenge of commanding a second language. These higher education international students often carry the extra responsibility of being a mediator between two contexts, which has not been widely discussed in the existing literature. As presented, there is a potential mismatch between local teachers and overseas students in their cultural knowledge, contextual knowledge, and professional knowledge. However, the responsibility of filling these gaps fell exclusively to the participants. Some participants found themselves in a challenging process of giving lengthy explanations to subjects which do not require any explanation to readers who share similar background knowledge. Some participants had to make extra cognitive efforts to compare how systems work differently in the host country and in their country of origin. This task involves, first, translating students' existing knowledge into English, where equivalent concepts or terminology may not be readily available. Second, the task requires a certain level of familiarity with the host culture and context, which potentially poses difficulties to new international students. In addition, participants also pointed out that teachers' individual preferences regarding language usage and writing style are a factor affecting their writing evaluation.

These findings serve as evidence that the process of writing is a socially situated practice and it is beyond switching between two languages. Moreover and more importantly, overlooking international students' challenges in being a mediator between two contexts presents an obstacle to the high hopes of international higher education that international students bring new knowledge and create a mutual interaction between foreign cultures and local cultures. The thesis wishes to call for practices which are designed to assist international students' role in being mediators so that the benefits of receiving international students do not stop at "wishing and hoping" (Leask & Carroll, 2011, p. 647).

After presenting the writing challenges, I probed into why the participants' English academic writing did not improve as much as they expected by investigating the academic writing support they received. I have argued that the current language and writing support is largely ineffective in practice as it tends to be general, untimely, inconsistent, and intermittent. However, my data have shown that international students need timely, interactive, consistent, and personalized support for their language learning and writing skills to advance. In addition, the analysis also presented some cases where effective practices the participants once experienced were replaced with ineffective practices. This shows the importance of integrating international students' perspectives into the practice of writing support.

Following on from this, I probed into the feedback that participants received from their course lecturers. The literature on written feedback to L2 students typically focuses on English language and error correction feedback, but pays little attention to feedback to L2 student writing relating to the disciplinary faculty (Leki, 2006; Roca de Larios & Murphy, 2010). In addition to the challenging nature of researching feedback, many research findings on feedback have been inconclusive because the research direction has moved too far away from empirical studies, shifting instead towards experimental studies (Storch, 2010). Ignoring the social nature of the practice, very few studies have looked at how students actually engage with feedback in natural settings while undertaking their university programs and how feedback influences their writing processes (see F. Hyland, 2010) This thesis section makes a contribution to the existing literature on feedback by bringing in empirical data of feedback on students' disciplinary writing as well as students' perception of feedback. It was found that there were several major problems with the written feedback given by the teachers to participants. Oftentimes there was little or no feedback, or the feedback was given in an illegible hand-written form. In other cases, the feedback was too general to be constructive. In the final section of the chapter, I highlighted the feedback that participants considered helpful to their learning. Effective feedback was feedback that was concrete and specific, and that formed a dialogue with students. Further, helpful feedback was not confined to written forms and did not always have to come from teachers.

Throughout the chapter, I have followed Kubota and Lehner (2004) in arguing that academic genres are not neutral but politically and socially situated. International students' challenges in academic writing thus should not be narrowly associated with L1 interference and L2 proficiency. Instead, my analysis shows the need to see international students as mediators between two contexts and calls for accessible constructive educational practices which facilitate this role. Thus, the more pertinent question is whether academic writing conventions in students' study disciplines are well communicated to international students. By investigating practices of academic writing and language support as well as feedback on writing, the thesis has identified gaps, which had been largely overlooked to date. These findings show that in order for practices to be effective, students' perspectives are indispensable and should be well integrated into educational practices.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

In this thesis I documented and analyzed 35 Taiwanese international students' experiences in Australia, with a central focus on their English language learning and their language use in the complex linguistic environment of Australian higher education. I described and analyzed their experiences of learning English prior to their sojourn in Australia. The thesis then examined the relationships between the participants' English language learning and their academic achievement as well as their temporary settlement experiences in Australia.

I discussed the data in terms of language desire, identity, peripheral participation, language ideology, and language practices. These concepts facilitated my analysis of language learning as socially and culturally situated in the overseas context, as opposed to as an imagined ideal in a vacuum. My analysis argued that language is a manifestation of participation, which is a dynamic and constantly changing process.

In this concluding chapter, I first revisit my research questions and summarize the research findings. Next, I address the implications of my research, both the theoretical implications for second language learning research and the practical implications for Australian higher education. Finally, I discuss the research limitations and offer suggestions for future research directions.

7.2 The research questions revisited

7.2.1 Desiring English

The first research question was designed to ask about Taiwanese tertiary students' previous experiences of learning English; how language learning intersects with Taiwanese tertiary students' motivation to invest in studying overseas; and why they choose to study in Australia.

The analysis in Chapter Four showed the participants' trajectories of their English language learning prior to coming to Australia. As English was neither a language for daily communication nor a medium of instruction in Taiwan, English learning was primarily described as test-orientated, geared toward academic performance and acquiring qualifications as part of the participants' compulsory education. By contrast, participants' experiences of additional English language learning outside public school were highly diverse, based upon different levels of investment. In order to have a head start, for instance, many of the participants were sent to children's English cram schools by their parents before they started compulsory English classes in public schools. As a result, by the time they started to receive formal English instruction in school, participants had acquired different levels of English and had generated different attitudes toward learning English. Given that English is a high-stakes exam subject, many participants continued to undertake private English tuition in order to perform well in school exams, to apply for university, or to meet the language requirements for studying overseas (e.g., a specific IETLS score). Some participants, if their parents had the financial capacity, also joined short-term overseas study travel programs for the opportunity to learn and use English in a natural setting. Trajectories toward learning English by interacting in real life settings with native speakers were accompanied by increasing economic investment; thus, not every participant could afford it.

Against this learning background, advancing English by interacting with native speakers in natural settings was undoubtedly one of the main goals behind participants' decisions to invest in studying in an English-speaking country. Such language desire was intertwined with participants' multiple pursuits of certain social identities within several imagined communities. Building upon advancing English competence, participants desired an international experience so as to identify as a global citizen in a world community. Furthermore, they longed for an overseas tertiary degree and self-fulfillment aligned with a professional identity in an elite community. To some participants, studying overseas was also a way to meet family expectations, which were fuelled by the parents' desire for their children to succeed in the society.

I also investigated participants' reasons for choosing Australia as a study destination. The most influential factors were English language learning combined with financial compromise. Australia, as an Anglophone country, was attractive to participants who expected to improve their English. At the same time, English also narrowed participants' choices: for instance, some participants had considered going to European countries but gave up the idea because of the need to learn a language other than English. After narrowing down their choices to English-speaking countries, participants chose Australia predominantly for financial considerations. Many participants indicated that they knew that tertiary degrees from the United States and the United Kingdom were regarded highly in Taiwan; however, affordability and the greater chances of obtaining scholarships motivated them to come to Australia.

7.2.2 Language ideologies and language choices

The second research question was designed to ask what kinds of practices, particularly in relation to language learning and language choice, Taiwanese tertiary students in Australia engage in; and what ideologies of language and learning are implicit in these practices.

In Chapter Five, I presented and analyzed participants' trajectories of language learning and language choice in Australia. Many participants came to Australia with the idea to do as the locals do. They expected that they would be immersed in local communities, speaking English daily. Some of them even avoided making Taiwanese friends in order to immerse themselves in English. However, to participants' surprise, the linguistic environment that they were situated in turned out to be rather different from what they had anticipated. Participants were facing a clash between monolingual ideologies of English as the target language and multilingual realities where a variety of languages was used, particularly Mandarin. Apart from 7 PhD participants, who did not have to attend classes, 13 out of 23 master's participants found themselves in classes where 50 percent to 90 percent of their classmates were from China, depending on their courses and majors. Instead of speaking English, participants often spoke Mandarin at university. Only five master's participants, who had few Chinese classmates, considered that their study functioned fully in English. Further, outside university, all participants were aware of the prevalence of Mandarin.

Participants interpreted these experiences as evidence of an excessive number of Chinese in Australia. The succinct quote “Too many Chinese!” highlights the linguistic conflicts participants were facing. Though Mandarin was facilitating their studies and settlement, participants were worried about the effects this would have on their English, which in turn would affect the fulfilment of their other aspirations. There is no denying that participants still had to use English when attending lectures, reading books, and writing assignments; however, the lack of English speaking opportunities ironically became the most common feature in most participants’ study experiences in Australia. The obstacle faced by the lack of English speaking opportunities remained the same as if they had studied in Taiwan.

7.2.3 Academic experiences

The third research question was designed to address the question of Taiwanese tertiary students’ experience in Australian universities; how language intersects with their identity and participation in educational settings such as in classroom and group work; and what is Taiwanese PhD students’ experience of engaging in the academic community as well as in supervisory practices.

In spite of the large number of Mandarin-speaking international students present at university, which complicates the sociolinguistic environment, Australian higher education is still an English-dominant linguistic field where English and Anglophone local students hold the dominant status. As presented in Chapter Five, participants often found themselves participating peripherally in classroom and group work, as if there were “an invisible wall” between local students and international students, as described by one participant. For instance, participants experienced subtle division when local students showed no interest in sitting with them or talking with them. In classroom discussions, participants found it difficult to make their opinions heard. Even when it came to group work, the interaction with local students was still limited. Participants often mentioned that local students immediately assumed the leadership role when group members had mixed linguistic backgrounds. Consequently, most participants felt they were participating peripherally in Australian higher education. Although the physical distance was minimized, the social distance between local students and the research participants remained extremely great. As shown in Chapter

Five, interactions were rather subtle; it was thus difficult to identify the cause – or even the exact nature – of the barrier. Several participants attributed the situation to their English competence; yet other participants believed it resulted from racism. These participants were led to the conclusion that their experiences of exclusion were racially motivated because they were confident in their English competencies and had many positive experiences of making friends with and working on projects with other international students in Australia.

In contrast to coursework students, PhD student participants were facing a relatively lonely journey in the Australian academic system. As Australian PhD studies focus on independent research and autonomy, the structure results in a small network with low network density. Loneliness of PhD participants in their research field is a pervasive phenomenon. Without a vibrant community culture, many PhD participants found themselves socially isolated without institutional community support. Limited participation in the academic community also resulted in low frequency and depth of speaking English. Although PhD participants were engaged in their research in English, their lack of English speaking opportunities concerned them. These problems also hindered the development of their academic identity. Without significant interaction and recognition from other researchers in the field, it was difficult for PhD participants to develop themselves in academia in Australia. Some PhD participants proactively responded to the situation by looking for opportunities to audit classes, tutor classes, or take a part-time research job, but such opportunities were not available to all of them. Other PhD participants were seeking involvement in activities outside university for a sense of belonging and language use opportunities. However, they were often constrained by the time pressure from their PhD tasks and financial constraints due to the high living costs in Australia.

In addition to the need to rely on one's own initiative, the structure of Australian PhD programs makes supervisor-supervisee relationships central and vital for academic achievement. All the PhD participants highlighted the significance of their relationships with their supervisors. The supervisory relationship is intricate and asymmetric. The power relations between a supervisor and a supervisee make it difficult to reveal and improve ineffective supervisory practices. This is evidenced in one case of a PhD participant who disclosed many difficulties with her supervisor but later asked me to keep them confidential. Other PhD participants considered themselves lucky that they worked well with their supervisors. The effective supervisory practices that these PhD participants experienced included the fact that their supervisors' availability was well communicated, supervisors gave timely feedback and support, and supervisors provided constructive comments on thesis writing. Furthermore, their supervisors offered encouragement, which kept them motivated, and showed them genuine care, which further supported them in their overseas sojourn. Their support was not only limited to research: some PhD participants also appreciated that their supervisor helped them connect to other PhD students and researchers as well as assisting them with their future career development. For these PhD participants, the quality supervision contributed to a successful candidature in the lonely journey attributed to the Australian educational system.

7.2.4 Academic writing experiences

The fourth research question was designed to ask about Taiwanese tertiary students' academic writing experience; and how they perceive the feedback they receive on their academic writing.

Academic writing played a dominant role during the participants' academic journey and impacted on their performance. PhD participants were expected to produce a thesis which makes a distinct contribution to knowledge in their field. Master's and undergraduate participants were required to hand in on average 8 to 12 assignments per semester, producing thousands and thousands of words. Chapter Six was devoted to analyzing participants' academic writing experience.

During their studies many participants came to be aware of different linguistic expectations of writing between Mandarin and English. They reported differences that have frequently been identified in contrastive rhetoric studies of English and Mandarin. These include the observation that English texts tend to be deductive and linear, with explicit discourse markers, whereas Mandarin texts tend to be inductive and circular, without explicit discourse markers. However, a major problem was that these linguistic differences were not examined in a systematic way; furthermore, the features were largely reduced to a binary and stereotypical impression. By incorporating critical contrastive rhetoric, my analysis showed that participants were facing a dichotomy in which English was valorized as superior and Mandarin was devalued as inferior. This hierarchy was even applied to judge participants' cognitive ability. One of the examples was given by a master's student, who experienced a teacher from a university affiliated language center telling her students that Asian students think circularly, while moving an index finger in a circular motion. Participants were thus not only not encouraged to develop their own voice and style in English writing but they were also required to narrowly conform to English conventions. A few participants indicated that they conformed to the expected English style mainly to assure their grades although they did not agree with the value assigned to the writing conventions. Other participants, however, started to doubt their critical thinking ability and came to believe that English language texts were more logical and advanced.

Besides dealing with the discourse of English conveyed by the educational institutions, the challenge participants faced was more than just rhetorical differences. Participants had to take exclusive responsibility for being mediators of cultural knowledge as well as of professional knowledge. Constantly in their writing they were required to explain and compare differences between two contexts. The extra effort expended to fill the gap of knowledge for their teachers, or imagined Anglophone readers, affected their writing processes and performance. At the same time, they were not sure how their writing would be perceived, which created a sense of insecurity in respect of participants' academic identity.

Many participants expressed that their writing was not improving as much as they expected, and their concern led me into an investigation of the writing support provided by universities as well as the writing feedback they received from their lecturers. In terms of academic writing support provided by the university, such as language advice, writing workshops, and written guides or pamphlets, my analysis showed that the existing writing support systems were largely ineffective. A major problem was that most of the services were untimely, general, and intermittent, whereas what participants considered useful was timely, interactive, long-term, and personalized assistance.

As participants did not find the general writing support useful, the most direct and influential help was the feedback participants received from lecturers or supervisors.

However, my analysis of the writing feedback that participants received revealed several hidden problems. First, more than half of the participants received little or no feedback, which gave them minimal guidance on how to improve their writing. Second, illegible hand-written feedback was difficult for participants to read. Third, in many cases the comments were too general to be useful. By contrast, the feedback participants perceived as helpful was concrete and specific. Model examples from other students and verbal feedback from teachers and peers were also beneficial. Effective feedback appeared to be dialogic in essence and not confined to written form.

By closely examining participants' academic writing experience, I argued that the development of academic writing skills is a complex process, which requires accessible, consistent, and constructive educational practices.

7.2.5 Temporary settlement experiences

The final research question was designed to ask about Taiwanese tertiary students' experiences of language learning and participation outside university; and how language learning intersects with these areas and shapes their temporary settlement experience.

Participants' life outside university was also an integral part of their overseas experience. Participants expected their English learning and communication skills to improve substantially through their everyday experience and social interaction. My analysis in Chapter Five focused on three areas, namely, accommodation, church, and romance, as these three areas often served as access points for international students to learn local knowledge and local culture as well as to practice the target language.

Some participants indicated church as a major social interaction site outside university. Personal faith, community support, and language use were the main factors taken into consideration by participants when choosing which church to join. Some participants chose to go to Taiwanese churches because of readily available community access, whereas other participants preferred monolingual English churches for English speaking opportunities. There was only one case where all these three aspects coincided, and this was a Taiwanese church attended by one participant, Alice. The Taiwanese church was multilingual, using Taiwanese, Mandarin, and English to meet the different needs of the congregation. The people in that church recognized Alice's need to improve her English so they were proactive in helping her. They would speak English with her, proofread her assignments, rehearse her oral presentations with her, and share with her their own university experiences. In addition, Alice was also connected to local social networks via other members of the church. This socialization significantly helped Alice's English language skills as well as giving her a sense of belonging and connectedness to Australia.

Besides church, accommodation was another vital area for international students in terms of physical environment, social relationships, and language use. Only a small number of participants were staying in university dormitories and their experiences were varied because of different living styles. Some of them disliked the prevalent drinking and partying culture in their dormitories; others found the atmosphere quite enjoyable. Most of the participants were staying in private rental accommodation. However, finding a suitable place to settle down was not that easy. Because of the high rental costs in Australia's major cities, participants had to compromise between costs of rent, transportation, and the time cost associated with the distance. In addition, as tenants, participants were vulnerable to unreasonable or illegal treatment. They tended to move house frequently and experience financial loss because they had few resources and little time to take legal action. Alice was an exception again because she was lucky enough to have a pleasant Australian landlady. The landlady frequently chatted with her, shared her cooking, offered her support and camaraderie, and connected Alice to her own relatives and friends. The bonding and interaction improved Alice's English skills as well as giving Alice the confidence to settle well in Australia. Though Alice had to leave Australia after graduation, she and her landlady continued to keep in touch.

Another area that led to social participation and language learning outside university was romance. As participants were at a stage in their lives where finding a romantic partner was relatively important, language remained an important factor in considering a romantic relationship. In contrast to the Japanese women in Takahashi's study (2013), who preferred white Western males as their ideal English interlocutors and romantic partners, many participants valued the benefits of speaking the same language in their relationships more than the benefits of dating a native English speaker for their English learning. One participant, Donna, was one of the few who thought that she could only find access to language learning, and social participation, combined with romantic chemistry, by having a white Australian partner. However, Donna found her ideal English teacher-plus-boyfriend in her bilingual Australia-born Taiwanese boyfriend. The boyfriend's bilingual knowledge of English and Mandarin constituted an additional bonus to Donna's English learning. Furthermore, Donna's boyfriend served as a bridge for Donna to extend her English language social network.

Based on the participants' settlement experiences, language choice was undoubtedly intertwined with their social participation. Though participants were keen to improve their English, not every participant was lucky enough to meet an important person (or people) who served as a bridge for them to connect to local life. Only in a small number of cases did participants consider their Australian experience a good return on their investment. These few participants were fortunate to find the combination of people to connect with, a place to belong, and a space to use the English language.

7.3 Significance and implications

Research into second language learning has moved away from the static view centering on learners' motivation and personality, advancing to the recognition of the interplay between a language learner, their agency, and their multiple social roles. This thesis demonstrates the significance of the complex relationship a language learner faces in the real world. Starting from examining participants' English learning trajectories from a young age, the thesis shows that a language learner's relationship with the English language evolves with their relationship with others and is gradually shaped by the educational practices they are engaged in. In addition, their level of investment in learning the language is also dependent on the resources they possess. The impact of a context in which language learners are situated is not any less influential than their motivation and agency.

Continuing to examine participants' linguistic experiences in the real world of the overseas study destination, the thesis makes a contribution by presenting the new phenomenon that the Mandarin language has predominated among the languages other than English in Australian international higher education. The thesis takes the initiative in exploring how the changing linguistic environment shaped by the large numbers of Chinese international students influences other international students, in this case, Taiwanese students, who they happen to share a common language with.

The research challenges facile assumptions that international students prefer to stay in their comfort zone by interacting predominantly with co-ethnics and speaking their own languages. By examining participants' language desires and choices, the thesis shows, in fact, that participants make significant efforts to avoid entering such social networks. The surrounding linguistic environment, however, poses unexpected challenges. The thesis thus shows the nuances of participants' meeting Chinese international students and how language is intertwined in their relationship and in their study experience in Australia.

In addition to presenting postgraduate coursework participants' dealings with other Mandarin speakers present in Australian universities, the thesis also explored participants' interactions with other international students as well as local students in class. The contrast between being able to build up friendships with other international students using the English language and not being able to easily do so with local students was obvious. The thesis shows that positive social interaction between local and international students does not naturally happen merely by bringing students together. After identifying the possible impacting factors, the thesis takes the issue of separation with local students beyond the characteristics of students. The thesis proposes to examine the issue by focusing on what is lacking: constructive practices which are carefully designed to create social inclusion and positive interaction. This thesis suggests that it takes organized and well-planned activities to break these covert barriers, and therefore recommends practices that promote community building and enhance participation. These practices, I believe, will benefit both international students and Australian local students in cultivating world knowledge, international perspectives, and cross-cultural communication skills.

The thesis also makes a contribution to the evaluation of PhD supervision. PhD students' experiences can be challenging to investigate as supervision is highly variable. Moreover, as the relationship between a supervisor and a supervisee is delicate, PhD students often feel constrained to reveal their perspectives. The study presents participants' experiences in the PhD programs, and how their structure impacts their language use and their socialization into academia. In addition, the study contributes to identifying effective supervisory practices.

Following a key concern identified by the research participants, this thesis also looks into academic writing which plays a significant part in higher education practices. This thesis shows that effective support in academic skills and language skills is largely missing from participants' experiences. With international students' tuition fees contributing significantly to university revenues, there is a need to reassess the allocation of funding in providing academic and language support, especially when Australian higher education, with its internationalization focus, has become a linguistic site where many students are users of English as a second language. The provision of adequate language support is fundamental to facilitate international students' academic achievement and their overall Australian study experience. The thesis suggests a change of perspectives and to view international students as mediators of two contexts so that teaching can be designed to facilitate their contribution in knowledge production and their participation in Australian higher education. Ultimately, it is students' positive education experiences that will sustain Australian higher education's position in the competitive global market of higher education.

In sum the thesis shows that despite the fact that the research participants had a strong language desire to immerse themselves in the English language, only a few participants were lucky enough to experience an ideal linguistic environment in which the participants were surrounded by fluent English speakers who engaged them in communicative events in a supportive atmosphere. Not everyone succeeded, and many were not fortunate enough to have such a bridge to connect them to English-speaking social networks during their studies. Thus, the research argues that there are limitations to language learners' agency. This study suggests that future research should focus on how much the individual language learner can do to create an ideal environment for their language learning.

By investigating the cases where a few participants found social connections that enabled them to enter Australian society outside the university and to use English in non-academic contexts, the thesis found that these opportunities arose in domains such as church and romance which operate multilingually. Consequently, the thesis proposes that multilingual practices should be taken into consideration in second language learning theory. While immersion in the target language monolingually has long been assumed to constitute the best way to master a language, the thesis suggests to move beyond this limiting view and to consider multilingual practices which recognize and take advantage of second language learners' multilingual competences.

7.4 Limitations and recommendations for future research

One of the limitations of the study is that I was unable to extend the research to a more longitudinal study due to the length of time allocated to my PhD project. It would be interesting to examine international students' transition from university into the workplace. This aspect must be left for future research. I would suggest that future research adopt a systematic longitudinal approach to examine the trajectories of international graduates. By doing so, insights will be gained into the crucial role languages play when shifting from educational settings to workplace settings. In addition, such data on international graduates will contribute to our understanding of the value of overseas higher education degrees as well as the impacts of overseas study experiences on international graduates' career development and life trajectories. To benefit future research, I offer the following short preliminary observations about my participants after they had graduated.

First of all, many participants did not consider that they had become capable of working and living in English-speaking countries other than Australia after graduation. The participants' major concern was their English skills, which they believed had not improved significantly during their studies in Australia, despite the fact that they were about to or had successfully obtained their degrees in Australia. Given the fact that participants often spoke Mandarin in their everyday life in Australia, participants perceived their Australian university experiences as an exceptional case where they got by without using English in most circumstances. However, participants' image of other English-speaking countries and other transnational communities remained largely monolingual in English; therefore, they did not consider themselves competent to work in other English-speaking countries. As Norton (2001, p. 166) argues: "A learner's imagined community invites an imagined identity, and a learner's investment in the target language must be understood within this context." I suggest that participants' imagined community and imagined identity continues to impact their social mobility and career development after graduation. In other words, their imagination creates a limitation to their options of job locations in the future. Most of the participants were considering either staying in Australia or going back to Taiwan. Some participants were considering looking for a job in (South) East Asian countries such as China, Singapore, and Hong Kong because they believed their language competence would suffice in those contexts and the similar cultural backgrounds would ease their adaptation to those countries.

In terms of where my participants actually went after graduation, the most influential factor seems to have been their visa status. Many participants happened to study in Australia in a period when post-study work visas were not available. Therefore, 14 participants returned to Taiwan straight after they finished their studies. Four participants were able to apply for an Australian permanent residency visa because their professions were listed on the Australian skilled migration list. Also, three participants stayed in Australia by applying for spouse visas, and two participants continued to study on student visas. In addition, four participants came to study in Australia much earlier at a time when permanent visas were relatively easy to obtain. These four participants had stayed and worked in Australia for several years.

Besides visa status, another influential factor was job prospects. Among the seven PhD participants, of whom five were in the Humanities and two in the Sciences, only the two in the Sciences obtained academic jobs straight after they graduated. This situation could be further probed into in future research in relation to language and knowledge production in different disciplines. As for master's participants, only one participant majoring in Accounting easily found employment as an accountant in Australia, while another two master's participants who stayed in Australia were working in areas outside their majors.

One aspect worth noting is the linguistic transition experiences from university to the workplace of four participants. These four participants came to Australia much earlier and had migrated at a time when migration was relatively easy and the English requirement was not as high as it is at present. According to their descriptions, their levels of English proficiency before they came to Australia varied widely. However, one common factor was that they all indicated that it was after they left university and went into workplaces that they felt immersed in an English environment. Working in areas of information technology, social work, and music, they started to meet and work with more local Australians, learn much more about Australian culture, and operate fully in English at their place of work. Furthermore, they also indicated that after working for around two years they felt very confident using English at their workplaces and they did not consider the English language a burden to them anymore. The examination of international graduates' linguistic transition from university to workplace carries great potential to advance our knowledge of second language learning and the overseas settlement experience.

A final recommendation for future research is to investigate domestic students' experiences in the context of internationalized Australian higher education. As the changing linguistic environment with large numbers of international students also has an impact on domestic students, understanding how this impacts the learning experiences of domestic students' is crucial to maintain academic quality and social cohesion on campus. Also, gaining views from both international and local students can be beneficial to their interaction as effective communication is mutual and can never be a one-side effort.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Participant recruitment

List of electronic boards where the recruitment advertisements were posted

1. Taiwan BBS (telnet://ptt.cc a well-known public bulletin board system among Taiwanese students both in Taiwan and overseas),
2. Hello ANZ website (http://www.helloanz.org/forum/index.php?showforum=127 public electronic forum for students studying in Australia and New Zealand),
3. TSA (https://www.facebook.com/sydneytsa/info Taiwan Student Association is the largest cross university network for Taiwanese students in Sydney)
4. Personal Facebook page of the researcher and the researcher's friends

Recruitment advertisement– English version

This is Grace, a PhD student in Linguistics in MQ. I'm conducting a research on Taiwanese students studying in AU higher education. I am interviewing Taiwanese students and would like to invite you to share your experience. The interview would only take half an hour to one hour, and it will be very casual and pleasant. Please let me know if you are interested or your other Taiwanese friends are. Thank you very much! :)

Recruitment advertisement – Mandarin version

台灣動起來: 流動，語言，留學經驗的互動與交錯

你是從台灣到澳洲留學的學生嗎?

如果是，歡迎你參與台灣留學生在澳洲的研究，我們想要聽見台灣留學生的語言學習及留學經驗的生命故事。

如果你願意參與研究，我們會有一個輕鬆的訪談，訪談時間約為半小時到一小時，之後若你同意，你可以繼續參與研究，與研究者保持聯絡，繼續分享你的經驗。

關係你的隱私

本研究經 Macquarie 大學的人權倫理委員會核准，你的隱私及匿名會受到完整保護。你也能隨時停止參加研究，即便先前已經同意參與。

若你有興趣或有任何問題，請聯絡研究者:

PhD Candidate Grace Chu-Lin Chang; Email: chu-lin.chang@mq.edu.au

謝謝!

Appendix 2: Information and Consent Form-First interview

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY | FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES

Information and Consent Form

"Taiwanese on the move: Intersections of Mobility, Language learning, and Overseas study experience"

You are invited to participate in a study of Taiwanese higher education students in Australia. The purpose of the study is to investigate how language learning intersects with Taiwanese students' experiences in Australia, including their motivation to study in Australia, the challenges they are facing, their language use, their sense of identity and belonging, their social network, and their overall educational experience.

The study is being conducted by PhD candidate Chu-lin (Grace) Chang of the Linguistics Department at Macquarie University. This project is conducted to meet the requirements of PhD under the supervision of Professor Ingrid Piller. Contact details are as follows:

Chu-lin (Grace) Chang (+61 449 818772; Email: chu-lin.chang@mq.edu.au)

Professor Ingrid Piller (+61 2 9850 7674; Email: ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au)

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to share your experiences and thoughts about your life in Australia in an interview with the researcher. The interview will be audio-taped with your permission, and will run for approximately half an hour to one hour. You may also be invited to participate in follow-up interactions in the future. Follow-up interactions could include keeping a one-week diary and keeping in touch with the researcher.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only the researcher and her supervisors will have access to the research data. A summary of the results can be made available to you by contacting the investigator (Grace Chang) at the email listed above.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I, *(participant's name)* have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:____

(Block letters)

Participant's Signature:_____________________________Date:____________________

I, ________________________ consent to audio recording of my interview.

Investigator's Name:____

(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: __________________________ ___Date:____________________

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(PARTICIPANT'S COPY)

Appendix 3: Demographic information

1. Name:
2. Email:
3. Phone:
4. Address:
5. Hometown:
6. University & major:
7. IELTS score: Listening____, Speaking____, Reading____, Writing____, and Average_____.
8. Age:
9. Gender:
10. Date of arrival/ Duration of stay in Australia:

Appendix 4: Interview guide for Interview One (English translation)

- Past: Before coming to Australia

1. What's your previous experience of learning English or studying overseas?
2. What were your expectations?
3. Can you tell me about your financial planning for your stay?
4. What do your family and friends back home think of your overseas study?

- Present: Being an overseas student in AU

1. Could you describe a typical day of your life here?
2. What do you like and dislike most about AU?
3. Are things the same as you expected?
4. What is challenging for you?
5. Can you tell me about your studies? How's your interaction with other classmates?
6. Could you please describe your social network here?
7. How do you usually move from place to place? Do you feel that you have sufficient physical mobility?

- Future

1. What are your plans for after graduation?
2. Where do you see yourself five years from now?

Appendix 5: Information and Consent Form-Second interview

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY | FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES

Information and Consent Form

"Taiwanese on the move: Intersections of Mobility, Language learning, and Overseas study experience"

You are invited to participate in a study of Taiwanese higher education students in Australia. The purpose of the study is to investigate how language learning intersects with Taiwanese students' experiences in Australia, including their motivation to study in Australia, the challenges they are facing, their language use, their sense of identity and belonging, their social network, and their overall educational experience.

The study is being conducted by PhD candidate Chu-lin (Grace) Chang of the Linguistics Department at Macquarie University. This project is conducted to meet the requirements of PhD under the supervision of Professor Ingrid Piller. Contact details are as follows:

Chu-lin (Grace) Chang (+61 449 818772; Email: chu-lin.chang@mq.edu.au)

Professor Ingrid Piller (+61 2 9850 7674; Email: ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au)

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to provide any academic assignments or essays to this researcher. This would include the original task as it was set, the assignment or essay you produced and any feedback you might have received. If you decide to participate, it is up to you which of your assignments you wish to make available.

Additionally, the researcher would like to ask you questions about your experiences of writing these tasks as well as your reflections on the feedback you received.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only the researcher and her supervisors will have access to the research data. A summary of the results can be made available to you by contacting the investigator (Grace Chang) at the email listed above.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I, *(participant's name)* have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:____

(Block letters)

Participant's Signature:______________________________Date:_____________________

Investigator's Name:____

(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature:_____________________________Date:_____________________

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix 6: Interview questions guide for Interview Two on academic writing (English translation)

1. How did you go about writing the assignment? Clarity of the task
2. Did you find the original task easy or difficult?
3. Did you seek and/or receive any writing support from any source?
4. Do you always get assignments back and get feedback
5. Do you read feedback carefully?
6. What do you think about the feedback and/or mark you received?
7. Do you change or make use the feedback to do other assignments
8. Do you bear in mind those feedback to improve next assignment

Appendix 7: Key to transcription conventions

Mandarin Transcription

。	Clause final
，	Short pause
…	Long pause
!	Sentence-level emphasis
?	Question intonation
[…]	Researcher’s omission

English transcription

.	Clause final
,	Short pause
…	Long pause
!	Sentence-level emphasis
?	Question intonation
[…]	Researcher’s omission
[ ]	Translator’s supplement to utterance

*Note on transcription: Most of the data comes from interviews and field notes. These data were transcribed in Mandarin first and translated into English by the researcher. In order to avoid repetition, data type will only be marked in quotes when collected from sources other than interviews and field notes.

Appendix 8: Final ethics approval letter

寄件者： Fhs Ethics
收件者： Prof Ingrid Piller
副本： Mrs Chu-Lin Chang; Dr Kimie Takahashi
主旨： Final Approval - Piller (Ref: 5201100705)
日期： 2011年10月6日 上午 09:44:46

Dear Prof Piller,

Re: "Taiwanese on the move: Intersections of Mobility, Language learning, and Overseas study experience"

The above application was reviewed by The Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee wishes to thank you for a thorough and well prepared application. Approval of the above application is granted and you may now proceed with your research.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Prof Ingrid Piller (Chief Investigator)
Dr Kimie Takahashi
Mrs Chu-Lin Chang

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports. Your first progress report is due on 1st September 2012.

If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Sub-Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Sub-Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

5. Please notify the Sub-Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University.

This information is available at the following websites:

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/
human_research_ethics/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of Final Approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have Final Approval, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the address below.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of final ethics approval.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Peter Roger

Chair
Faculty of Human Sciences
Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee

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