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**Conceptual, Rhetorical and Linguistic Problems
in Second-Language Academic Writing**

by

Christine Bischof, B.A., C.T.E.S.L.

A thesis submitted to
The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Applied Language Studies

School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies
Carleton University
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*"Conceptual, Rhetorical and Linguistic Problems
in Second-Language Academic Writing"*

submitted by Christine Bischof, B.A., C.T.E.S.L.

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Aviva Freedman", written over a horizontal line.

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine the nature and causes of problems in second language writing in regular university courses, in order to gain insight into the difficulties that occur when writing is cognitively demanding and requires the use of secondary sources. A naturalistic, qualitative inquiry into the writing of eight Cantonese speakers studying business revealed conceptual, rhetorical and linguistic weaknesses, as well as weaknesses in the evaluation. Some of the weaknesses exhibited appeared to be rooted in similar problems in the reading of the source materials. In order to examine the difficulties in depth, textual analysis was combined with interviews with the writers and the evaluator. The study has implications for researchers in academic writing and teachers of nonnative-speaking students.

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Chapter One

Introduction

In almost all North American university classes, some students come from non-English-speaking backgrounds, and therefore must do the required writing in a second language. For these students, the intellectual challenges they face are complicated by linguistic and rhetorical difficulties, difficulties far greater than those experienced by native speakers. While there has been much research on the linguistic and rhetorical problems encountered by native speakers in their writing for academic purposes, there has been relatively little on the problems of nonnative speakers in the same situation: research on L2 writing has been done primarily in the context of ESL courses rather than regular content courses. Since writing for ESL does not (and indeed cannot) impose the same cognitive burden as writing in content courses, many questions remain about the failures that can occur when nonnative speakers work with intellectually demanding concepts. Thus many questions remain about the writing problems of nonnative speakers in regular courses.

Writing for academic purposes requires both analysis and synthesis, as ideas are extracted from their original contexts and applied to new ones. Writing, therefore, begins in reading, and nonnative speakers' difficulties, it can be said, begin here also. Readers must be able to form a global understanding of the source text, yet a low level of language proficiency may impede the ability to deal effectively with the new concepts. When writing, students are required to use the ideas in arguments that are appropriately complex, and also to structure these arguments so that they are easy for a reader to

complex, and also to structure these arguments so that they are easy for a reader to follow. This requires mastery of many things: the concepts themselves, the vocabulary and syntax to express the relationships among the concepts, and the rhetorical pattern appropriate in the particular situation. Many nonnative speakers, however, do not have such mastery, and therefore face a struggle with each of these elements.

Because the requirements in academic writing are so complex, and there is such great risk of failure for nonnative speakers, more information on nonnative speakers' difficulties is needed, so that appropriate measures may be found to help them succeed in their academic careers. Detailed information on the types of failures that are likely to occur and the causes of these problems may contribute to the development of such measures.

When discussing problems in academic writing, what is meant is the failure to satisfy the expectations of a particular evaluator, since writing is always an act of communication between individuals. Therefore it is also necessary to examine the expectations themselves, if the failures are to be fully understood.

The aim of the present study was to investigate problems in L2 writing and its evaluation in a content course. To do this, the assignments of a group of nonnative writers in a second-year business course, and the reactions of the teaching assistant who marked these assignments, were examined. The goal was to pinpoint the types of weakness and to consider the sources of the difficulties.

In order to situate the study, an overview is first given of some of the demands placed on academic writers, and the difficulties nonnative speakers are likely to

experience in meeting those demands; the problems that can occur in evaluation are also examined. Chapter two of this thesis reviews some of the literature relevant to these issues. In chapter three, the means by which the current study attempts to investigate the issues are laid out. Chapter four presents the findings of the research, and these are discussed in light of the literature in chapter five. In chapter six, directions for further research and pedagogy are explored.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

In doing academic assignments, students are often called upon to comprehend information presented in readings, lectures, and other sources and then use this information (or appropriate pieces of it) in written tasks. In order to do this, they must be able to recognize the relevant ideas in the source materials, extract them from the contexts in which they are embedded, and then reassemble them according to a pattern that is appropriate to the particular task. They must be able to "synthesize, organize, and interpret ideas, as well as apply information gained from reading to new situations" (Pugh & Pawan, 1991, p. 3).

1. The Task of the Reader

The task of reading, of addressing the ideas in a text, involves making meaning at many levels:

To understand a text a reader has to do more than compute the meanings of individual words. He must understand the ideas expressed by combinations of word meanings (generally represented as propositions) and must also understand the interrelations between those ideas. This is clearly a complex task. (Fletcher, 1981 p. 564)

A part of the complexity of the task is due to the fact that the levels at which a reader must make meaning are not discrete, but rather are intricately connected. Readers can often understand the individual parts of a text only if they understand the whole, and can

understand the whole only if they understand the parts: "The interpretation of parts and whole must proceed jointly" (Rumelhart, 1980, p. 46).

If readers are to understand texts on these two levels, it is essential that they understand, as Fletcher (1981) points out, not only the individual ideas, but also how those ideas are related. In particular, understanding the hierarchical relationships between ideas is crucial (Carrell, 1987), yet this presents many students with great difficulty (Johnson, 1981; Spivey, 1984; Winer, 1994). This is true of native speakers (hereafter called NSs) (Campbell, 1987), and it is especially the case for nonnative speakers (NNSs) (Currie, 1991, 1993; Jones, personal communication; Levine & Reves, 1994). The additional difficulty brought into the process by limitations in language proficiency will be discussed in the course of this chapter.

To begin, a study by Winer (1994), which integrates research in several areas of reading, specifies the problems some NNSs face when dealing with academic materials. In this study, the poor nonnative readers had great difficulty grasping hierarchical relationships among ideas. On a word-association task, which was part of a reading comprehension test, these readers gave more syntagmatic responses -- that is, they associated words *across* categories (such as 'colour' with 'picture') -- whereas the good readers gave more paradigmatic responses -- that is, they associated words *within* categories (such as 'colour' with 'red'). Winer offers Johnson's (1981) claim that

differences in responses represent different ways of perceiving relationships and categorizing information, and...there is a connection between perceiving and categorizing related to levels of reading comprehension. (p. 87)

Winer illustrates how important the ability to grasp hierarchical ideas is in reading comprehension. Similarly, Spivey (1984) argues that good readers are more able to distinguish between superordinate and subordinate ideas and are thus better able to “get the gist” of a text they read.

For nonnative readers, an added challenge in recognizing hierarchical structures arises out of the fact that a low level of familiarity with a second language can cause relationships between ideas in a text to be obscured. Winer (1994) explains that, for NNSs, “the problem is not usually individual vocabulary items as such, but failure to catch the significance of syntactic cues, including overt markers, e.g., *however*, *both*, and *such as*” (p. 88).

Similarly, Spack (1988) suggests that NNSs can be greatly hindered in their general understanding of reading material not because of technical vocabulary, such as “repression” and “schizophrenia” in work in psychology, but because of difficulty with descriptive terms like “to coax,” “remnants” and “fervent appeal” (p. 42). In reading academic sources, “often the more general use of language causes the greatest problem” (p. 42). Some of this “more general” language refers to relations among ideas -- relations such as contrast, inclusion and exemplification, as given above by Winer -- and it can therefore make larger meanings opaque to NNSs.

Winer’s (1994) and Spack’s (1988) findings indicate that NNSs have even greater difficulty than NSs understanding texts well enough to make the appropriate connections between ideas as they read. Consequently, it can be argued, these students will have less ideas to work with when it comes to the task of writing, compounding their difficulties

in performing in the academic context. This will be discussed more fully in later sections. However, it is necessary to provide an overview of the reading-to-writing task, in order to specify what is required of reader/writers in the academic context.

2. The Reading-to-Writing Task

The processes of reading and writing for academic purposes are intricately intertwined (Spack, 1988). As Pugh and Pawan's (1991) research shows, "most studies conclude that reading and writing are connected, mutually supportive, and fundamentally involved in thinking" (p. 9). Thus in working through assignments, students must switch back and forth between the roles of reader and writer, in order to understand the information they are endeavouring to incorporate, and to make their own connections between the ideas this material brings forth (Pugh & Pawan, 1991). This, according to Campbell (1987), is a step beyond reading to learn, since the goal is not only to become familiar with the material, but also to integrate relevant aspects of the information into one's own writing. Clearly, the reading-to-writing transition is immensely complex.

Comprehension during reading affects a student's ability to write later on (Stein, 1990), given the connectedness of the reading and writing processes. The representation one makes of either task influences one's reading and writing, as students look for ideas in their reading that are relevant to the written text they are to produce. That is, since they keep their writing goals in mind as they read or reread a source text, the reading of the text is affected by those goals. Accordingly, students who have decided early on what kind of paper they want to write find it easier to build a representation of the source text

and thus read with greater ease. But students who are unsure of the shape they want their papers to take will find it more difficult to build an appropriate representation of the source text (Stein, 1990).

However, indecision about writing goals is only one of the problems students may face when dealing with a source text. Winer (1994) points out some of the cognitive activities involved in reading-to-write:

- a) identifying and distinguishing classifying criteria
- b) identifying categories of superordinate/subordinate relation
- c) reclassifying the same content in different ways using different criteria or different hierarchies of categories
- d) dealing at an appropriate level of detail with various ideas – i.e., recognizing the importance of ideas relative to each other

Stein (1990) adds that in reorganizing ideas found in a source, in order to integrate them into their writing, students must elaborate on the ideas, producing "meaning-enhanced additions," by, for example, looking for agreement or disagreement between those concepts and their own prior knowledge. This is connected to understanding hierarchical relationships, in that in order to make these elaborations, students must "arrange the text into high- and low-level propositions, ...look[ing] for superordinate categories under which to subsume items in the source text" (p. 122). This, in Stein's view, clearly indicates "how constructive processes of reading and writing interact, as prior knowledge combines with source text propositions to create new ideas and critical perspectives" (p. 122).

These conclusions come out of an extensive study undertaken by Stein and colleagues Linda Flower, John Ackerman, Margaret Kantz, Kathleen McCormick, and Wayne Peck. Stein's findings also echo Pugh and Pawan's (1991) claim that reading and writing are deeply connected and "fundamentally involved in thinking" (p. 9): she summarizes by stating that when reworking ideas in reading-to-write, students "discover relations between ideas that may not have been apparent on reading alone" (p. 122).

In the present study, students were required to make a transition from a narrative to a thematic structure and interpret data from a case study within the framework of general concepts addressed in the course. It seems reasonable to suggest that such a reinterpretation of empirical information according to a theoretical framework would demand that students discover more relationships between concepts than they would "on reading alone."

But if readers are hindered in their ability to understand pertinent information in their readings, as suggested earlier, they will be disadvantaged when they come to build their own texts; as Rumelhart (1980) points out, a prerequisite to reconceptualizing and expressing ideas is that one first have a firm grasp of these ideas. And as stated earlier, research indicates that NNSs have even greater difficulty than NSs in understanding the ideas in their reading material and using them to write; for example, Spack (1988) argues that even highly literate NNSs face a greater struggle in performing this task.

Particularly difficult tasks for NNSs are the identification and manipulation of classification categories, as Winer (1994) has pointed out. In a thorough study of NNSs writing for a content course, Jacobs (1982) found that L2 writers often could not

adequately mold ideas to fit the requirements of their assignments, tending instead to present chunks of information in the same form as they had found them:

Apparently they found themselves locked into an ordered set of data, much of it unrelated to the process of muscle contraction [i.e., the topic at hand]. They seemed to know it very well and to find it easy to lift it straight from their memory of lecture notes, like a large chunk. (p. 18)

Campbell's (1987) study reveals the same, and concludes that students who have not properly assimilated ideas from readings are unable to build a coherent whole in their own texts, and consequently produce writing which is "coherent in spots, because it has been taken directly from the text lecture. Yet the whole is not coherent" (Johns, 1985, cited in Campbell, 1987, p. 3). This lack of textual coherence suggests an incomplete understanding of the overall conceptual picture.

2.1. Reading and Writing in L2

Shedding further light on the additional difficulties experienced by NNSs, Levine and Reves (1994) uphold Clarke's (1980) "short circuit" theory, which maintains that a low level of proficiency in a second language can hinder the transfer of reading skills from the L1 to the L2. While acknowledging suggestions to the contrary (e.g., by Hudson, 1982 and Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983), they maintain that there is greater evidence that an L2 reader's "inadequate language proficiency may prevent the application of the reader's schemata to the reading of the text" (p. 72). They claim that familiarity with the lexicon and grammar of the language in which NNSs are reading is essential to their ability to apply their schemata and fully understand a text.

A reason for this may be that tending to concerns of syntax and vocabulary in a language in which one is not sufficiently fluent demands so much mental energy that one is not also able to pay enough attention to larger meanings. Nonnative readers thus may have difficulty applying appropriate L1 schemata in order to "stop learning to read and only read to learn" (Grabe, 1988, p. 36). Therefore students who must spend inordinate amounts of time consulting dictionaries and otherwise struggling through wording may have less attention remaining to devote to the understanding of larger meanings in texts.¹ A journal excerpt from a participant in Spack's (1988) study gives an indication of the struggle NNSs may face in reading: "To understand the text fully, it often takes more than an hour to read just ten pages. And even then I still don't look up all the words I don't understand" (p. 42). It can be argued that many NNSs are unable to "understand the text fully," as this student claims to do, if reading can only be achieved through a great deal of exertion.

2.2. The Capacity Argument

The problem outlined above is the thrust of the capacity argument, supported by Currie, (1991, 1993), and Zamel (1995) -- that when cognitive, rhetorical, and linguistic demands are heavy, a reader or writer may not be able to devote sufficient mental energy

¹ Research in first-language reading skills among children may provide further evidence for the link between the ability to use language and the ability to make meaning when reading. Children who have problems processing language perform more poorly on reading tests (Perfetti & Goldman, 1976), and this suggests that language proficiency plays an important role: "...reading comprehension is best understood as dependent upon general language comprehension skill" (p. 33). While the study cited here deals with children who are relatively unskilled in L1 processing, the connection it makes between language skill in general and reading comprehension appears relevant.

to all of the demands. This may then be at the root of NNSs' greater difficulty with academic reading and writing.

An important consideration in this argument is the interconnectedness of the cognitive, rhetorical and linguistic tasks when dealing with texts. D'Angelo (1979) maintains that "the enactment of basic rhetorical strategies is related to the enactment of fundamental patterns of thinking" (cited in Rose, 1985, p. 235). This echoes Jacobs' (1981, 1982) claim that rhetorical information constitutes information about relationships between ideas. According to Jacobs, syntactic relations such as superordination versus subordination are reflective of similar hierarchical relations between the ideas dealt with in a particular sentence; thus making connections between ideas and dealing with the syntax that expresses them are closely related tasks, both demanding great amounts of the reader/writer's attention as he or she attempts to work through a resynthesis of ideas.

2.3. The Relationship between Language Use and Idea Development

Research by Rose (1985) clearly indicates the relationship between using language and developing ideas. In his analysis of a NS's argument against an idea expressed in Karl Jasper's *Man in the Modern Age*, he claims that the writer "was most confused and conflicted when writing the particular sentences that embodied her not-quite-honed, sometimes rambling disagreement with Jaspers" (p. 247).

If there is a connection between difficulty working through ideas and difficulty expressing oneself in language, then it seems clear that the problems are exacerbated when students are not highly proficient in the language in which they must write, and

when their vocabulary is perhaps limited to words that are “only semi-fitting with [their] thoughts” (Leki & Carson, 1994, p. 94).

Pugh and Pawan (1991) also explain the role that language plays in grappling with new ideas: “Students use language associated with unfamiliar knowledge as a kind of prop in the constructive process of building their own schema for...knowledge” (p. 15).

That is, students use the new words as building blocks when they construct knowledge. Pugh and Pawan refer here to NSs, and it can be argued that knowledge-building is even more difficult for NNSs, who are likely to find that the words themselves impose heavily on cognitive capacity. Research by Tannen (1984) further suggests that dealing simultaneously with new words and new ideas can be overwhelming for some NNSs. In this study, second-language students, when retelling the plot of a movie they had seen, relied more heavily on the original structure than did native speakers, since they were less able to manipulate both new concepts and new vocabulary. Campbell’s (1987) research, as well as that of Connor & McCagg (1987), also suggests that difficulty in doing academic work will be heightened when both the language and the ideas are relatively unfamiliar to students.

2.4. Language Fluency and Idea Development

To be more specific, those who are less *fluent* in a language may necessarily be more preoccupied with form and thus find it more demanding to work through and express ideas when writing from sources. This difficulty can be compared to the writer’s block that NSs sometimes also experience, as discussed by Rose (1985), where writers

attempt to edit while they are still working through larger concepts and in so doing inhibit the flow of ideas. Harris (1985) also discusses how unskilled (L1) writers tend to interrupt composing in order to tend to grammar or spelling errors. Thus editing in the early stages of writing interferes with the development of ideas. However, since NNSs are less familiar with the second language, they may be forced to "edit" more, even at early stages.

In addition to lack of fluency, another, perhaps minor, cause of writer's block may be the desire to adhere to a word limit on an assignment. Research by Leki and Carson (1994) and Rose (1985) indicates that the development of ideas may be impeded when writers devote a great deal of attention to choosing the language that will allow them to express themselves precisely and economically before they have sufficiently worked through what it is they want to express. One student in Leki and Carson's study wrote that because his vocabulary was too limited to allow easy access to the precise words necessary, his line of logic was also limited:

In a short essay, I had to use the words that should have a very specific meaning. Since my word choice is limited, I have almost always hard time to find those words; therefore, my essays cannot make good arguments but rather be very simple. (p. 94)

On the other hand, when there are no restrictions on text length, nonnative writers, even those less skilled, may be partly able to avoid a preoccupation with surface-level editing and use a recursive process of writing and revising to generate ideas (Raimes, 1985; Leki & Carson, 1994). Thus it can be suggested that when NNS writers do not need to be overly worried about the precision and conciseness of their written language, they are able to devote more attention to the concerns involved in making meaning through

text. While this does not directly support the idea that the level of proficiency in the second language is an important factor in the quality of written texts, it is congruent with that notion. If writers are less preoccupied with vocabulary and syntax, either because it comes more easily (due to their higher level of proficiency) or because they have more freedom in their choice of forms (when the length of their papers is not restricted), they may be better able to attend to larger meanings and connections between ideas.

It might be counterargued here that those NNSs who are not particularly concerned about linguistic correctness will not be impeded in their working through ideas. While there is some evidence for this (e.g., Jones & Tetroe, 1987), if fluency with language is at least to some degree a prerequisite to formulating propositions in that language (as suggested by Leki & Carson (1994), and implied by Rose (1985)), then NNSs may be less able in general to get away from concerns with linguistic forms and pay sufficient attention to ideas.

However, this is not to say that NNSs always devote attention to language at the expense of ideas. Pringle and Freedman (1982) suggest that for first-language writers, mechanical errors increase when a writing task demands a great deal of attention to concepts; it could be suggested then that NNSs also, at various times, devote their attention to ideas rather than linguistic forms. The point being made here is that when both language and concepts present a student with difficulty, the student may be unable to sufficiently attend to both concerns.

To summarize the research cited thus far, the reading-to-writing transition appears to be particularly demanding for NNSs. NNSs may already have a poorer store of ideas

to work with at the point of writing, having been less able to identify and extract the relevant information during reading, and might then not have enough conceptual connections at hand to construct appropriately complex arguments (Campbell, 1987; Pugh & Pawan, 1991; Spack, 1988; Stein, 1990). Expressing the ideas that they do have may then impose a further heavy demand, if formulating sentences and finding vocabulary are difficult and can only be accomplished by the constant employment of dictionaries and the like. Attending to concerns of audience, while struggling through cognitive and linguistic tasks, likely heightens the challenge even more.

The conclusion that all of the activities discussed here may prove especially challenging for NNSs is supported by comments from nonnative students themselves who participated in Leki and Carson's (1994) study. When asked about the degree of difficulty they had in handling reading-to-writing tasks in regular content courses, the students responded that they still, even after completing EAP courses, felt inadequately prepared to do these things.

3. Second-Language Writing

Having discussed the difficulties that all students, but especially NNSs, may have in reading and writing, it is now necessary to explore in greater detail what contributes to "good" academic writing.

3.1. Skilled versus Unskilled Writers

A 1985 overview of composing research by Raimes suggests that there is no consensus on the meaning of good, poor, skilled and unskilled writers. More recent work by Pennington and So (1993) offers a similar conclusion. According to Pennington and So, writers are often classified on the basis of their products: thus those who write poorly are unskilled writers, and those who produce good writing are good writers. There has been considerable research into the strategies of both good and poor writers, but in their view, the criteria for assigning writers to either of these categories are not precise enough. While there may be a lack of precision in the description of good versus poor writers, research does suggest consistencies in what products and strategies are associated with good or poor writers.

3.1.1. Skilled versus Unskilled Writers: Strategies

Raimes' (1985) review of composing research finds that skilled writers consider audience and purpose (also Grabe, 1987; Hirose & Sasaki 1994), consult background knowledge, "let ideas incubate," plan, and see writing and revising as a cyclical, recursive process (also Krapels, 1990). In general, then, skilled writers plan and revise at higher levels and attend to concerns of audience, content, and organization. While also paying attention to lower-level issues of grammar and spelling, skilled writers do not get bogged down by them (Pennington & So, 1993; Hirose & Sasaki 1994). Unskilled writers, on the other hand, consider audience less, plan less, have plans that are less flexible, revise less and often revise only at surface level rather than assessing the fit between the plans and

the product (Krapels, 1990; Raimes, 1985). Skilled writers also give the impression of having greater control over their writing, manipulating information and language to fulfill the reader's expectations (Jacobs, 1981; Reid, 1992). The next section will examine the issues of composing skill and second-language writing.

3.2. Is Composing Competence Transferable from L1 to L2?

The relationship between composing ability in L1 and L2 is controversial. Some (e.g., Mohan & Lo, 1985; Raimes, 1985) maintain that good L1 writers are good L2 writers: Hirose & Sasaki (1994), for example, claim that there is a "composing competence" that transcends the languages used. Others, however (e.g., Cumming, 1988; Kaplan 1988), claim that the ability to compose in one language does not necessarily mean an ability to do so in another.

Even the issue of whether or not good writers' use of the same strategies in the L1 and the L2 will result in good written products is unclear. Hirose and Sasaki (1994) claim that the good writers in their study employed the same strategies when they wrote in their second language, and that this partly led to the quality of these products, although they allow that L2 proficiency is also important. Pennington and So (1993) place more emphasis on the importance of L2 proficiency and claim that the use of good strategies in L2 writing will *only* lead to good products if language proficiency is also high. Since most studies of NNS writing take language proficiency into account (Raimes 1985),² it

² Although Raimes argues that L1 writing skills are the main influence on the quality of L2 products, she suggests that language proficiency is also an important factor.

would seem that this, as well as writing strategies, is an important factor in the quality of NNSs' texts.

Research findings by Jones and Tetroe (1987), however, may well answer the question on the importance that language proficiency has in the transferability of skills to L2 writing. They claim that "studies that look for *quantity* of transfer find differences, while those that look for *quality* find similarities" (p. 39, emphasis added).

In their study measuring the extent of transfer of writing skills between languages, they found that L1 strategies could indeed be applied to the L2 task (observing this directly during the writing process); however, the degree to which they could be employed was lower in the L2 than in the L1. Since NNSs generally must devote more mental energy to language during the process of writing than NSs (Jones, personal communication), it stands to reason that they will be less able to adequately attend to the larger issues of making meaning and addressing audience as well, and that the quality of their writing will thus be lower.

Thus L1 writing skills, even if transferable (and transferred), do not necessarily ensure the quality of written L2 products: a writer's proficiency level in the second language may also be an important factor in his or her ability to write well in that language. The next section explores the importance of language proficiency more fully.

3.3. The Importance of L2 Proficiency in the Quality of L2 Written Products

Just as there is controversy over the transferability of writing skills from L1 to L2, the importance of language proficiency in this transfer is also contentious. Some (e.g.,

Mohan & Lo, 1985; Zamel, 1984) claim that writing strategies and behaviours mainly determine composing skill, while others (e.g. Leki & Carson, 1994; Pennington & So, 1993) argue that the level of proficiency in the second language is an important factor in the quality of L2 texts. A third group (e.g., Hirose & Sasaki, 1994; Jones, 1985; Jones & Tetroe, 1987; Raimes, 1985) places equal emphasis on the two, suggesting that both L1 writing skills and L2 proficiency have an influence on L2 writing quality. In general, the research supporting the view that language proficiency is important outweighs the research that does not support this assertion (Pennington & So, 1993). Based on the research discussed above, it is possible to argue that the skills and strategies that a writer is able to use in the L1 may be only partially transferred when writing in the second language, and that this is especially the case when a writer is less proficient in the L2, and must direct a large amount of attention away from larger concerns toward working through vocabulary and grammar. Since cognitive capacity is not unlimited, meeting the demands in all of the areas – conceptual, organizational, rhetorical, linguistic, etc. – may not be possible for many NNSs. Cumming (1988) sums up the relationship between a writer's proficiency level and ability to devote attention to the range of elements involved in producing good writing:

As people gain proficiency in their second language, they become better able to perform in writing in their second language, producing more effective texts, attending more fully to aspects of their writing. (in Pennington & So, 1993, p. 44)

In order to explore the role that L2 proficiency plays in a NNS's ability to write well, it is necessary to examine more closely the relationship between language proficiency and cognitive capacity.

Research by Britton, Holdredge, Curry and Westbrook (1979) shows that cognitive capacity is exploited more fully when one reads a passage that contains more discourse level meaning. They conclude that making a greater amount of connections thus uses more cognitive "space." It could be suggested that making the transition from reading to writing, where ideas must be reformulated and reconnected, also uses a great deal of cognitive capacity. Given this evidence and the argument presented earlier that many students have difficulty grasping and manipulating relationships between ideas, it is clear that academic reading and writing place heavy cognitive demands on students.

As discussed in sections 2.1 and 2.2, for those who are less proficient in the L2, simply dealing with sentence-level language may also take up a great deal of cognitive capacity, and prevent them from paying sufficient attention to other demands in writing. Jones (1985) investigates this problem in greater detail, and demonstrates that NNSs who over-monitor their language as they write use a great deal of short-term memory (a compartment of cognitive capacity) for lower-level language and do not have enough cognitive space left for more global concerns -- the monitor works at the level of the sentence or word and overusing it comes at the expense of "other parts of the process, such as generating ideas and connecting them, and organizing them for the audience" (p. 97). While some NNSs monitor less than others (Jones, 1985), all NNSs probably monitor more than NSs (Jones, personal communication), and thus all NNSs are likely to be at least partly diverted by surface-level language concerns away from the other cognitive activities they need to perform in writing.

To continue this argument further, the lower the level of language proficiency, the more attention a NNS has to devote to dealing with wording and grammar, if these do not come as fluently (this is alluded to by Hirose & Sasaki, 1994). And if a student is less fluent in language, he or she is also likely to have more difficulty allowing ideas to flow when writing in that language, if the connection holds between developing ideas and using the correlating syntactic forms, as discussed earlier. Since developing ideas requires dealing with information at levels higher than the individual word or sentence, this process is likely to be impeded when the higher-level tasks are only accomplished haltingly, if at all.

The writing research reviewed to this point has highlighted some of the cognitive tasks that can cause NNSs great difficulty. It has also been suggested that because these tasks can be so overwhelming, NNSs may be unable to adequately address some of the social concerns involved in writing. That is, the writing of NNSs is likely to be rhetorically as well as conceptually weak. The following section will focus more specifically on some of the social concerns involved in writing.

3.4. Social Concerns: The Reader-Writer Relationship

Grice (1975) informs us that participants in a conversation must cooperate; it can be said that writers and readers must also work together to build meaning. Writers must anticipate a reader's reaction and suitably shape their presentation of information. However, this kind of shaping for the reader can be particularly difficult for NNSs (Currie, 1991, 1993), who, as has been argued to this point, may find the cognitive

aspects of a writing task already overwhelming, and so have less attention to devote to audience, and who are also less able to manipulate vocabulary and syntax to reflect their ideas.

Following is a brief outline of some of the ways in which academic writers must shape their presentation of content in order to interact appropriately with their readers.

4. Argumentation

Work by Toulmin, Rieke and Janik (1979) provides insight into the manner in which writers must present information if they are to be persuasive. They find that, in particular, writers must be sensitive to the ways in which their particular discipline values certain types of claims, grounds and warrants. In order to construct a valid argument, writers in business courses, for example, must uphold the principle that "modern business organizations, large or small, all tend to have one singular objective: to be profitable" (p. 289), and must remember that "the organization typically does not require managers to think deeply about the question, How will selling more cars (or building weapons) make better children?" (p. 303). That is, the reasoning must reflect the fact that profit is more important to businesses than is social welfare, if this reasoning is to be accepted by a reader from the field.

Enculturation into the values of a particular discipline is a long and complex process for any student (Currie, 1991; Freedman, 1993), and it can be assumed that this process is at least as difficult, if not more so, for NNSs as for NSs. In other words, some of the problems encountered may be the same for both groups, while others may be

unique to NNSs. For example, approaches to the subject matter itself might differ in the respective cultures of the writer and reader (Ballard & Clanchy, 1991; Shen, 1989), and, as we know from the now large body of research in contrastive rhetoric, starting with Kaplan's work in the 1960's, the means of persuasion can vary greatly from culture to culture, and can be difficult to employ effectively in a new social setting.

The problem, discussed earlier, that NNSs have with accurately reflecting their thoughts in second-language grammar and vocabulary is relevant in argumentation also. The use of the wrong words, for example "results in" rather than "results from," can make an argument appear illogical, even though the content might otherwise be correct.

4.1. Aristotelean argumentation

In Western universities, Aristotelean argumentation is generally demanded (Connor, 1996; Connor, Gorman & Vähäpassi, 1988; McKay 1993), and writers who deviate from it will have greater difficulty communicating with their readers. As suggested above, nonnative writers are less likely than NSs to employ this pattern successfully, first, because they may have less experience with this type of argumentation, and second, because they may have less remaining attention and fewer linguistic resources to employ in tailoring their writing to the needs of their audience.

To examine what is required in this type of argumentation, it is useful to look at statements made by Aristotle (1984). One such statement is: "What you should do in your introduction is to state your subject, in order that the point to be judged may be quite plain" (p. 2268).

However, NNSs are more likely to find it difficult to state their thesis clearly and concisely. Aristotelean argumentation also requires that the importance of ideas relative to each other be made clear: "The facts having been proved, the natural thing to do next is to magnify or minimize their importance" (p. 2268). Again, those who are less able to manipulate syntax will find it more difficult to represent such relationships accurately.

Regarding language, Aristotle (1984) states that "language to be good must be clear, as is proved by the fact that speech which fails to convey a plain meaning will fail to do just what speech has to do" (p. 2239). Further, he states that "one merit, then, of good style lies in the right use of connecting words" (p. 2244). Yet achieving clarity through the manipulation of language can be difficult for second-language writers. As Toulmin, Rieke and Janik (1979) explain,

the precise placing of different phrases and clauses within a sentence can itself influence emphasis and comprehension; using such devices as the repetition of words or phrases, the omission of some elements that can be supplied by the reader or listener, or the inversion of the usual sentence structure may also increase [or decrease] the effectiveness of a sentence as an instrument of communication. (p. 143)

In general, NNSs are less likely to be able to mold the content of their writing to the pattern required by their readers, and thus are more likely to fail in their communication. If information is not patterned as expected, a reader may misjudge the logic in a writer's argument and therefore in the student's underlying comprehension. As Currie (1991) explains, "NNSs, who frequently have less control over lexical subtleties and nuances than their NS counterparts are in danger of confusing their professors and thus of being judged incompetent" (p. 41).

5. "More of Everything": The Sufficiency Argument

The argument presented to this point is that NNSs have *greater* difficulty than NSs in performing not only the cognitive, but also the rhetorical and linguistic tasks necessary in academic reading and writing. The difference may be quantitative rather than qualitative, in other words, NSs may also find these tasks challenging, but students who are not completely at ease in the second language likely face an even greater challenge, since each task demands a greater effort on their part. It may be that for NNSs, it is a problem of *insufficiency* – insufficiency of fluency, of cognitive capacity, of connections made between ideas, of employment of appropriate L1 skills, of attention to all levels of text, of time to consult dictionaries, and of familiarity with the cultural norms of the academic community.

Raimes (1985) suggests that in order to cope with academic demands, second-language writers need "more of everything." She suggests specifically that NNSs may need more practice at organizing ideas appropriately (from a logical and rhetorical standpoint) and at finding the correct language to express ideas. Her more general statement concurs with the findings of the research reviewed here: that there are a great many areas in which NNSs may do some, but not all, of the right things. It may be that the normal pace of academic work does not allow NNSs to summon all the resources they need in order to read and write well (Ackerman, 1990; Jones, personal communication), and that their efforts are curtailed before they are able to satisfy the demands placed on them. Echoing the complaint expressed in the journal entry of the student in Spack's study (see p. 11), participants in Leki and Carson's (1994) study commented that they wished

they could process the second language faster, because it was slowing down the flow of ideas. Their comments reinforce the argument that in tending to one of the most vital concerns in academic work, the development of ideas, insufficiency (of time or other things) is at the heart of the problem.

6. Evaluation

The previous sections have discussed the various difficulties facing NNSs as they write. Since academic writing is always writing for a particular evaluator, it is also necessary to examine the issue of evaluation. Let us now turn to the evaluator's task.

6.1. The Task of the Evaluator

The purpose of evaluation of academic writing is to allow markers to assess students' mastery of course concepts (Currie, 1991) and reasoning abilities (Carlson, 1988). To do this, graders look for evidence of a student's manipulation of the relevant ideas into new relationships which are appropriate to the current prompt (Carson, 1992; Currie, 1991, 1993; Jacobs, 1981, 1982). That is, they look not only for the ideas themselves, but also for propositions created from those ideas:

The content of information is only part of what the reader wants to hear. The other body of information that the reader wants to hear is composed of the predications "This is a cause. This is an example. This is at some specific time. This is different from that." (Jacobs, 1981, p. 245)

However, accurate assessment is problematic, for two reasons. The first is that evaluators in North American university courses are often teaching assistants, who are themselves at relatively early stages of enculturation into their disciplines, and therefore

not necessarily competent to judge other students' knowledge. The second reason is that evaluators may be unable to assess content and organization properly when there are nonnative-type errors in students' writing (Pennington & So, 1993). In a study done by Carlson (1988), evaluators did not distinguish between reasoning skills and writing ability on two of the four writing tasks they judged, even though they used scoring methods that were supposed to stringently separate the two. Further research (e.g., Park, 1988 and Sweedler-Brown, 1993) also suggests that non-native linguistic errors influence graders' perceptions of the overall quality of writing. While some (e.g., Janopoulos, 1992) dissent, others (e.g., Vann, Meyer & Lorenz, 1984) maintain that non-native errors cause irritation, and research by Santos (1988) suggests that irritation is linked to incomprehensibility.

Perhaps it is in an effort to deal with the second problem that professors sometimes allow graders to accept papers that display less integration of ideas. Currie (1991) cites a study done in 1979 by Mike Rose, in which "the TAs who had been hired to grade the papers had been told by the faculty in departments other than English to sift through poorly organized papers to find facts" (p. 36). While manipulation of ideas and quality of reasoning are important in academic writing, the evaluation of these things is clearly problematic.

Another issue is that in addition to judging comprehension, evaluators also perform ranking and gatekeeping functions for universities (Farrell, 1994, 1995). Carrying out this second duty may in fact interfere with the first, and in certain cases students may receive marks that are reflective not so much of their ability, but of the administrative needs of their professors.

These arguments, however, are not to suggest that fair and accurate assessment of university writing is impossible, but only to point out some of the impediments. Having said this, it is necessary to return to a discussion of the main objective of evaluation, that of judging students' reasoning ability and comprehension of content. In the following section, the role of evaluators as readers is highlighted, in an attempt to reveal some of the things that evaluators must do in order to carry out their objective.

6.2. Evaluators as Readers

In order for an evaluator to be able to understand the information presented to him or her, there must be a certain degree of match between the structure used in the piece of writing and the grader's mental schema (Levine & Reves, 1994; Rumelhart, 1980). A text that varies greatly from the structure that the reader expects to encounter can cause more difficulty in comprehension, or can lead a reader to a false understanding of the intended meaning.

Rumelhart (1980) clarifies the latter problem and shows how strongly a reader's mental schema shapes understanding. He explains how a reader, believing that he or she has grasped the relevant ideas in a text, will continue with an incorrect understanding longer than a reader who has not yet committed to any schema. This reader will need more information than normal before he or she can give up the original schema. The match between expected and encountered information, then, seems vital in readers' ability to comprehend texts.

The problem suggested by this research is the potential mismatch between the structure used by a nonnative writer and the one expected by the evaluator. Information that is correct but is arranged in a pattern with which the reader is not familiar may be misconstrued or overlooked. For example, if the most important idea is presented last instead of first, the reader might misjudge the writer's understanding of the importance of that idea. Conversely, a writer's use of the correct (i.e., anticipated) schema may aid the reader's understanding so much that the reader is able to gloss over gaps in the information and perhaps even credit a student with more knowledge than he or she has.

7. Conclusion

The research reviewed here has highlighted the fact that writing in the academic context begins with reading, and that the two are intricately connected. It has shown that in order to understand source texts fully, readers must grasp the hierarchical connections that exist among the ideas, and that writers must then arrange these ideas into new hierarchies that are relevant to the current prompt. NNSs are particularly likely to fail at these tasks, however, because the understanding and manipulation of ideas is especially difficult for them. This is because they may need to devote so much attention to vocabulary and grammar that they are unable to attend to larger meanings as they read. With only a superficial understanding of the required information, NNSs are likely to have insufficient ideas to use in their writing. In writing, their cognitive capacity may also be overtaxed, and they may be unable to direct enough attention away from "editing" to let ideas flow and develop. In this case, they are unable to construct arguments that are

sufficiently complex. A further problem is that they may not be proficient enough in the second language to reflect their thoughts accurately, and their knowledge may therefore be misjudged. They may be unable to structure arguments as the reader from the target culture expects, and this may lead the grader to misjudge their reasoning ability; in other circumstances, their nonnative-type errors may cause the reader irritation and leave him or her unsatisfied with otherwise valid content.

The research has also shown that what is recorded as student failure may in fact be attributable to a certain extent to evaluator failure. Evaluators who are themselves novices may be unable to accurately judge the comprehension and reasoning ability of students only slightly behind them on the academic pathway. (In some cases this may also lead to students' false successes, if evaluators, for various reasons, give more credit than is due.) In addition to evaluator failure, another issue that must be considered when examining NNSs' (or indeed any students') performance is the other agendas a teaching assistant must fulfill when he or she marks their work.

In the context of these research findings, the present study attempts to examine the performance of a group of NNSs on an authentic academic writing task, which required the use of two source texts -- a textbook and a video (in addition to class lectures) -- and which was graded by a teaching assistant. In particular, this study aims to answer to following questions:

- * What is the nature of the weaknesses in the writing? How can they be categorized?
- * To what can the weaknesses be attributed? How can they be explained?

Chapter Three

Research Design

The Focus of the Study

The focus of the study was to examine the ways in which the writing of a group of nonnative students in a second-year course in business studies failed to meet the expectations of their evaluator. Specifically, the goal was to categorize the weaknesses, and to investigate their possible causes. In order to pursue these two questions as fully as possible, the difficulties in writing and in working through the source materials were examined. Since an important consideration was the expectations of the grader, weaknesses in the evaluation itself were also investigated.

The Participants

The participants were eight international students, seven of whom had Cantonese as a first language, and one who had Hokkien as a first language and Cantonese and Malay as additional languages. The students were enrolled in a second year course in Management and Organizational Behaviour, and all had completed two to three years of university study, in Canada only, when the data was collected. Seven of the students had done most of their high school studies, and some of their elementary school work, in English, in their home countries; one had done her high school studies in Malay. Five of the students had also completed between one and two years of high school in Canada. Six

of the students had taken at least one business course before the study was conducted. The students were chosen randomly from a large group (approximately 60 students).

The Data

The data consisted of two assignments from each student, the comments made on these papers by the evaluator, who was the teaching assistant for the course, my own evaluation of the assignments, and the comments and insights of the students on their difficulties. The assignments were those typically given in this course in management and organizational behaviour, as shown in research by Currie (1991, 1993).

The Assignments

Each paper consisted of the answers to four questions (see Appendix B) and was 1000 to 1500 words in length. In each assignment the students were required to analyze a case study in terms of theoretical concepts addressed in the course textbook, a video shown in class, and the course lectures. The textbook readings consisted of, for the first assignment, one chapter (30 pages) and one case study (4 pages), and for the second assignment, two chapters (55 pages total) and one case study (1 page). A sample from the textbook is provided in Appendix A, which illustrates the type of information the students were required to use.

The Interviews with the Evaluator

After each set of assignments had been marked, the grader was asked to read through the papers and comment on the failings, and to give explanations of or

justifications for the marks. These comments were tape recorded and transcribed. The following is a sample:

Evaluator: Yeah, see here he's just listing stuff. You know, this kind of stuff here, when they run into a sentence that's just a total run-on sentence and he's hitting like a whole bunch of points, he just like flipped through his textbook, found something in one of the chapters and goes okay this is the stuff and say okay just copy out the headlines, you know, that's all he did. No interpretation there. Yeah, you can also see like what he understands what "on the other hand" means, when he uses it to make another point, like an additional point, you know, with another subject, and he doesn't know how to break into that new idea, so he just kind of goes "on the other hand," which when you're reading it makes you think that it's a counterpoint, like on the one hand it's good because, and on the other hand it's bad, but that's not what he's saying, you know, and I didn't screw him for it, but it's obvious that he doesn't really know..

A larger sample of these comments appears in Appendix E.

The Interviews with the Students

In order to minimize intrusion into the writing process, the students were interviewed after the first assignment had been marked and returned, and again after the second assignment had been graded and returned. In these sessions they were asked to comment on their difficulties during the reading and writing, and, where appropriate, to explain the choices they had made in their work. The interview questions were informed by the comments made earlier by the evaluator. The interviews were recorded and transcribed; excerpts appear in Appendix D.

The Independent Evaluation

The researcher's independent evaluation was conducted after the interviews had been completed. In order to complete these evaluations, additional information was

sometimes obtained through further conversations with the students or evaluator.

Method of Analysis

The study was naturalistic in orientation. The aim was to gain an insight into the difficulties experienced by writers in authentic, rather than experimental, situations, and for this reason, the data consisted of actual assignments for the course. In contrast to positivistic research, where outcomes can be anticipated at the outset of a study, the naturalistic approach taken here allowed questions to be pursued as they arose during the course of the analysis. Thus, rather than looking for previously specified categories of writing problems, the categories emerged as the body of data was analyzed. This approach was used in order to allow a fuller exploration of the potential problems.

The approach was a modified version of the analytic-inductive method supported by Goetz and LeCompte (1981), and the constant comparative method advocated by Guba and Lincoln (1985). The former strategy

involves scanning the data for categories of phenomena and for relationships among such categories, developing working typologies and hypotheses upon an examination of initial cases, then modifying and refining them on the basis of subsequent cases. (Goetz & LeCompte, 1982, p. 57)

Guba and Lincoln (1985) give a similar characterization of the latter. They state that

the discovery of relationships, that is, hypothesis generation, begins with the analysis of initial observations, undergoes continuous refinement throughout the data collection and analysis process, and continuously feeds back into the process of category coding. (p. 248)

In this study, the "continuous feedback and feedforward" (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 248) took place primarily at the stage of analysis. Hypotheses were sketched, refined, and

altered as the data was examined. The aim here was to allow the gradual emergence of a tool that would function as "a sensitive homing device that sorts out salient elements and targets in on them" (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 224). This approach led to the study's focus on difficulties connecting ideas and arguing appropriately, and on the evaluator's misjudging of content; the questions were pursued as they became apparent.

In order to increase the trustworthiness of the findings, data sources were triangulated (Blaikie, 1991; Guba & Lincoln, 1985), and consisted of the grader's evaluations of the texts and comments on those evaluations, evaluations by the researcher, and the students' comments on their difficulties in reading and writing. Thus there were two analyses of written text and two sources of interview data. The categories into which the difficulties were organized were arrived at when there was significant overlap among the three sources of data.

Chapter Four

Findings

1. Connections between Ideas

As discussed in chapter two, the task of writing from sources is immensely complex (Campbell, 1987; Leki & Carson, 1994; Pugh & Pawan, 1991; Spack, 1988; Spivey, 1984; Spivey & King 1989; Stein, 1990), and can prove very difficult for all students and especially so for NNSs (Campbell, 1987; Leki & Carson, 1994; Spack, 1988). The task involves identifying and extracting appropriate ideas from the contexts in which they appear in the source material and synthesizing them according to different criteria in their writing. In synthesizing the ideas, students must provide links between them, since the presentation of isolated ideas is not highly valued in academic writing (Horning, 1993; Jacobs, 1981, 1982; Kantz, 1990; Spivey, 1984; Spivey & King, 1989). For the NNSs participating in this study, the recasting of ideas into new frameworks seems indeed to have proven very difficult.

The evaluator's responses to the papers suggest that the students could often identify key words and phrases in the source material, since they reproduced them in their assignments, but that they had much greater difficulty with the development of ideas into more complex arguments. The evaluator often commented that students were "just listing points" and "just doing the basics" -- that the raw concepts may have been provided, but that appropriate connections between them often were not.

In some cases this lack of connection was visually quite apparent, where answers appeared as a series of separate paragraphs introduced by headings, rather than as "essay-style answers," as the professor had required. One example of this is provided by the following response to the question *"What were the key strategy implementation factors for success of the Moscow McDonald's venture? Explain"*:

Leadership: Cohon communicates to Soviet Union on the joint venture for twelve years. His persuasive motivation, and changes in corporate values and culture in Soviet make McDonald successfully opened in Soviet market. He also motivates employees to adopt new McDonald's policy and infuses the required new values and attitudes.

Technology: Long history of McDonald provides food production technology. It has all automatic machines to provide fast and clean food services.

Human Resources: McDonald arranges a nine-month training program for its managers and a four-week period training for new crew members. McDonald only hires very high quality employees to achieve strategic goals.

In this answer, the ideas were presented in isolation, sometimes with appropriate connection to the question, but without real connection to each other. Dividing an answer into separate paragraphs, as was done here, made the disconnectedness more visible; however, in answers that appeared as continuous prose, there was often a similar lack of synthesis of ideas. The ideas were not reworked to address the question at hand appropriately, and instead appeared simply as "lists of points". The evaluator commented that "a list of points is not worth all that much," and thus indicated rather succinctly how responses that lack synthesis of ideas might be valued by a grader of an academic paper.

One student's comment on her difficulty with the assignments gives a clear indication that the synthesizing of ideas found in the source material, as well as the understanding of the ideas themselves, was an imposing task. To cope with questions

which overtaxed her understanding of the material, she would "just look through the book and try to find the right words."

Working from source texts

Although the students whose work is presented above did not provide sufficient synthesis in their writing, it was clear that they had been able to identify the relevant ideas in the source text, and to reproduce these in their papers. However, research (e.g., Early, 1989) suggests that this task of identification is more difficult for NNSs than for NSs, because NNSs must struggle with language as they read. With this in mind, it is necessary to turn to a discussion of one of the localized sources of information within the textbook.

Working from key visuals

At one point in the chapter, a pie chart appears which contains information relevant to the question *"What important environmental factors are evident in [the McDonald's] case?"* This chart (see fig. 1) uses only minimal language to present the information, conveying much of it through the use of lines and symbols instead. Some of the information conveyed is hierarchical – for example information on the relationship of the three factors to the organization, the boundaries between the three factors, and the categorization of ideas into factor groups. While the same information is also presented in prose form elsewhere in the chapter, this graphic representation may have been an important element in the students' ability to understand the ideas, in that it would have

simplified for them the task of sorting through language in order to identify concepts. Research on the use of key visuals (e.g., Early, 1989, 1990; Gillespie, 1993; Tang, 1992/93) supports such a view: graphic representations "lower the language barrier" and "promote the students' understanding of the relationship between ideas" (Early, 1989, p. 206).

Fig. 1. Key Factors in the International Environment

If the capacity argument holds, and these students were overwhelmed by the many demands -- conceptual, rhetorical and linguistic -- facing them in the reading, the visual aid may have been an indispensable source of information, since it would have allowed for the reduction of at least the last two of these demands, and thus helped the NNSs to identify the ideas more easily: Gillespie (1993) explains that "visual displays convey information in a form that is easier to perceive" (p. 351). This may explain why the chart was a more popular choice as an information source, rather than the prose sections, which would have required more effort to decode.

Thus according to the capacity theory, the students' use of the chart should have put them in a better position to manipulate the ideas, since they were not as taxed by the other concerns, and could better attend to the conceptual task. However, the ideas drawn from the pie chart were not better employed than those taken from other sources. Two possible reasons exist for this. The first possibility is that the ideas were made somewhat clearer, but not clear enough, if the chart did not provide *enough* hierarchical information (as much as, for example, a tree diagram, where hierarchical relations are more obvious). That is, the students may still have needed to rely to a heavy degree on the prose information in the chapter, and because of this, missed some of the connections. The second and more plausible explanation is that the pie chart facilitated only the identification of ideas, but not their synthesis: it may have helped the students to analyze the ideas as they read, without helping them to recombine these ideas as they wrote. Accordingly, several students who used the information from this source still presented it in isolated fragments rather than in complex and coherent arguments.

Still, it is likely that the visual aid allowed some simplification in the reading. In addition, it repeated information that appeared elsewhere, giving the students a second chance to work through it. This may also have been helpful (as Gillespie (1993) points out).

While the information given in this chart was acceptable as an answer to the question, it did not constitute the ideal answer. But it was still used more than was other information, suggesting that it had some added appeal, e.g., increased accessibility. Ideas that are easier to locate and extract may be more readily employed.

An example of the fragmentation suggested above is found in the following answer to the question cited previously, *"What important environmental factors are evident in this case?"*. The *economic* factor, taken from the chart, is given as a heading. The information in the accompanying paragraph is related to the heading, but the sentences within the paragraph contain no real connections between them:

Economic: Soviet is willing to change the capital of communism to beacon of capitalism. Although the economy is still weak, Soviet people can still afford to buy a Big Mac in McDonald. Weak dollar in Soviet will provide lower investment and lower operation fee for McDonald.

Working from prose

The presentation of unconnected ideas was, however, not limited to answers built on information drawn from visual sources, but was instead a common problem. This is exemplified in a response to the question *"Henry Quadracci seems to emphasize the individual over the team, yet the entire organization functions as a team. Discuss."* In this particular student's response, the first and last sentences were contradictory, one stating

that the company was a team and the other stating that it was not, and there was no sentence reconciling the two. The question required a discussion of each of the two propositions as well as a resolution of their apparent inconsistency, which would show that the two claims were hierarchically related, with one claim subordinate to the other. In his response, however, the student did not provide any such resolution, giving only the two opposing claims, and so neglected to illuminate the hierarchical relationship which was the heart of the question.

In another example, information that appeared in prose form in the case study was used to answer the question *"What were the key strategy implementation factors for success of the Moscow McDonald's venture?"* An excerpt from the response reads as follows:

There were several key strategy implementation factors for the success of Moscow McDonald's venture. They were the managerial leadership with long term perspective, the cooperation with the international, technological innovation in production, also pay more attention on the quality control and the services for customers, employee training and the public service such as charity funds for the children etc.

In this paragraph, while there is some connection between the first sentence and the second – i.e., the first sentence introduces the list and the second provides it – there are few connections within the second sentence; instead it is simply a list of factors. This might be appropriate if it were an introductory paragraph, since the points could be developed later on, but this paragraph is part of the body of the answer. In the evaluator's words, the student did not "prioritize" or "extrapolate" from the points he used; that is, he did not build the ideas into an argument.

Borrowing source-text language

Also of significance is the fact that these points, as they appeared in the student's answer, were hardly altered from the form in which they appeared in the source. The seven factors are given in the same order, some copied almost word for word. In the source these points are listed without elaborations, as they are in the student's response, but they are also explained again, at a later point, in greater detail; the student, however, did not draw on this more detailed information, but only reproduced the list.

In several other cases, phrases from the textbook or video were similarly transferred almost intact into the students' writing. The most commonly repeated phrases were that workers had to "eat, drink and sleep Quad/Graphics" (taken from the video) and that this company had "no procedure manuals, time clocks, or budgets" (from the textbook). Perhaps transferring the phrases in this way eased the linguistic load for students who were not adequately fluent in the second language. It is not clear why these particular phrases were so popular; perhaps they were somehow "catchier" than others and for this reason were appealing choices. In any case, these phrases were used frequently, even though they were not the most appropriate, just as the information on environmental factors, discussed earlier, was used even though it was not the most suitable. It may be that all of this information was somehow more accessible and that for this reason, rather than for reasons of relevance or suitability, it was more readily exploited by the students.

In this section, general weaknesses in linking ideas have been discussed. In order to examine this issue more thoroughly, it is necessary to address some aspects of connectedness more specifically.

1.1. Connections between Ideas: Applying Theory to Case Data

Relating theoretical ideas from the chapter to empirical information from the case studies also seems to have proven difficult for the students: this type of connection was frequently either omitted or incorrectly handled. Consider the following response to the question on environmental factors in the McDonald's case: in the following section the student attempts to deal with the political factor; while he does provide both theoretical and empirical information, he does not work the two into a complex argument:

Political environment is concerning the political risk. More than 12 years was need to negotiate the agreement between Soviet Union and McDonald's. This joint venture is the largest in the Soviet Union with any food company. For this risk will rise such as loss of management control through politically motivated even or action by host government.

In this response the theory (political risk) is not employed to *interpret* the data (the McDonald's/Soviet joint agreement); rather, the two are almost haphazardly thrown together. In fact, the theory and data are only vaguely related conceptually; in this case the lack of connectedness is profound. The evaluator's comment here was that the correct key words ("political environment" and "political risk") had been used, but the surrounding discussion did not relate to these words and the concepts they embody.

A somewhat more successful, if still limited, attempt is made in the following response, which demonstrates how key words or phrases from the theoretical sections of the textbook were simply juxtaposed with pieces of empirical information, rather than used as a framework for analyzing the data. This response begins by introducing the factors involved in McDonald's entry into the Soviet market:

There are 7 environmental factors which will be showed as follow.

It continues by naming the factors, which were taken from the textbook's discussion of the theory. It then matches each factor with information from the case study, for example:

Technological: McDonald provides it own food technology and transfers new agricultural technology and equipment to the Soviet potato farm.

Here theoretical ideas and case data appear together, in the headings and adjacent paragraphs, but they are not truly linked. The question required discussion of the relevance of the environmental factors (such as available technology) to McDonald's ability to enter the market. In this response, adequate discussion was not provided.

The students' weaknesses in linking ideas were apparent not only in their written products, but were also alluded to by the students themselves during the interviews. Several students commented on the difficulty they had in thinking about the issues and making their own arguments. One student found the second assignment particularly difficult because it was not as "straightforward" as the first, and called for more combination of theory, case information, and her "own opinions" – that is, it required more manipulation of concepts:

I think [the second assignment] is harder than the first one, because the first one you can just find examples for the questions and you can find examples from the book, and the questions is short but for this one you need to find some theories and your opinions to back up your answers.

For this student, finding the proper vocabulary to express herself also posed a challenge, suggesting that inadequate proficiency in the second language may have also contributed to the difficulty.

1.2. Connections between Ideas: Relevance

In deciding which ideas to include in their responses, students needed to address the issue of relevance. This also turned out to be difficult for them, and responses often included information that was superfluous to the particular argument being made.

A response to the question *"Which leadership models describe Henry Quadracci?"* shows how information irrelevant to the issue at hand was included in the discussion. In addition to a pertinent discussion of leadership, this answer also includes assertions that "employees become family members of Quad Graphic. They trust each other and respect each other" and "thus personal growth, technical learning, daycare and fitness centers are provided for employees." None of these statements is directly related to the topic of leadership. The ideas are not relevant; although they are included, they are not linked to the topic.

Another response, to the question on environmental factors in the McDonald's case, demonstrates a similar weakness. The following excerpt is from a discussion of the economic environment:

Quoted by the Dutch agricultural consultant: "because of the McDonald's venture, it may not take the Soviets twenty years to catch up to Western production methods."

This information on farming techniques is not related to the economic factors surrounding the venture, and consequently does not contribute to the argument.

Thus there were often disjunctures between certain pieces of information and the arguments in which they were included. In the above examples, the rifts occurred within a section of prose in the answer. In other cases, they occurred between a part of an

answer and the heading introducing it. For example, in a different discussion of environmental factors, a paragraph headed "socio-cultural," discussed instead how the venture was a success, citing evidence that it had outperformed expectations, and so on; there was no discussion of socio-cultural factors. A discussion of such factors may have been relevant to the overall argument, but the paragraph that followed the subheading did not include any such discussion.

In commenting on these errors, the evaluator expressed an interesting point of view: that the inclusion of irrelevant information was a clear signal of students' lack of understanding of the material. Rather than being able to focus on important ideas, the evaluator suspected they used "the shotgun approach" -- that they included all of the ideas remotely related to their arguments, and hoped that some of them would "hit". This view also seems to be at the root of his dissatisfaction with papers that exceeded the imposed word limit, since he felt that it was unfair that some students should have a greater chance than others of "hitting" the correct ideas simply by writing more and randomly covering all of the possibilities. Nevertheless, as will be discussed later, the evaluator was sometimes inclined toward giving students favourable marks, and sometimes rewarded answers that, even if only through this tactic, provided the correct ideas.

Another possible reason, however, for the evaluator's dissatisfaction with irrelevance errors is that they caused a rule of communication to be broken. That is, Gricean rules of interaction between a writer and reader demand that an answer be relevant to a question (Fasold, 1990), and thus in these cases, the interaction was faulty. The evaluator was irritated here that students did not "give a straight answer".

1.3. Connections between Ideas: Relative Importance of Ideas

Another apparent source of difficulty for these writers was the weighting of ideas within an argument according to their importance. This problem was of two types, one cognitive and the other rhetorical. Regarding cognitive difficulty, students (according to their comments during the interviews) sometimes did not fully understand which ideas were more important, and thus could not write about them satisfactorily.

With respect to rhetorical problems, even when the students grasped the importance of the various ideas, they often did not know how to reflect this appropriately in their writing, that is, in the manner expected by the grader. One student, for example, said that she did not use any particular order to present her ideas, and others said they put the most important ideas last. The structure used in such instances was at odds with the one anticipated by the grader, who expected the most important ideas in each argument to be emphasized, by being addressed first, being handled in a separate paragraph, being accorded the most space on the page, or by being signalled with terms such as "the most important...", etc. Students who did not use these signals had trouble meeting the grader's expectations, even if they did understand the material sufficiently.

Difficulty with the rhetorical pattern is clear in the following response to the question "*Which leadership models describe Henry Quadracci?*" Here the writer includes several relevant ideas, but does not correctly signal which ones are more or less important:

Quadracci is a democratic leader because...Also, he is people oriented leadership because...In addition, the inspirational leadership model describes Henry Quadracci because...

In the evaluator's interpretation of this answer, the ordering of leadership models was meant to correspond with the degree to which they applied to the named leader. However, the model discussed last was actually of primary importance, and the first one of least importance, and thus the answer was judged to be unsatisfactory, since it did not reflect the correct ordering. The writer, however, claimed that such a correspondence was not intended, since she generally did not order ideas according to their importance. (Closer questioning revealed that the student did in fact have a rough understanding of the relative importance of the models she used that was not reflected in her writing.)

As suggested earlier, in addition to ordering, other means could have been used to signal the writer's understanding of the relative importance of the ideas. This was accomplished satisfactorily by one student, who wrote, "Sociocultural factors were not less important than others," making clear that this idea, even though it was addressed last, was equal in importance to others. In contrast, a response by another student also included a vital idea, but without an appropriate signal as to its importance, and this prompted the grader to comment, "He's lucky I even noticed it."

The following answer reveals almost the opposite problem, one that again points to the NNSs' difficulties with the language of the source text. In this response, the discourse markers with respect to importance are all in place. The most important idea is dealt with first (as the grader expected), it is accorded the most space in the paragraph, and it is labelled as "the greatest effect" and "the key element":

The greatest effect of this entrepreneurial venture on the Soviet Union was that it changed a lot in the attitudes of the Soviet people as well as the Soviet economy itself. People found that by working together, they learn to communicate, to get along and be part of a team. These were the key element of success. Also

the transfer of technology provided a long-term benefit to the Soviet Union. It had brought a kind of revolution of food production and technology to the Soviet Union.

There is a mismatch, here, however, between the rhetorical and the conceptual. The answer is rhetorically effective, but wrong. The problem is that the idea of 'change in attitudes' does not relate to the question, which asks "*What is the impact of this entrepreneurial venture on the Soviet economy?*" (emphasis added). The writer focuses on the impact of the entrepreneurial venture -- but not on its impact on the economy, as required.

A close inspection reveals that this highlighting of 'attitudes' reflects the emphasis given to that idea in the original text, where it appears in a different -- non-economic -- context. In fact, the entire paragraph closely resembles the passage from the textbook, and has simply been lifted from that source:

According to one Soviet official, the greatest effect of the McDonald's venture is changes in the attitudes of the Soviet people...The impact on agricultural and production methods has established a foundation for a revolution in the food production system in the Soviet Union and has magnified the vivid imagination and entrepreneurial spirit of the Soviets. (Daft & Fitzgerald, 1992, p. 136)³

The student here simply regurgitated a section from the textbook and did not rework the ideas for the current purposes. The superficial match between the question and the information given in the above paragraph apparently misled the student.

The evaluator reacted to errors regarding relative importance in much the same way as he reacted to the errors of irrelevance: he suspected that students did not know

³ All subsequent quotations are from the textbook are taken from this edition.

which information was more or less important, and that they simply presented all of it in the hope of including the correct points somewhere in the answer.

1.4. Connections between Ideas: Redundancy

Redundancy was a less common problem, but it was still pointed out by the evaluator. The issue has been included in this discussion of connections because its occurrence suggests that a writer has failed to see the underlying similarity between the repeated words. In unnecessarily reproducing information, a writer may also fail to show *why* a chunk of information needs to be reiterated, that is, what new connection there is between the information and the overall argument. Again, it is not clear whether for the students in this study the problem was conceptual or rhetorical, or both. The students themselves were sometimes unsure why they wrote what they did, and thus opportunity for clarification on this issue was limited.

Some passages from the students' papers will serve to exemplify this type of error. The following two sentences, which give almost exactly the same information, are taken from a discussion of McDonald's as it compares to its competitors:

There is no quick-service food restaurant in Soviet market. McDonald is the first high quality, clean quick-service food restaurant in Soviet Union.

The second sentence in the next passage, which discusses strategy implementation factors in the McDonald's case, was also judged by the evaluator to be redundant:

Contribution was made by Cohon and other working teams as well. They completed the negotiations for the joint venture for a long time and made presentations to the chief officials.

Occasionally, issues of redundancy were confused with rhetorical miscues. A paragraph that was meant to be a conclusion was judged by the grader to be redundant, because it did not make *clear* that it was a conclusion, and that its purpose was to allow the reader to review and summarize the body of the answer; instead it simply repeated the information without signalling why this was being done. Here, then, the problem was an unsuccessful attempt at a rhetorical pattern rather than a misunderstanding of ideas.

1.5. Connections between Ideas: Language

In examining the ways in which the students failed to make the appropriate links between ideas in their arguments, it is useful to look more closely at the language used in their responses.

Jacobs (1981, 1982) argues that rhetorical information is information about relationships between ideas; this suggests that it may be difficult, or even impossible, for a grader to separate problems with language from problems with concepts, or that, indeed, for the student, the problems may be intertwined. A lack of rhetorical links would suggest a lack of conceptual connectedness; similarly, illogical rhetorical connections would suggest, at least to an evaluator, faulty connections among ideas. These two problems -- lack of connections and faulty connections -- did surface in the writing of this group, and the comments of the evaluator pull together the issues of using language and dealing with concepts, i.e., the issues of rhetoric and ideas.

The evaluator referred often to the students' reliance on "lists" instead of connected arguments to present their ideas. The conceptual simplicity of such sections was often reflected in the language used, as can be seen in the following sample response:

Bill Graushar is a democratic leader in Quad Graphic. He trusts and encourages members to make their own decision to perform high quality job for Quad Graphic. Employees become family members of Quad Graphic. They are taking care jobs like taking care their own business. Employees check each other's job quality. Bill becomes a big brother in the Quad Graphic family.

Conceptually and rhetorically, this paragraph is rather fragmented. The ideas are somewhat disparate, and there are few connectors holding the section together. Syntactically there is no subordination or superordination, and therefore also no causal relationships, for example, among the ideas. There is no "but" or "however", and so no relationships of contrast. (There is, however, one comparative relationship, signalled with "like".) There are few links, and therefore the section can only constitute a coherent and cohesive whole if the reader supplies a substantial number of the connections – more, I would argue, than a grader is normally prepared to make. The grader in this study indeed found answers such as this disjointed, and did not reward them with high marks.

While some answers (or parts of them) displayed a lack of connections, others contained links that were faulty. In one response information was introduced with "as a result" even though there was no causal relationship in the argument. This writer did not intend to present such a relationship, and simply used the phrase improperly, but to the grader, this appeared to be an illogical connection. In another, an idea was introduced with "on the other hand" when there was no contrast. Here, the student began by naming the strategy implementation factors in the McDonald's venture:

Some of the factors from the general environment were being used in the case, they were the technological, economic and legal/political factors.

The student then discussed the technological factor:

Mcdonald's brought some advanced equipment and machinery to the field in order to replace the older ones, which were adequately fifteen years or more left behind the First Countries.

The student then addressed the economic factor:

On the other hand, Mcdonald's need to care about the currency that they used in the restaurant. For example, the first Mcdonald's only accepted the rubles and the second ones only accepted the hard currency.

In the student's discussion of the final factor, there is another faulty connection, where an idea is introduced with "moreover" when the appropriate connector would have been perhaps "in addition" or "also":

Moreover, the company needed to negotiate with the ministries and trade officials of the Soviet in order to make a commitment, by setting up a joint venture between the nation and the company.

It appears that the writer wished to emphasize the information pertaining to the legal/political factor, yet nothing else in the discussion reinforces that emphasis.

The connectors used in these instances did not match what seemed to be the meanings intended by the writers, and therefore their incorrect usage may have stemmed from second language difficulties. It may be that the students did not clearly understand their meaning, and could only use them approximately. The grader was aware of this possibility, but still took the words at face value, and marked the students as if they had meant what the words implied. Because the connectors made unambiguous links between ideas, their presence seemed to cement the evaluator's understanding (correct or not) of the students' intended meanings.

The fact that the grader placed so much value on rhetorical connectors such as these suggests that, as Jacobs (1981, 1982) argues, rhetorical information is indeed information about ideas, at least to an evaluator. Connectors are likely signals of the underlying logic of the argument, that is, of the writer's understanding of how the ideas relate to each other. When they are incorrectly used (when students do not know what they mean), they then give the reader a false view of the writer's understanding. A comment by the grader is revealing: he equated clear argumentation with a "clear stream of logic."

1.6. Connections between Ideas: Summary

The problem of primary concern to the evaluator of these papers was the lack of connection between ideas. The purpose of the assignments was to allow students to apply theoretical knowledge in a practical analysis, and the result was to be presented in coherent and cohesive prose. However, on a conceptual and a rhetorical level, the writing often lacked the various types of connections expected. I suggest that in many instances, the conceptual and rhetorical problems, as well as linguistic ones, were intertwined, and that they stemmed in part from similar problems in reading, the first stage of the work. This question will be taken up again in chapter five; here, however, it is sufficient to say that the problems with integration were numerous and diverse.

A sentence from a discussion of the economic environment of the McDonald's venture displays some of the connectedness expected by the grader of these assignments:

Since McDonald's had decided to build its largest restaurant in the Soviet market, resource market was critical to them.

This sentence presents a causal relationship, and marks it clearly with "since". It also makes clear the importance of one idea to another, signalling this link with "was critical." The sentence is also concise, another requirement of the assignments. Perhaps most importantly, it connects theoretical information ("resource market") with empirical information (McDonald's in the Soviet Union). In this sentence the writer has achieved an appropriate integration of ideas and expressed them in the expected manner, demonstrating conceptual and rhetorical competence. Thus the writers were sometimes able to make the necessary connections, but there were many more instances where this was not so.

The aim of these sections has been to focus on the conceptual aspects of the students' writing difficulties. In the following sections, the rhetorical aspects will be highlighted.

2. Argumentation

The way in which writers presented information was often problematic, with errors in logic and organization being among the most important.

2.1. Argumentation: Logic

Illogical arguments

Proposals that contradicted basic logic, or "common sense", were sometimes made in students' arguments. For instance, in responding to the question *"How do you account*

for the extraordinary motivation of Quad/Graphics employees?" several students correctly employed the theory of the 'hierarchy of needs', which maintains that motivation is related to the fulfilment of a hierarchically structured set of needs, from basic physiological needs to needs for self-actualization, and that each need can only be fulfilled when all of the ones below it are fulfilled. However, one student cited "entertainment" as a need at the lowest level of the hierarchy, that of physiological needs. In the interview, this student confirmed that she saw entertainment as a basic need, and that she believed it to fall into this category in the hierarchy. Another illogical claim is the one made in the following response:

Hungry Muscovites appear in all levels of society. It has a great probability that those people will come to the largest McDonald in the world.

The student claims a link of "great probability" between hunger and patronizing McDonald's, a claim that is not supported in the argument, and is, in the evaluator's opinion, unsupportable in general. Another claim found by the grader to be unacceptable was that "the company's average employee has a high-school diploma thus the level of maturity of its employees is relatively high."

Some arguments, however, appeared illogical, but on closer examination, it was found that the problem was lexical. For example, one student claimed that "physiological needs are satisfied since employees as a group own about 22 percent of the company," because, as he revealed in the interview, he understood "physiological" to mean "psychological."

Inappropriate arguments

In the above arguments, the reasoning contradicted common sense, while in others, the logic ran counter to principles more specific to the field of business studies. An example of the second type of argument is the following:

McDonald's chose the direct investment strategy to enter the Soviet market. This strategy was applied because of the country's instability.

According to the evaluator, political instability would not inform a decision to use a direct investment strategy, and for this reason the argument was seen as illogical.

In another response, the support given for claims was not credible. A student referred to "previous studies" to support her proposal, but did not clarify the nature of these studies. In the evaluator's judgement, the support was too vague, and was in fact false, since no such studies existed.

Contradictions

In another student's argument, the problem was that there were two contradictory claims, and no resolution of the disjuncture. The writer first claimed that a manager at Quad/Graphics is a "people-oriented" leader, and then concluded with an implication that in this case leadership style is irrelevant, and that "substitutes for leadership" are of importance. The argument lacked a sentence that reconciled these two statements.

Some arguments, however, contained a different type of reasoning error. The reasoning here was not illogical, but was inappropriate to the forum of business studies. For example, one question asked for the ways in which the success of the McDonald's venture could be measured. According to the evaluator, the only real measure of success

in business was profit. However, some students offered other indicators, such as the improved relations between Americans and Soviets and the creation of jobs for Soviet citizens. Because these humanitarian or social concerns are invalid in the business arena, arguments that used such warrants were dismissed.

To be fair, though, it should be noted that consideration of so-called "soft" issues is not totally incompatible with business, and that businesses often do pay attention to their relationship with the community, etc. But typically, this only becomes an issue when neglecting it would result in an unfavourable public image and eventually affect profits (Toulmin, Rieke & Janik, 1979). This subtle point may not have been picked up by the students; it is clear that to the evaluator, such "soft" issues were inappropriate as warrants for these arguments.

Here too, the cause of the problem, the use of inappropriate support, may be ultimately traceable to the students' language difficulties. It has been argued that the students were operating at a somewhat superficial level in their reading and thus in their gathering and utilizing of information. One might speculate that because the idea of profit was not discussed explicitly in the textbook, it was overlooked by some students, who may not have been flexible enough to integrate explicitly-stated information with ideas that were either tacitly part of the discipline, or discussed only in the lectures, rather than in the textbook, their principal source of information. The students who argued for the humanitarian success of the venture were using information from the textbook⁴, and they

⁴ The textbook states: according to Cohon, "McDonald's is a business but also is a responsible member of the community it serves. The joint venture with the Soviet Union should help foster co-operation between nations and a better understanding among people. When individuals from around the world work shoulder-to-shoulder, they learn to communicate, to get along, and to be part of a team. That's what we call burger diplomacy." (p. 136)

may not have been able to change focus from rewording textbook information to considering outside ideas, since the preoccupation with getting through the text may have been so consuming.

Other evidence supports the idea that language difficulties may have impeded a deeper understanding of the text. The textbook states that "the McDonald's venture is a success story for Gorbachev's policies and for the McDonald's organization..." (p. 133). The statement may have been taken at face value and understood as evidence that the venture was a success in the usual sense, even though it may have actually meant that the venture was a success of a different sort -- long-term rather than immediate. This superficial evidence of success may have been used in place of more appropriate warrants, because its explicitness made it easier to identify and grasp.

Lack of expert knowledge

A final type of argument considered inappropriate were those that did not sufficiently demonstrate expert knowledge of the field of business. For example, the following statement about the venture's impact on the Soviet economy was considered amateur:

Economic development: Soviet is the globe from the capital of communism but many Soviets appeared to genuinely want to establish closer ties with the West.

Here the student was apparently attempting to provide the information contained in the following excerpts from the textbook:

Perhaps you wonder how Lenin would react to the site of the golden arches within walking distance of the Kremlin. Would he be outraged that a beacon of capitalism would shine across the globe from the capital of communism?...Despite

numerous setbacks and requests for endless submissions and revisions to their proposals, Cohon persisted because many Soviets appeared to genuinely want to establish closer ties with the West. (p. 133-134)

In the evaluator's view, students in their second year should demonstrate a more thorough knowledge of economics than is presented in the student's overly general statement, and therefore this part of the answer was not given credit. The evaluator commented here, "Joe off the street could give a better answer."

2.2. Argumentation: Organization

As discussed in section 1.3, the evaluator judged organization to be a reflection of conceptual quality, and thus it was a critical element in the students' success or failure on the assignments. The order in which ideas were addressed, for example, was taken as a signal of the students' understanding of their importance relative to each other. Other elements of organization were also important, such as the grouping together of similar ideas, and, conversely, the use of separate paragraphs to discuss separate ideas. This section will show in greater detail how digression from the expected pattern was interpreted as conceptual error.

Here is one example of the first type of error: a response that included an important idea (about the McDonald's distribution centre) near the end of the argument instead of at the beginning was given a low mark, because the evaluator believed that the student did not recognize the significance of that piece of information. Because the expected pattern was not followed, the evaluator did not reward the inclusion of a valuable idea.

As an example of the second type of error, an answer that was broken into two sections (marked "Part 1" and "Part 2") was also given a low mark, perhaps because this visual break suggested that the student had failed to connect the ideas adequately. In other papers, where valuable points were scattered throughout an answer instead of kept together, the grader also judged the students to have an unclear grasp of the ideas.

Another response, one which failed to use a separate paragraph to discuss the issue of the McDonald's distribution centre, was marked down because, according to the grader, the student did not make clear that this idea was important.

Mismatch between writers' and reader's schemata

While poor organization was seen as a signal of a student's lack of clear understanding of certain ideas, it also seemed to dissatisfy the evaluator for another reason. Arguments that were structured according to a pattern unfamiliar to the marker were harder to read, and this may also have been significant. The evaluator preferred arguments where he "didn't have to look for" the correct ideas, i.e., in which the ideas were where he expected to find them. For example, an answer broken up into "Part 1" and "Part 2" would have required more effort to read, and this may have counted against the student.

Also, even though the professor had required essay-style answers, which used fluid prose, the evaluator sometimes preferred those where ideas were addressed separately and marked with headings. (It was argued earlier that responses that were broken up into headed paragraphs did not display enough connectedness. However, such answers seem

to have been better received than ones which were of the same conceptual quality but used fluid prose and thus did not mark the ideas as clearly.) Here the teaching assistant seemed to replace the professor's requirements with his own, and judge the papers on how easily he could understand them. This is suggested by a comment the evaluator made on the use of headings:

It's really bad English, but I don't mind it, because it's easier for me...it gives a context to the upcoming series of words...even though it's bad, I kind of like to see it.

His comment on the headings giving a "context to the upcoming series of words" also suggests an issue raised in chapter two, that of the use of schemata in reading. Stein (1990) claims that "readers first need to build a coherent representation of the source text in order to be able to build a representation of their own text" (p. 125). That is, a reader must be able to make sense of the text before he or she can use the information contained in it, and this is helped when the structure used matches the one anticipated by the reader (Currie, 1991). In this case, the grader had to first be able to follow the argument made by a student in order to assess its quality. If the argumentative structure used differed dramatically from the one the grader expected, it may have been more difficult for him to understand the answer. This does not mean that the evaluator expected arguments that were broken up and marked with headings (he judged these to lack integration of ideas), but this may have at least simplified incorrectly structured arguments and allowed him to glimpse the intended meaning.⁵

⁵ Research in the use of schemata (Britton, Holdredge, Curry & Westbrook, 1979) suggests that readers can more easily understand information if they know its context at the start of the reading. In one study, knowing the context ahead of time helped readers better to understand the following information:

Other arguments, however, may have more closely reflected the marker's expected structure. Here he may have been able to follow the arguments, since his expectations concerning structure were met, and consequently he may have filled in the information that was not provided by the students. The evaluator sometimes referred to giving the students "the benefit of the doubt" when their answers contained only "lists" of isolated ideas: "I read [things] into [their] answers." So it may have been possible for the reader to supply the missing connections and build for himself a coherent argument, if the structure of the writing did not differ greatly from the one he had in mind as he read. On the other hand, if the ideas were arranged according to some unfamiliar pattern, this may not have been possible. The evaluator commented that "really bad [answers] are just a series of words, [there is] no structure at all." "No structure at all" may have meant a structure different from the one he was expecting.

This possibility is further suggested by the fact that the evaluator claimed he would be willing to shift his expectations if the writers clearly expressed that they would be using a different pattern, where, for example, the most important idea would be addressed last instead of first. But if there was no clear statement to this effect, he would not make this shift. So it seems that the match between the reader's and the writers' schemata was indeed very important.

The procedure is actually quite simple. First you arrange things into different groups. Of course one pile may be sufficient depending on how much there is to do...

The context here was 'how you do laundry'. In the present study, having the headings may have provided the same aid to the evaluator as he read the students' discussions.

The data was not sufficient to examine this issue more fully; however, the students' use of inappropriate structures seems to have been one reason for the low marks on their papers. It is also impossible to comment extensively on the degree to which organization on paper reflected their actual understanding of the ideas; however, one point can be made. Research (e.g., Tannen, 1984) suggests that when NNSs recount information from an L2 source text, they are more likely to rely on the original structure than to restructure the information. Tannen's study, cited in chapter two, of Greek speakers retelling the plots of English stories suggests that the manipulation of both language and concepts is too much for students at lower levels of proficiency. This problem may also have been experienced by the students in the present study. Perhaps these NNSs transferred a structure, or part of it, from the original text, or perhaps they invented one that was in some other way inappropriate. In any case, these organizational problems may also be linked to their difficulties with the second language.

2.3. Argumentation: Stance

A frequent problem was with responses to the question *"Quadracci seems to emphasize the individual over the team, yet the whole organization is a team. Discuss."* In the grader's understanding, the answer should have included a clear decision on whether or not the organization was a team, and then a reason for this choice. Several of the students, however, understood the proper answer as being a discussion of both sides of the issue, of how the organization was and was not like a team. Therefore, they did not always make a clear choice between the two. So to the evaluator, who believed that it is

important in business to commit oneself to an opinion, these apparent hedges were seen as flaws in the argumentation.

3. Other Conceptual Errors

In addition to the problems with conceptual hierarchy discussed in section one of this chapter, other types of conceptual errors were present.

3.1. Use of Incorrect Ideas

Among the errors most easily identified by the evaluator was the inclusion of incorrect ideas in the answers. Some of these concepts were taken from the sources, although they were applied incorrectly; others, however, seemed to have been invented by the students, since they were not found in the source materials. This section will examine both types of errors, beginning with the former. Both of these types of error were taken by evaluator of the assignments as evidence that the students did not adequately understand the source information.

A first example illustrates the substitution of an incorrect piece of information for the one sought by the evaluator. In answer to the question *"What type of multinational corporate strategy did McDonald's choose to enter the Soviet market?"* one student responded with "multinational strategic planning" rather than the expected "joint venture". The concept used by the student is taken from the appropriate section of the textbook but is not the correct answer to the question.

In other responses to the same question, however, the substitution of incorrect ideas for correct ones is not as simple as in the example given above. In some of these responses "globalization" or "growth and globalization" were given, which are concepts also found in the relevant section of the textbook, the section on multinational corporate strategies. In fact, the subsection on growth even discusses the opening of McDonald's restaurants outside the United States, and thus it would appear that these responses should be appropriate. Particularly since one of the main goals of these assignments was to apply theoretical ideas to concrete data, it would seem that this relating of an idea from the chapter to a situation presented in the case study would be correct. However, the preferred answer in this case ("joint venture") was one that appeared only in the case study. The students who answered with "growth" or "globalization" thus erred by substituting information found in the more general theoretical discussion for information found in the empirical section.

In an answer to another question, the error seems to have arisen out of a misunderstanding of whether or not certain things are measurable. Some students responded to the question *"How should Mr. Cohon measure the success of Moscow McDonald's?"* with things that, according to the evaluator, could not be measured, for example "customer's point of view", "human resources management" and "a focus on quality control", rather than "profits," which according to the evaluator, could be directly measured.

Another type of error identified by the TA was the use of concepts that seemed to have been invented by students. One student gave the response "achievement-oriented"

to the question on leadership styles of the two leaders at Quad/Graphics; another gave "people-oriented". Neither of these terms was found in the source material.

3.2. Confusing of Concepts

In the situations discussed above, it is possible that confusion over concepts led students to omit the correct information and apply incorrect ideas in their answers, although this is not shown directly in their responses. The following section, however, discusses situations where students gave clearer indications of their confusion.

A question on assignment 1 asks for a discussion of *intrapreneurial* and *entrepreneurial* elements involved in the McDonald's case. The course textbook defines the *entrepreneurial* mode as "a mode of strategy formulation characterized by strong leaders who have a vision for the organization, are willing to take risks, and emphasize opportunities over problems" (p. 741). An intrapreneur, on the other hand, is defined as "an individual who anticipates the need for productive change and champions it within the organization" (p. 744).

The source text makes a clear distinction between the two, as does the assignment question, which is divided into two parts, each addressing one of the concepts. However, the response of one student suggests that he saw the two ideas as the same: "intrapreneurship also known as entrepreneurship..."

At times, a single concept was split into two separate ideas; at other times, two different ideas were treated as one. In response to the question "*What were the key strategy implementations factors for success of the Moscow McDonald's?*" one student

discussed innovations in technology in two adjacent paragraphs, terming it "international cooperation" in one and "transfer of innovation production technology" in the other. In the TA's evaluation, the student had not realized that the information in both paragraphs dealt with the same idea.

The question on the success of the McDonald's venture also prompted many students to divide like ideas into separate categories. The full question is *"How should Mr. Cohon measure the success of Moscow McDonald's? What factors should be considered when measuring the performance of the venture? Discuss."* The first part of the question asks for proof that the venture was successful; according to the evaluator, the only acceptable proof was the amount of profit. The second part asks for things that one should take into consideration when judging its success, for example, the exchange rates, the lack of competition, and the number of restaurants opened compared to the number planned. Recognizing the difference between the "measures" and "factors" associated with success seemed to pose some difficulty for many students. In the examples discussed in section one, the information given was not relevant to either category (profit or surrounding factors), and was thus evaluated as incorrect. However, in other responses the information was relevant to the second category, but the categories themselves were seen as interchangeable. In these cases the information given in answer to the two parts of the question was overlapping. These responses did not reflect an understanding of the two concepts as different from each other.

In the earlier example (see p. 67), the student erroneously created a second category ("international cooperation"), and filled it with the same type of information as

was used to fill the other category ("transfer of innovation production technology"). In the second response, the student also had two categories on the surface (measures and factors), but in fact gave only one type of information. These examples, compared with those given in section 1, seem to be clearer, more direct indications of students' confusion regarding the concepts used, since more of the students' thoughts regarding them are committed to paper; that is, assessment of the students' understanding of the concepts is easier here, since in these examples the ideas have been explicitly discussed.

Other responses turned up the second type of error noted above, where information that should have been divided into separate groupings was presented as a single category. In answering the question *"What important environmental factors are evident in [the McDonald's] case?"* one student discussed the issues of labour supply and training -- two concepts identified by the TA as distinct from each other -- in the same sub-section, which is headed "Labour Supply."

In answering to the question on the leadership styles of two managers at Quad/Graphics, another student provided, in addition to some relevant points, information which dealt with employee motivation, a separate theme. A relatively long passage, comprising over half of this response, relates to this other theme but makes no overt distinction between the two ideas, suggesting that they were seen as the same by the student.

Another student's answer to the same question presents a slightly different problem. This response mentions several leadership models but does not make clear which models apply best, nor show clearly that the student has understood the differences

between them. The evaluator expressed the opinion that this student did not understand the material well enough to distinguish between the various models and may therefore have copied large sections (covering several ideas) out of the textbook without understanding them fully. The student's response to this comment confirmed that he was somewhat unclear in his understanding of the differences between the models, but also revealed that his inclusion of several different models was part of a strategy where he risked presenting incorrect information in order to also cover the correct information. His belief, or hope, was that the marker would disregard the incorrect material and give credit for the appropriate information.

3.3. Missing Ideas

Another type of problem indicated by the evaluator was that, in many cases, important ideas were missing from the students' responses. In some of these cases, answers were fairly long and provided much other information, which may or may not have been appropriate, while in others, answers were particularly short; for example, one response consisted of only 30 words, rather than the approximately 250 expected.

Perhaps the most common was the omission of the idea of "profits" when answering the question on how to measure the success of the Moscow McDonald's venture. In the evaluator's view, this idea was of crucial importance, in regard to this question and to business studies in general, and thus its omission was more serious than others. However, the idea of profits is not discussed explicitly in the source material, and

students would therefore have had to use an outside source of information, such as the lectures or simply their general knowledge of business, in answering this question.

As discussed in section one, some of the information relevant to the question on the environmental factors in the McDonald's case appeared in the form of a pie chart given in the chapter. It was suggested that the chart, which is verbally sparse, may have allowed the NNSs to more easily understand the ideas presented, since some information was conveyed through non-verbal means. However, even students who used this source of information sometimes omitted important ideas. Not all of the ideas appearing in the graph are relevant to the question, and it is apparent that some students had difficulty judging which did and did not apply. Important ideas that were given in prose form in the chapter were also sometimes omitted. In both cases, students used some but not all of the relevant information from a particular source.

In the responses to the environmental factor question, as in some other answers, the ideas omitted were on the same hierarchical level as those included. That is, it could be said that the students had the right 'list' of concepts but omitted some of the 'items'. However, in other cases, ideas that should have been used to make links between hierarchical levels were omitted. Some of the responses to the question *"How do you account for the extraordinary motivation of Quad/Graphics employees?"* provide a clear illustration of this.

In answering this question, six of the students employed the 'hierarchy of needs' theory but did not indicate that the needs exist in a hierarchical relationship. Some links were made across levels of hierarchy, in that some of the theoretical needs were

connected to the actual needs of workers as described in the case, but no links were made between categories, either in theory or regarding actual data. Thus these responses did not demonstrate that they understood the hierarchical nature of the relationship.

4. The Word Limit

As suggested in chapter two, NNSs may find it significantly more difficult than NSs to be linguistically economical, since they may not have the vocabulary to express themselves precisely, and may need to use circumlocutions instead, or may need to use several simple sentences rather than one complex one, if they lack the words that would accurately signal the intended relationships among ideas.

In the following exchange, a student expresses the difficulty caused by the imposition of the word limit:

Student: We're asked to find some models that fit the situation. Now, most of us found that we can apply, I think most of the model will fit. But the thing is, none of the model is perfect. So you try to figure out which one fits best.

Researcher: Did you choose one then for each of them that fits the best?

Student: Definitely I didn't choose one only. Definitely.

Researcher: Now, did you state clearly that they all sort of fit, and that you can't really choose one, or did you...?

Student: No, I didn't say that.

Researcher: Did you not think it was important to say that; did you think that was obvious?

Student: I think it was obvious, I guess, to some people maybe.

Researcher: Okay. So is that why you didn't state it clearly?

Student: I think it's just the limit of the page. We're limited to one page per question. And I don't really think I stated it as clearly as I could if I were given more number of pages.

Researcher: How important was it to stick to the word limit?

Student: Oh, they're pretty serious about it. Everything over one thousand words, that will be rejected. You have to listen to that. They said it right at the beginning of the lecture. They handed us some notes that said "don't treat it not seriously." It's very serious. So that's one of my concern. And I think because the way I may not have expressed myself as clear as I could have, so it's not as compact as it could have been.

Researcher: So did you feel hindered by that word limit?

Student: Sure, definitely. I'm sure if you give the question to some native speaker and tell them to express the points they has on the page I guess they would have it they would do it easily with seventy per cent of the wording.

Researcher: So was the language an extra hindrance? Or was that a problem when you were trying to stick to the word limit?

Student: You can say it's a problem if you can't express it to make it in a concise form. Like instead of using ten words you have to use twenty and you need two pages instead of one.

Student: Did you find that was a problem for the assignments? Was that hard for you?

Researcher: For some of the questions it would be, yeah. But that's all I can do, I mean, try to squeeze more points in.

5. Evaluation Issues

The following sections discuss the performance of the evaluator.

5.1. "The Benefit of the Doubt"

As discussed in previously, the evaluator sometimes favourably interpreted answers that were missing information or addressed incorrect ideas. But he may have only been able to do this when the structure of the text was similar to the one he was expecting to find. In such cases, he may have been able to supply connections between ideas, or substitute slightly different ideas for the ones given. This may have let him build an argument out of the strings of ideas that were presented in separate, headed paragraphs, for example, or allowed him to transform a phrase like "services for customers" into "community work, taking a leadership role in the community."

However, if the structure he anticipated and the one actually used were too dissimilar, he may have been unable (or unwilling) to make such interpretations. In these instances, as he said, he "couldn't be bothered" to "develop the words into an argument." Also, when incorrect but clear links were made, he was unable to give the benefit of the doubt, and he therefore marked down arguments that inappropriately used words like "moreover" and "as a result" and "on the other hand."

Finally, the evaluator also looked outside the individual papers in marking them. For example, six of the eight students (as well as others not participating in the study) employed the 'hierarchy of needs' theory when it was not the most suitable answer to the question, but the evaluator accepted these answers anyway, because he did not want to assign such a large number of low marks. He seemed to have taken the performance of the whole group into account as he marked the individual assignments.

In making statements, writers normally take on a certain degree of risk, although for these students the risk might have been reduced, since the grader was inclined to give favourable marks where possible. For example, information that was incorrect was sometimes disregarded, provided there was other, redeeming information in the answer. So it was often in the students' best interest to include as much information as possible, although only up to a certain point, after which the evaluator judged them to be arriving at the correct answer only by chance. The students had various strategies in this regard, with some avoiding statements in which they did not have confidence, and others being bolder in their choices.

5.2. Evaluation Discrepancies

The marking on the assignments was not entirely consistent, a fact recognized by the evaluator. This may have been partly due to his having to mark a large number of papers in a short time, where concentration and interest may have flagged, or it may have been attributable to his relative lack of experience as an evaluator and as a business student, as he was an undergraduate.

On rereading the papers during the interview, the grader sometimes questioned the marks he had originally given, rating them now as too high or too low. One reason offered for this was that he had been influenced by the papers he had marked previously. After a string of particularly good or poor papers, the next one suffered or benefitted somewhat from the comparison.

Also, after reading through a large number of assignments, clarity and the ease with which they could be read might have become more important. This may help explain why some of the information given in the NNSs' papers was overlooked, and thus not rewarded. For example, a discussion of economic factors was judged as insufficiently addressing a key idea, because it devoted less space to it than to other issues. A subsequent reading, however, showed that the discussion of this idea formed the bulk of the answer, only the discussion was divided into two paragraphs, and only one of them named the idea. (While there may have been other problems with this answer, the evaluator's comments regarding emphasis did not match what the student had actually written.) Having to put more effort into recognizing correct information may have led to lower marks.

In another response, the student equated safety needs (one level in the hierarchy of needs' theory of employee motivation) with job security, which the evaluator saw as incorrect. However, the two are equated in the textbook: "In an organizational workplace, safety needs reflect the needs for safe jobs, benefits, and job security" (p. 453). The evaluator may have been unaware of this detail, and relied on a more common understanding of safety.

As discussed earlier, a recurring problem arose out of the mismatch between the evaluator's and the students' understanding of the question *"Quadracci seems to emphasize the individual over the team, yet the whole organization is a team. Discuss."* As suggested there, the error may have been the evaluator's rather than the students'.

As suggested above, it may have been the evaluator's lack of experience in business studies that led to this discrepancy. He may have been insufficiently familiar with the genre of business writing, and in this instance may have applied the rules of a genre like law, where taking a more decisive and defensive stance would be appropriate (Freedman, personal communication). The word "discuss" may have had a different meaning for him than for the students, who understood it in a more general way.

5.3. Ease of Reading

As already noted, it may have been important in the grading that the students' writing be easy to read. Answers that "rambled on," that did not clearly mark ideas with numbers and headings, and that used connectors incorrectly were more difficult to understand, and were not as highly valued.

First, by being concise, students demonstrated that they understood the ideas well enough to convey only what was relevant, and also demonstrated the required decisiveness, since they committed themselves to only certain pieces of information, instead of 'hedging their bets' by covering more ideas. But papers that were concise and adhered to the imposed word limit also allowed more economical use of the grader's time, which may have been important, since he had a large number of papers to mark.

The use of numbering and headings also facilitated the locating of ideas, and was sometimes preferred, even though it went against the requirements for the writing. Using a structure similar to the one the evaluator expected made the reading easier as well --

the grader expressed a preference for answers where there was “no interpretation required”; perhaps answers where interpretation was *easy* were also acceptable.

Interpretation was more difficult when connectors like “as a result” or “on the other hand” were used incorrectly. Here the logic of the arguments was harder to follow, and assessment of the student’s intended meaning required more effort. Also, passages that contained many non-native-sounding errors were also harder to understand, and therefore perhaps less valued. Writing that was easier to read, then, may have seemed more valuable, even if it was no better in content. Ideas and logic that were more easily picked out may have been more convincing.

5.3.1. Clarity

Like organization, clarity was sometimes equated in the grader’s judgement with conceptual accuracy, and was for this reason important, since it signalled the thoroughness of a student’s understanding of the material. While the grader did not articulate exactly what constituted clarity, his comments indicate that it meant the ease with which the papers could be read. He was explicit, however, on his policy on marking for clarity: arguments that were clear and concise would get half a mark more than those that contained unnecessary information. “Well-worded” answers were preferred to ones that “[made] the same points but [were] not as clear.”

The following is a sample of the responses that the evaluator found unclear, and less valuable:

When Quad grows even larger, more people will be employed. Although their decentralized structure can let his company to survive for such a large and fast

growing. It is hard to maintain the same level of motivation. In order to achieve same result by apply the need theory, it consume a huge amount of money. For example, expanding the daycare and fitness centre etc.

The evaluator commented here that the meaning was unclear, and that "every sentence is a struggle."

Another response was unsatisfactory because it did not clearly name the concept used:

Employees become family members of Quad Graphic. They are taking care jobs like taking care their own business. Employees check each other's job quality. Bill becomes a big brother in the Quad Graphic family. They trust each other and respect each other.

The grader assumed that the student was referring to the 'hierarchy of needs' theory, but was dissatisfied that he had to guess.

What lent clarity to the writing were such things as the use of headings, numbering, transition words like "firstly" and "lastly," connectors like "however," conciseness, and, perhaps importantly, native-like quality. The following paragraph, discussing the environmental factors of the McDonald's case, contains few non-native-sounding errors, and was marked as "good" by the grader:

Before the set up of McDonald's in the Soviet Union, there was no long distance telecommunication line that connects the country to Canada, however the line was installed eventually. Hence, we can see a change in the infrastructure of the country.

Another response, however, contains more nonnative-sounding errors, and was described as "choppy," even though the content was satisfactory.

Political environment is concerning the political risk. More than 12 years was need to negotiate the agreement between Soviet Union and McDonald's. This joint venture is the largest in the Soviet Union with any food company. For this risk

will rise such as loss of management control through politically motivated even or action by host government.

Readers have various reactions to non-native type errors in student writing (Carson, 1992; Janopoulos, 1992; Park, 1988; Sweedler-Brown, 1993; Vann, Meyer & Lorenz, 1984). This evaluator may be been somewhat influenced by such errors; he noted that "people who write better in English tend to do better," and he wrote on one student's paper that "an English course would really help."

In general, answers that were clear were seen as "clever" and as "making sense," and so written clarity was thought to reflect clarity in thinking. Interestingly, however, when marking one response, the evaluator judged the student to be intelligent, even though he did not appear to have thoroughly understood the ideas that he used, because the answer was arranged "so that you could read it." Perhaps what really concerned the evaluator as much as clarity of thought was the writers' ability to anticipate the needs of the reader.

Again, the students' inability to provide the clarity that the evaluator sought may have been related to their level of language proficiency. Because the conceptual, rhetorical and linguistic demands together may have been too heavy, they may not have been able to cope with them all. One student said that she came to understand the material as she wrote about it (the same is likely true of the others, even though it was not expressed), and it may be that after spending so much time and effort just identifying and reproducing the necessary concepts, they were not able to then revise for such things as clarity.

5.4. Originality

The evaluator expressed a preference for answers that were original. On the surface this applied to the avoidance of the "catchy" phrases described earlier, for example that employees had to "eat, drink and sleep Quad/Graphics" and that the company had "no procedure manuals, time clocks, or budgets." These phrases were dispreferred, seen perhaps as clichéd.

Another meaning of 'original', however, had to do with making new links between ideas, i.e., the kind of links examined in general in this study. That is, manipulating the ideas found in the sources, and contradicting those ideas when necessary, was seen as being creative. For example, it was better to suggest that the McDonald's venture was not a great success, rather than to repeat the idea given in the textbook that it was.

There may in fact be a connection between the bias against the use of quotations and the use of isolated, unconnected ideas. In both of these instances, chunks are imported wholesale from the sources, without being adapted for the writer's current purpose, and so the writer's conceptual, and perhaps linguistic, dexterity is not demonstrated.

5.5. Effort

Effort was also a consideration in the evaluations, and the apparent lack of it was one reason for the relatively low marks of the NNSs. However, these students had put between ten and fifteen hours into each assignment, which was more than the evaluator had considered necessary. But because of their insufficient proficiency in the second

language, producing more acceptable assignments might have demanded more effort than they were able to manage.

An interesting comment made by the evaluator was that one student "should be taking ESL," because she was working at a low level of efficiency, due to her problems with the language. He believed that she devoted a great deal of effort to avoiding spelling and grammar mistakes, at the expense of other concerns.

6. Other issues: Cultural Differences between the Students and the Evaluator

One aspect of the problems that is outside the scope of this study is whether the difficulty responding to the needs of the reader was rooted in the students' cultural backgrounds. Research on contrastive rhetoric, such as Kaplan's (1965, 1972, 1988) seminal work, and that of Connor (1996), Connor, Gorman and Vähäpassi (1988), Connor and Kaplan (1987), Crismore, Markkanen, and Steffensen (1993), Eggington (1987), Ferris (1994), Hinds (1987), Leki (1991), Matalene (1985), Ostler (1987), Park (1988), Purves (1988), Reid, (1992), and Scollon (1991) provide insight into the ways in which rhetorical patterns can differ widely among cultures. Other research, for example by Carlson (1988) and Liebman (1992), suggests that cultures can also vary in their views of what constitutes knowledge and what role writing plays in education. This body of research, as well as the personal account of one academic's experience learning to write in a new culture (Shen, 1989) gives credence to the argument that different cultures' approaches to knowledge and its expression are important considerations in the study of writing.

Undertaking an investigation of this sort might have produced quite a different picture of the students' difficulties. For example, the absence of clear links in the writing could possibly have been accounted for by the students' use of a rhetorical pattern, typical in some Chinese writing, where a series of seemingly unrelated sentences is bound together with a final "summarizing" sentence. Similarly, some of the broad, sweeping statements interpreted by the evaluator as evidence of only a superficial understanding might have represented culturally appropriate ways of arguing. The following exchange illustrates how some of the students might have been using a pattern that was unacceptable to the evaluator, but acceptable in their culture:

Researcher: Would you say this is your thesis statement?

Student: Yes.

Researcher: Why does it come at the end, rather than somewhere else?

Student: That's the conclusion...it's like an equation. It's all step by step and finally they get the result...If you put the result at the beginning, they say, "I have no idea how you get the result." Then you still need to go through the steps.

Researcher: If you were doing that answer in your first language, would you also put the result at the end?

Student: That's usually do. In my language, we don't put this thesis on the top. We don't do that.

Researcher: Where do you put it?

Student: Usually it's at the end. Usually at the end. Final conclusion. Different style.

In general, the students' failures may have been due in part to a mismatch between the rhetorical patterns expected by the grader and those thought appropriate by the students. Also, some of the warrants used in the arguments, e.g., that Quad/Graphics

employees were mature and dependable simply because they had a high school education, may have been acceptable in the students' cultures.

Toulmin, Rieke and Janik (1979) explain how cultural differences are relevant in not only the structure but also the substance of reasoning:

To engage in reasoned discourse, individuals must share more than a language. If they have quite different backgrounds, they must make the effort required to discover how far their total cultures are alike, and if there are no relevant overlaps, reasoning may be difficult or impossible. (p. 145)

There was in fact some evidence of problems in cross-cultural communication; one student, for example, felt that the relationship between herself and the reader was not as close when she wrote in her second language as opposed to in her first. However, because the students had completed a large part of their previous studies in English, and may therefore have been relatively unfamiliar with Chinese rhetorical patterns appropriate to this type of writing, it was concluded that such a study would not have been particularly fruitful.

7. Conclusion

One of the major types of weakness in the writing was the lack of analysis, of interpretation of the data. Instead, empirical and theoretical information were simply juxtaposed, with no substantial connections between them. Much of the writing was similar to that described in a study by Geller (1986):

They had written in prose which narrated the events without indicating which ideas were more important than others. They had not noticed the relative importance of different ideas; they had noted the existence of facts rather than the relationship of one fact to another. Thus, the products were 'laundry lists' rather

than hierarchical arrangements...they seemed to be placing pieces of information next to one another without connecting them causally or logically. (p. 339)

The writing Geller describes was done by NSs; some of the weaknesses discovered in the current study, therefore, are not unique to NNSs. However, research suggests that difficulty working with hierarchical relationships is far greater for NNSs. Winer (1994), for example, argues that

in organizing writing, ESOL students typically have difficulty in determining which ideas are "main" ones and which "supporting". Further problems occur in writing paragraphs of equivalent "weight." (p. 86)

These difficulties were apparent not only in the students' writing, but in their dealing with the source texts as well. There were also problems in argumentation, some of which appeared also to be connected to an inadequate understanding of the larger web of ideas. Other problems, however, were the structuring of the arguments, and the type of reasoning used.

However, the interviews and the independent evaluation revealed that some of the apparent writing problems were actually evaluation problems. Valuable information was sometimes overlooked, and "discussions" were sometimes misunderstood. On the other hand, responses that were judged acceptable turned out, on the evaluator's rereading them, to have been inadequate. The discrepancies in the evaluation of the papers may have been caused by the evaluator's inexperience, or the insufficient length of time given to complete the marking. However, other considerations also influenced the evaluator's marking: he had to fulfill a quota given by the professor, and he did not have the freedom, he believed, to penalize poor answers as much as was appropriate. He could not, therefore, mark strictly according to merit.

Aside from these problems, the cultural differences between the students and the evaluator may also have been important: some evidence suggested, for example, that there were different views of how to structure arguments. However, the issue could not be pursued in depth, and therefore no conclusive findings were made in its regard.

Chapter five provides a theoretical discussion of the findings regarding the weaknesses in the students' and the evaluator's performance.

Chapter Five

Discussion

Introduction

Kroll (1990) sums up a study of nonnative writers by saying:

Writing is frequently a difficult skill for *any* language user, which is to say that writing presents a fairly challenging task for both native and nonnative speakers. For English as a second language (ESL) students, it seems fair to say that writing academic papers is particularly difficult. (p. 140)

The findings of this study regarding the conceptual, rhetorical and linguistic weaknesses in the assigned writing tasks indicate that academic writing can indeed be difficult for NNSs, on many different levels. This chapter will discuss these findings in the light of the literature reviewed in chapter two.

Unmet Expectations

In general, the papers written by these NNSs failed in many ways to satisfy the expectations of the teaching assistant who marked them. While there were many common problems, not all of the students' writing demonstrated the same weaknesses. The aim of this study was to categorize and explain both the weaknesses that appeared to be of primary concern to the evaluator and the weaknesses in the evaluation itself.

The students, who faced the challenge of having to synthesize theoretical and empirical information from source materials, had varying degrees of difficulty finding the appropriate data and reorganizing and encoding it in such a way as to fulfill the reader's expectations. In some cases, the expectations themselves were questionable, perhaps

because they had been set by an inexperienced evaluator. The findings highlight two critical issues in the study of writing: first, the need to consider the reading task, because of the great risk of student failure in the reading-to-writing transition, and second, the importance of grader competence. Regarding the first issue, it is vital to examine the difficulties students may face as they attempt to integrate information from outside their store of general knowledge into their writing, since this is precisely the task required of university students. Regarding the second, little insight can be gained into students' successes or failures in writing if the role and expectations of the evaluator, who is an active participant in these phenomena, are not taken into account.

Language Proficiency

While the role of L2 proficiency in writing quality is contentious, the evidence gathered in this study is consistent with the theory that the added burden of working in second language hinders writers first as they gather ideas from their source materials, and then as they rework and express these ideas in their writing.

These students had a level of language proficiency that was only slightly above the minimum requirement, as is shown by their TOEFL scores, which ranged between 535 and 600 in tests taken, for the most part, two years or less before they wrote the assignments. Their interview comments (see Appendix D for example) make clear that the task of working through the textbook was enormously difficult, and that a superficial understanding was often all that was possible. Given this inadequate conceptual basis, and

the subsequent difficulty expressing what they did know, the writing task was also highly problematic.

One of the reading problems, expressed by the students themselves, and suggested in their writing errors, was that they tended to focus on key words, but did not always understand what they meant, how they differed from other key ideas, or what their importance was to the overall discussion of a particular issue. Therefore while they could sometimes identify the key ideas, they were often unable to employ them to create appropriately connected arguments.

An excerpt from the source material exemplifies the type of text the students were required to work through:

The first thing to understand in international management, then, is the nature of environments in other countries. The environmental factors that affect international business are similar to the task and general environmental sectors described in Chapter 3. However, when comparing country to country, the economic, legal/political, and sociocultural sectors present the greatest differences. Key factors to understand in each are summarized in Exhibit 4.1. (p. 101)

To someone not very proficient in English, the words that are meant to be in the background can seem instead to be key words. It might appear that the economic, legal/political and sociocultural factors are the most important in the international business environment; one might understand something like "these factors are key" instead of "the key factors of these are..." And when these factors are immediately followed by a visual aid ("Exhibit 4.1"), which repeats the information about the factors, it may reinforce the false understanding.

While this excerpt uses arguably simple vocabulary, the meaning contained in it may still be difficult to perceive. For example, "key factors" is not in itself a difficult

phrase, but its function in the discourse may be obscure. This is the argument made by Winer (1994) and Spack (1988) – that it is often ordinary words, words that however convey important connections, that can mislead nonnative readers.

And it is clear that if readers *do* find the vocabulary problematic, the meaning of the text as a whole will be even harder to perceive, especially if their reading is frequently interrupted to consult dictionaries and so on. Fluency is important in global comprehension in reading (Spivey, 1984), and if reading is impeded in this way, writing is also more problematic. In Spivey's study,

...the less fluent readers produced writing that consisted largely of lists, whereas the fluent readers produced true connected discourse containing propositions from the logical network embedded in the source texts. (p. 5)

Although the issue of fluency could not be pursued in depth in the present study, it is one worthy of further study in second-language writing; for now, it provides a theoretical contribution to the discussion of the students' difficulties.

The Capacity Argument

The conceptual weaknesses in the papers, and the difficulties expressed by the students in the interviews, highlight the crucial issue of cognitive capacity in the study of L2 reading and writing. It will be useful here to provide a summary of this theory.

The theory maintains that the processing of ideas takes up cognitive space. Manipulating language is a part of this processing, and all language users must devote some mental energy to it, but NNSs, who are less fluent, must devote more energy to the task, and therefore have less attention left to devote to other kinds of thinking. The

research reviewed in chapter two supports the view that language monitoring and higher level thinking are in competition with each other. To summarize just some of this research again: regarding NSs, Rose (1985) discusses how ideas are blocked when too much attention is devoted to editing, and conversely, Pringle and Freedman (1982) discuss how mechanical errors result when a writing task is cognitively demanding. Currie (1991, 1993) discusses how NNSs experience problems similar to those of NSs, only to a greater degree, because they have greater problems in general with language. Jones and Tetroe (1987) give empirical evidence to support this contention.

While any conclusive validation of the theory concerning the competition for mental resources would have been far indeed beyond the scope of this study, the data is consistent with the theory that the students had difficulty attending to all the levels of meaning, while reading and writing, and that their level of proficiency in English played an important role. This argument is supported by a comment made by one student; she found it more difficult to work through her ideas in her second language than in her first:

When it's in English I'm not sure if it's right. I have to check the book and I don't know if what I think is right. But when I write in Chinese I know okay I think that's the right one.

While even relatively simple language (as appears in the above textbook excerpt) can cause NNSs confusion, it is even more difficult to understand ideas thoroughly if they are encoded in complex grammar (Jacobs, 1981, 1982). Working through syntactically complex text may impose too heavy a cognitive load and thus strain capacity. Observe the following passage from the textbook:

Although each country had been the other's largest trading partner for decades -- in 1988, the United States supplied nearly 70 percent of Canada's imports,

consumed almost 75 percent of our exports, and provided close to 150 percent of our trade surplus in 1988 (see Exhibit 4.3) – some analysts perceived the development of increasingly protectionistic attitudes in the United States and feared that it might limit Canada's access to its markets. (p. 111)

For the NNSs in this study, the complex web of relationships in this sentence may have become tangled as they attempted to work through it. The NNSs may not have realized that the first idea (heavy trading) is *contrasted* with the last idea (a potential limit in trading). The reader has to reach the end of the sentence, keeping the word "although" in mind the entire time, before the contrastive relationship becomes clear, and this may overtax memory. Similarly, it may not be apparent that the information between the dashes is *evidence* for the initial statement, and so its value or relationship to the rest may be unclear. With complex sentences such as this one, it may be quite difficult for readers at a lower level of English proficiency to do more than identify isolated ideas.

The capacity argument helps explain how the reclassifying of ideas in writing, already a difficult task for most students (Winer, 1994; Mitchell 1994), becomes doubly difficult if writers are distracted by having to monitor language more than usual. Comments by two of the participants made this problem quite plain. Both students described how they simply scanned the text for likely-sounding words; one then merely listed these in her writing ("I just look for the key words"), and the other "just wrote anything" about them. This group of students had trouble "getting the gist" (Flower, 1990) of the reading, and the writing they produced reflected this -- they included irrelevant material, did not combine theory and data to a sufficient degree, and did not make the relative importance of each idea clear. Further evidence of the lack of digestion of the material is the fact that some sections were reproduced almost intact from the sources.

To give perhaps the clearest example of the lack of reworking, we can refer again to the response which discussed the impact of the McDonald's venture not on *the Soviet economy*, as the question asked, but on *the people's attitudes*, which was the original context given in the textbook:

According to one Soviet official, the greatest effect of the McDonald's venture is changes in the attitudes of the Soviet people. (p. 136)

Like Jacobs' (1982) students, they sometimes appeared to be "locked into an ordered set of data" which they lifted from the source text "like a large chunk" (p. 18).

While working with the information from the textbook and video was a problem, reaching outside those sources seems to have been even more difficult: the students sometimes left out even vital ideas, such as the significance of profit in a business venture, if they were not present in the sources. Perhaps this was because just getting through the source material was so consuming that they were not able to elaborate sufficiently, that is, to combine newly encountered information with that stored in memory (Stein, 1990).

It should be stated here that it was not possible in this study to determine whether all of the comprehension problems were due to strained capacity; it remains simply one explanation for the difficulties encountered by the students.

The capacity argument has made a vital contribution to the study of academic writing, because it helps explain the difficulties students encounter when they perform precisely the task described earlier: integrating new and previously-held ideas. Authentic academic writing, it can be argued, always imposes a heavy cognitive burden, and therefore a theory that deals with cognitive stress is vital. The study of authentic

university writing could greatly benefit from more research into cognitive capacity, research of which there is currently relatively little.

Manipulating Language/Manipulating Ideas

It is argued in this study that the limited language skills of the writers made the already difficult tasks of building and expressing knowledge even more problematic. The content of their work shows that there were conceptual problems, but in examining these weaknesses, it is difficult, if not unwise, to separate content from surface structure, that is, to separate the ideas from the language.

For example, the writing displayed a lack of rhetorical connectors, which should have been used to signal relationships such as contrast, relative importance, and causality, and it also contained few complex sentences, which would have necessarily reflected a hierarchical relationship of ideas. This was not a separate problem, but was integrally connected to, and reflective of, the lack of connectedness in content.

The data gathered here gives support to the argument that rhetorical and syntactic structures are deeply connected with conceptual structures, an argument made by Jacobs (1981, 1982), D'Angelo (1979) and Rose (1985), and expressed thus by Eagleson (1981): "confusion in thinking inescapably produces muddle in expression" (p. 183).

Transfer of L1 Skills in the L2 Writing Process

The extent to which L1 writing skills can be employed when writing in L2 has been alluded to earlier: if too much attention must be devoted to constructing sentences,

writers are able to tend sufficiently to the development of ideas, which is the most important element in writing well (Rose, 1985; Spivey, 1984). There is evidence (i.e., Jones & Tetroe, 1987) to suggest that NNSs are likely to experience exactly this problem.

Zamel's (1995) description of a more successful NNS's writing nevertheless indicates the difficulty that may be encountered:

Once he stopped worrying about thesis sentences, vocabulary, and the like, he became a different writer. His papers were long, thoughtful, and engaging. (p. 508)

The students in the present study, I would argue, could *not* stop worrying about words and sentences, and I suggest that this is one of the reasons they could not write papers that were thoughtful and engaging. One student commented that she found it very difficult to find the proper vocabulary to express her ideas in English, and another found it necessary to revise more in English, because, as she explained, "I can't get out what I mean the first time." This difficulty with words and sentences is likely one reason that the writers were unable to make the larger connections among ideas.

Plagiarism as a Writing Strategy

Perhaps it was in an effort to deal with this difficulty with words and sentences that some of the writers copied certain sections directly from the source texts. Currie (1991) finds that NNSs sometimes plagiarize in order to lighten the linguistic load and facilitate expression, and indeed, some of the students believed that because they were NNSs, they could not present the information in as clear or grammatically correct a form as was done in the textbook and video, and that it was therefore a good choice to use

some of the material in its original form. This may have been behind the writers' choice of phrases like "employees eat, sleep and drink Quadgraphics," phrases that may have seemed more appropriate than what they could have written themselves.

It should be noted that the teaching assistant believed that it was a good idea for students with "language barriers" to plagiarize to a certain extent, because this would produce writing that was clear and easy to understand. This raises an important issue -- that NNSs, and perhaps even NSs, may actually be encouraged (subtly or otherwise) to plagiarize. Again, the role of the marker must be considered if failures in academic writing are to be fully understood.

Argumentation Problems

Four broad explanations, somewhat overlapping, suggest themselves for the weaknesses in argumentation: cognitive error, the inability to express oneself accurately in the second language, lack of experience with the field of business studies, and lack of experience with Aristotelean argumentation. The first three have already been discussed in the context of other types of errors; the fourth, however, applies only here. These four types of weakness are discussed below.

Cognitive problems

A misunderstanding of the source information appears to have led to some of the problems with unsound reasoning. At the simplest level were lexical errors, which led to claims such as the one that the need for ownership in the company is physiological rather

than psychological. On another level were larger misunderstandings, leading to the claim, for example, that political instability warrants using a direct investment strategy in a new venture. The claim that the McDonald's venture was a success also seems to have been due to a superficial understanding of the source text, since the context in which it appeared in the source was completely overlooked.

Difficulty with accurate expression

The misuse of phrases like "on the other hand," "as a result" and "moreover" caused relationships among ideas, and therefore the larger arguments, to be misconstrued by the evaluator. While the evaluator seems to have been able to reconstruct the intended meaning, the writing in these cases was viewed as problematic.

Experience with Aristotelean argumentation

Since Aristotelean argumentation is not demanded in all cultures (Connor, 1996; Connor, Gorman & Vähäpassi, 1988; McKay 1993), these students may have lacked the experience necessary to employ it successfully (Jones, personal communication). Referring to Aristotle, we find that "what you should do in your introduction is to state your subject, in order that the point to be judged may be quite plain" (p. 2268), and that "finally you have to review what you have already said...In the epilogue you should summarize the arguments by which your case has been proved" (p. 2268).

These writers' introductions and conclusions, however, were sometimes unclear or confusing to the evaluator. Recall, for example, the attempt by one student (see p. 50,

section 1.4) to provide a conclusion to his response; this response was seen by the grader as simply redundant. The writer may have lacked the experience to structure the conclusion appropriately.

Another weakness was the failure to make the relative importance of ideas clear. Aristotle states that "the facts having been proved, the natural thing to do next is to magnify or minimize their importance" (p. 2268). However, the relative importance was misrepresented when ideas were discussed in the wrong order. Even if the conceptual basis was sound, the arguments appeared illogical, because, as Kantz (1990) explains, "readers usually expect the signalled structure of a text to serve the content -- to indicate reliably the internal logic of the information presented" (p. 81).

The point here is that the structure was sometimes different from that commonly used in Western writing, and therefore the content *seemed* incorrect. This difference in structure was best illuminated by the comment made by one of the students (see p. 80): "In my language, we don't put this thesis on the top...usually it's at the end...different style." This student's use of a "different style" misled the grader as he evaluated the argument.

Experience with business studies

As stated earlier, a central principle in business studies is that "modern business organizations, large or small, all tend to have one singular objective: to be profitable" (Toulmin, Rieke & Janik, 1979, p. 289). Accordingly, "the organization typically does not

require managers to think deeply about the question, How will selling more cars (or building weapons) make better children?" (p. 303).

It appears that the importance of this principle was not realized by some students, since they claimed that, instead of profit, things such as the improved relations between Soviets and Americans were measures of the success of McDonald's. It was argued in chapter three that this problem may have arisen out of the inability of some of the writers to consider ideas outside the ones explicitly stated in the textbook, because understanding the latter was already such a challenge. Another possibility, however, is that these students simply lacked a thorough knowledge of what counts as a valid argument in this field. They may have been unaware that concerns with humanitarian goodwill, while appropriate in some other forums, were not appropriate here.

The fact that the students were still at relatively early stages of enculturation into the discipline and its genres may have also caused some of the other failures in their communication with the reader. While writers are not required to articulate everything that they want their reader to know (Freedman, 1993; Giltrow & Valiquette, 1994; Spivey, 1984), there are limits to what they can leave to the reader to infer. However, the writers may have sometimes misjudged this: one student believed that because the teaching assistant knew the material better than the students, he would be able to "figure out what [they] meant" when they left out certain information.

Since the focus of this study was not on genre learning, the issue could not be pursued in greater depth. However, the application of the large body of research in first-

language writing could be very fruitful here. In researching problems in second language writing, it might be useful to cast a larger net than is currently being done.

Other Issues

The following are other factors which were not a focus of the study, but may also have been influential.

Task conception

All writers must form a representation of the task in order to compose (Ackerman, 1990; Farrell, 1994, 1995; Flower, 1990; Riazi, 1995; Stein, 1990). However, these writers may have had a different conception of the task, or parts of it, than what was actually expected of them.

This could explain the evaluator's dissatisfaction with the majority of the answers to the question *"Quadracci seems to emphasize the individual over the team, yet the whole organization is a team. Discuss"* (emphasis added). In the evaluator's understanding, "discuss" meant to present both sides of an issue, and then resolve the issue by making a clear choice between the two. None of the students, however, included this idea of conflict resolution in their understanding of the word. As a result, their "discussions" appeared ambiguous and inconclusive to the evaluator. Thus the prompt that they responded to was not the one on which they were actually graded.

Riazi (1995) and Ackerman (1990) also suggest that students and graders can differ even in their understanding of the level of complexity to be striven for in the writing. Riazi finds that while some (i.e., advanced) writers may hold the grader's

conception, and see the task as one of synthesis and persuasive argumentation, others (i.e., beginning writers), may believe that simply presenting "the facts" is enough. As Ackerman states,

forming a clear, practical representation of a writing assignment is a challenge for both teachers and students and...the level of complexity between one representation and another can vary enormously (p. 108).

Because task conception was not a focus of this study, no evidence was gathered on what the students *perceived* to be the necessary level of complexity in their writing. It is possible, however, that this is an additional reason for the inadequate amount of synthesis in their texts.

Interest in writing

Research by Hirose and Sasaki (1994), Pennington and So (1993), and Warter (1981) suggests that interest in writing is related to its quality. Two of the students expressed a lack of interest in the process, and this may have been one of the factors contributing to the relatively low quality of their finished products.

Effort

According to their interview comments, the students put more hours (between ten and fifteen) into each assignment than what the grader believed necessary (four to five hours). Because of the multitude of difficulties they experienced, however, it appeared as though they had not expended enough effort. The evaluator attributed to lack of effort such things as exceeding the stated word limit and even including irrelevant information -- if unnecessary ideas were included, the evaluator judged the writers to be using the

“shotgun” approach in an attempt to cover all the possibilities. The evaluator’s repeated comments regarding effort echo Currie’s (1991) finding that appearance of effort is important in the assessment of academic writing.

While it is clear that the students expended a great deal of effort on the assignments, it may still be that it was insufficient. That is, with more time and more revision, the students may have been able to step back from their writing, take greater control, achieve a somewhat higher degree of clarity. These students had to weigh the importance of these assignments against all the other work they had to do (in other courses as well), and they may have had to stop working after a certain amount of time, even though the assignments could still have been improved (Jones, personal communication). Some of the students did express the belief that they could have done better if they had had more time.

Still, while the students apparently devoted a great amount of time to the work, it cannot be said with certainty that even greater effort could not have been made. The possibility remains that for them, as with many other university students, more could have been achieved simply through more effort.

Experience with critical thinking

Given that high school generally does not demand a great deal of critical thinking (Campbell, 1987; Jones, personal communication, 1996; Pugh & Pawan, 1991), and that these students had only completed an average of two years of university study, they may have been insufficiently prepared to handle the task required of them. While the other

students would presumably have been in the same position, and equally affected, this may simply have been an additional difficulty that the students had to deal with.

Cultural differences

A further aspect of difficulty that was not explored, but may also have been influential, is the different approaches among cultures to reasoning and to structuring writing. That is, the approach of the writers may have differed from that of the evaluator.

Toulmin, Rieke and Janik (1979) suggest that reasoning is a way of testing ideas critically, socially, publicly, and interpersonally, and that it "calls for the critical evaluation of...ideas by shared standards" (p. 9). It is easy to see, however, how the social, public, interpersonal forum, with its shared standards, might vary from culture to culture. To restate their earlier-cited claim, "if there are no relevant overlaps [in the cultures of the participants], reasoning may be difficult or impossible" (p. 145).

The main point here is that the two participants in the discourse, the writer and the reader, must approach an argument in a similar way if they are to communicate. They must also use "individual but commonly understood linguistic and rhetorical resources" (Vähäpassi, 1988, p. 29). But because different school systems emphasize different kinds of reasoning and writing (Connor, 1996; Shen, 1989; Vähäpassi, 1988), there is much opportunity for misunderstanding to arise. Research in contrastive rhetoric, for example, shows how differently various cultures structure argument, and how much misunderstanding might therefore arise between a writer and reader from different backgrounds.

Evaluation Issues

In addition to the difficulties experienced by the students, the role and performance of the evaluator must be considered when examining the writing. The performance of the evaluator in this study is discussed below.

"The benefit of the doubt"

A central focus in this study was the way in which the evaluator reacted to the writing, since graders' reactions are the ultimate determinant of students' success in university. It was found that the evaluator played an active role in the construction of text meaning, often filling in connections so as to "transform the discussion[s] into a functional network of ideas" (Spivey, 1984, p. 18); this bears out what Kantz (1990) argues: that "given a combination of good will and constructive effort on the part of the reader, the paper can be read as if it were coherent" (p. 84).

The finding that the evaluator was sometimes willing to put a great deal of effort into "read[ing] things into their answers" in order to make them coherent highlights the necessity of finding ways to assess students' understanding accurately. In certain cases, for example, the evaluator provided a considerable amount of the information missed by the students, which echoes Toulmin, Rieke and Janik's (1979) finding that "the respondent may actually be trying to make sense out of the original statement and may not realize that he is in fact offering significant modifications or improvements" (p. 144).

If students are to learn in their courses, it is necessary that more consideration be given to the degree to which it is appropriate for evaluators to "give the benefit of the

doubt." On the other hand, it would also be helpful to know more about student failures that are attributable to an inability to express themselves accurately rather than to a lack of knowledge. Because evaluators assume that what appears on paper is an accurate reflection of writers' knowledge (Carson, 1992), those who have greater problems expressing themselves will find it more difficult to perform well. If there is "confusion on the surface of the language, a reader may not be able to tell whether there was any clear idea in the writer's mind at all" (Eagleson, 1981, p. 179).

The evaluator's comment on one paper that "an English course would really help" signals the frustration the evaluators may have when reading papers written by NNSs; more information on readers' reactions to different types of errors would be helpful, if, as was found here, there is such a discrepancy in their interpretation.

Reading and writing schemata

In order to be able to give the benefit of the doubt, as described above, the reader needed to have at least a basic understanding of the writer's intended meaning and to be able to fill in the information that was missing. As was suggested in chapter two, understanding of a text is only possible if there is a sufficient degree of match between the schema held by the reader and the one used by the writer (Carrell, 1987; Levine & Reves, 1994; Rumelhart, 1980). Thus it can be argued that when the students used the appropriate framework, it was possible for the evaluator to locate the required ideas and create for himself a coherent text, but that this was not possible if the structure differed too greatly from the one he expected to find.

Such a match in schemata would have been necessary, because, as Currie (1991) points out, readers are only willing to put so much energy into making meaning: "there is a limit to the extent to which the evaluator will try to interpret what the student is trying to say" (p. 38). Therefore, if the two structures were dramatically different, it was likely more difficult to recover the writer's intended meaning.

Lack of expertise

Evaluation of writing is a difficult task, since the quality of a writer's understanding can only be inferred from what appears on the page (Carson, 1992; Flower, 1990). However, when an evaluator does not have a great deal of experience, the task becomes even more challenging, and more susceptible to error. Graders who are at relatively early stages of enculturation into the discipline have different expectations for, and therefore different assessments of, the writing they have been given to mark than do those who are more advanced (Currie, 1991).

Some of the problems discussed in chapter three, therefore, may have had as much to do with the evaluator's lack of experience, since he was an undergraduate student, as with the students' inability. For example, his understanding of what constituted a "discussion" may have been inappropriate for this area of study; it is interesting to note that none of the students shared his conception (nor did I). Also, he sometimes seemed to overlook information that students presented, and on rereading the assignments, during the interview sessions, decided that his original assessments were inaccurate. While the pressure he was under to mark a large number of assignments in a short time may also

have been a factor, an evaluator at a later stage of enculturation may not have varied so much in his assessments.

The importance of this issue in the study of student performance is clear, given that evaluators, at whatever level of competence, determine, to a certain extent, the academic futures of the students they grade.

Purposes for grading

As shown in research by Jacobs (1981, 1982) and Currie (1991), different evaluators may also have different purposes for grading. This evaluator was constrained in the marks he was allowed to award – the professor for whom he marked the papers had required that he achieve a certain distribution of marks, and for this reason he was sometimes reluctant to give a mark that accurately reflected his judgement. Because he was not supposed to fail too many students, he may also have been encouraged to “give the benefit of the doubt” more than he otherwise would have.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine the ways in which NNSs may fail in their academic writing. The results suggest that these failures can be of many different types, and have a variety of causes.

First, it was found that some of the writing problems may have begun in reading, a finding consistent with research by Campbell (1987), Pugh and Pawan (1991), Spivey (1984), Spivey and King (1989), and Stein (1990). It appears that the students, who had

a relatively low level of language proficiency (as suggested by their TOEFL scores and their comments on their difficulties), could often form only a superficial understanding of the text from which they were to draw their information. They often appeared to have missed the context of the ideas, and to have understood only isolated points. Their reading proficiency was not studied directly; however, their interview comments, in addition to the speculations based on their writing performance, point to difficulties at this stage of the task.

In the writing, a major weakness was the lack of analysis, of evidence that the required ideas had been thoroughly understood and applied to new contexts. That is, while the correct key words were sometimes used, it was often without real application to the issues at hand. The requirement in the assignments was to apply theory to empirical data, yet there was often no substantial connection made between the two. In general, ideas were often presented as lists rather than incorporated into connected arguments. Such lack of connection, or complexity, was seen as problematic by the evaluator.

Another problem was inappropriate argumentation. Arguments sometimes contained contradictions or other flaws in logic, or were reasoned on inappropriate bases, i.e., used grounds that were incompatible with the principles of business studies. In other cases, the stance was inappropriate. Finally, the way in which arguments were organized sometimes led the reader to misunderstand the intended meaning.

Because the students lacked a high degree of proficiency in English, the cognitive and rhetorical tasks may have been overwhelming. If they had great difficulty with word- and sentence-level meaning when reading the source text, they may have been unable to

grasp higher level meanings. In turn, this may have left them with insufficient material to use in their writing, where they were unable to apply the ideas that they had not fully understood. In addition, expressing what they did know may have proven further problematic, since they may have had to struggle to construct sentences, and therefore been distracted from the higher cognitive tasks of synthesis and generalization, and also from the task of tailoring their writing to the reader's needs. It appears that to cope with the difficulty expressing themselves, the students sometimes resorted to copying or nearly copying sections from the source text, which led to problems when the ideas were imported out of context.

The difficulties expressing themselves appropriately, however, may not have been only due to cognitive overload; some evidence suggests that the students and writers differed in their approaches to structuring arguments. Cultural differences, therefore, may have caused some of the misunderstanding.

Also, some of what appeared to be student failures may have actually been evaluator failures. For example, the apparent poor performances on the question requiring "discussion" may in fact have been adequate, and misjudged because grader was not familiar with the appropriate response to such a prompt. In other cases, some of the information given by the students was overlooked and not rewarded, perhaps because the evaluator did not have sufficient time to mark the assignments. The interviews with the grader revealed that the marks assigned were not always accurate. Perhaps also because of time pressure, the evaluator was partial to assignments that needed little effort to read, even if they did not fulfill the requirements stated by the professor and typical in

academic courses, i.e., that they be written in "essay style," rather than in unconnected fragments.

In addition to evaluator failure, other issues were important in the grading. The evaluator did not have complete freedom to mark according to merit, but had to fulfill a second agenda in his grading, and produce a certain ratio of good to poor marks. Some of the marks were therefore slightly inflated, and writers were given "the benefit of the doubt" when it may not have been appropriate. Another reason for giving higher marks was that the grader believed that, as an undergraduate student himself, he did not have the authority to fail other students. The marks, therefore, were sometimes higher or lower than they should have been.

In conclusion, the papers displayed a variety of weaknesses, and these varied somewhat from student to student. In general, however, the writing lacked the required degree of integration of two levels of ideas (theoretical and empirical), and the reasoning and structure used in argumentation were problematic. While the causes of these weaknesses cannot be stated conclusively, the data is consistent with the theory that NNSs who are not highly proficient in the second language have great difficulty addressing higher level ideas as they read source materials and attempt to synthesize these ideas in writing, and also have great difficulty addressing concerns of audience in their writing. The findings also reveal that writers' apparent failures may be attributable to problems in the evaluation, such as the grader's inexperience or his duty to serve agendas other than the rewarding of merit.

Chapter Six

Implications

Implications for Research

Relatively little research in second-language writing focuses on the use of source texts, yet in order to understand failures in authentic academic writing more fully, it is necessary to examine the difficulties involved in understanding and synthesizing cognitively demanding material. All academic writing requires some degree of analysis, of recasting ideas into different frameworks, and therefore research must take account of the problems that can occur at the many different stages of reading-to-write, from encountering new information to combining it with previous knowledge and appropriating it.

More information on the role of language proficiency in this process is also necessary, since dealing with new ideas and with new language is a double burden facing NNSs. Some research (e.g., Cumming, 1988; Jones, 1985; Jones & Tetroe, 1987) suggests that the *degree* of proficiency makes a difference, and that language proficiency and the ability to manipulate ideas in the new language progress together, at least until a certain point (Hirose & Sasaki, 1994). Further research might help to develop more useful means of gauging when, and what kind of, intervention would be most helpful.

Further to this, research on NNS writing does not currently provide a clear distinction between the role of second language accuracy and that of L2 fluency. It could be speculated that fluency allows students to address higher level ideas as they read and

write, and accuracy allows students to express their thoughts precisely and therefore produce writing that is more comprehensible to a reader, i.e., that fluency frees readers and writers from being bogged down in syntax and vocabulary, and lets them work with the ideas more thoroughly, and accuracy allows writers to choose the words and structures that will properly serve their intended meanings. The answer to this question would shed light on the degree to which NNSs can apply their writing skills when fluency in the language is a problem. More research might clarify the influence of fluency versus accuracy, and again suggest solutions to the problems faced by those reading and writing in a second language.

Finally, more research is needed on the role of the evaluator in the performance of university writers. More specifically, research must examine the degree to which inexperienced graders, particularly those who are only slightly more advanced than the students they are grading, are competent to judge the knowledge of others, and it must also look more closely at the other tasks that an evaluator is involved in when marking for a professor.

Implications for Pedagogy

Following are some of the means by which NNSs might be helped as they progress through their courses of study or prepare for them.

More Experience with Analytical Reading and Writing

In order to help NNSs deal with secondary sources, particularly selecting relevant texts and synthesizing the ideas found in them, perhaps their use should become more of a focus in ESL programs, since, according to Leki and Carson (1994), NNSs often feel that even after having taken language classes, they are still not adequately prepared to handle this kind of work.

Addressing the Task in Stages

Solving more of the conceptual problems before beginning to write may be helpful, as Currie (1991) claims, for students who find expressing themselves difficult. Lightening the cognitive load would then allow writers to devote more attention to the other aspects of writing. As Early (1989, 1990), Gillespie (1993), and Tang (1992/93) suggest, one way to do some of this cognitive work would be to use key visuals to clarify the relationships between ideas. Mitchell (1994) claims that this also helps students learn how to argue. Key visuals might be employed in class by ESL teachers or by professors and teaching assistants, or by students in their individual study.

Another means of lightening the cognitive load might be for students to ignore the word limit on early drafts, and shorten their texts later, in order to separate editing from idea development. Since simultaneously manipulating language and ideas appears to be one of the greatest problems, the use of the first language in early stages of writing is also a rather obvious potential solution.

Facilitation of Comprehension of the Source Text

Even before the writing task can be addressed, the reading task must be made more manageable if students are to be able to use the ideas the text contains. Graphic organizers, used in the planning stage of writing, can also be used to work through ideas during reading.

More Time

As Jones (personal communication) suggests, NNSs might benefit greatly from simply reducing their course load and progressing more slowly through their degrees. This might allow them to develop their language skills to a higher degree, and also to devote more attention to each assignment.

At the micro level, Kroll (1990) suggests that because NNSs have particular difficulty with the code of English, extending the amount of time allotted to write may affect the level of mastery over the different text levels -- overall text structure, paragraph structure, sentence structure, word structure. Time, she suggests, may be a factor in the ability to control the finished text, but she makes clear that guided revision is also essential to improvement, especially regarding rhetorical and syntactic performance. Kantz (1990) concurs, adding that prompted revision also helps writers rethink their interpretation of a task when this is necessary.

More time might allow students to learn to do "more of everything" (Raimes, 1985) and attend more fully to both local and global concerns in their writing, at all stages.

More Experience with Target-Culture Rhetorical Patterns

Research, most notably by Kaplan (e.g., Kaplan, 1972), on contrastive rhetoric reveals that students learning to write in a new culture face much more than language problems. They must learn new ways of communicating with their reader and even new ways of thinking. The opportunity to read other students' successful writing pieces, and to practise writing more often, might greatly help NNSs to find their way.

Conclusion

This study has revealed some key weaknesses that may be found in content course writing by NNSs, as well as some of the problems inherent in academic evaluation. It is clear that the great range of potential difficulties provides much fertile ground for further investigation and study. It is hoped that the issues only touched on here will find a larger place in future research, so that the students who face this multitude of demands and difficulties can be helped to succeed at university.

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Appendix A Textbook Sample

PATH-GOAL THEORY

Another contingency approach to leadership is called the path-goal theory.²⁸ According to the path-goal theory, the leader's responsibility is to increase subordinates' motivation to attain personal and organizational goals. As illustrated in Exhibit 13.7, the leader increases their motivation by either (1) clarifying the subordinates' path to the rewards that are available or (2) increasing the rewards that they value and desire. Path clarification means that the leader works with subordinates to help them identify and learn the behaviours that will lead to successful task accomplishment and organizational rewards. Increasing rewards means that the leader talks with subordinates to learn which rewards are important to them — that is, whether they desire intrinsic rewards from the work itself or extrinsic rewards such as raises or promotions. The leader's job is to increase personal payoffs to subordinates for goal attainment and to make the paths to these payoffs clear and easy to travel.²⁹ This model is called a contingency theory because it consists of three sets of contingencies — leader behaviour and style, situational contingencies, and the use of rewards to meet subordinates' needs.³⁰

LEADER BEHAVIOUR. The path-goal theory suggests a fourfold classification of leader behaviour: supportive, directive, achievement-oriented, and participative styles.³¹

- *Supportive leadership* involves behaviour that shows concern for subordinates' well-being and personal needs. Leadership behaviour is open, friendly, and approachable, and the leader creates a team climate and treats subordinates as equals. Supportive leadership is similar to the consideration leadership described earlier.
- *Directive leadership* occurs when the leader tells subordinates exactly what they are supposed to do. Leadership behaviour includes planning, making schedules, setting performance goals and behaviour standards, and stressing adherence to rules and regulations. Directive leadership is similar to the initiating structure leadership style described earlier.
- *Participative leadership* means that the leader consults with his or her subordinates about decisions. Leadership behaviour includes asking for opinions and suggestions, encouraging participation in decision making, and meeting with subordinates in their workplaces. The participative leader encourages group discussion and written suggestions.
- *Achievement-oriented leadership* occurs when the leader sets clear and challenging objectives for subordinates. Leadership behaviour stresses high-quality performance and improvement over current performance. Achievement-oriented leaders also show confidence in subordinates and assist them in learning how to achieve high goals.

The four types of leadership behaviour are not considered ingrained personality traits; rather, they reflect types of behaviour that every leader is able to adopt depending on the situation.

SITUATIONAL CONTINGENCIES. The two important situational contingencies in the path-goal theory are (1) the personal characteristics of group members and (2) the work environment. Personal characteristics of subordinates include such factors as ability, skills, needs, and motivations. For example, if an employee has a low level of ability or skill, the leader may need to provide additional training or coaching in order for the worker to improve performance. If a subordinate is self-centred, the leader must manipulate rewards to motivate the individual. Subordinates who want clear direction and authority require a directive leader who will tell them exactly what to do. Craftworkers and professionals, however, may want more freedom and autonomy and work best under a participative leadership style.

Work environment contingencies include the degree of task structure, the nature of the formal authority system, and the work group itself. The task structure is similar to that described in Fiedler's contingency theory; it includes the extent to which tasks are defined and have explicit job descriptions and work procedures. The formal authority system includes the amount of legitimate power used by managers and the extent to which policies and rules constrain employees' behaviour. Work group characteristics are the educational level of subordinates and the quality of relationships among them.

USE OF REWARDS. Recall that the leader's responsibility is to clarify the path to rewards for subordinates or to increase the amount of rewards to enhance satisfaction and job performance. In some situations, the leader works with subordinates to help them acquire the skills and confidence needed to perform tasks and achieve rewards already available. In others, the leader may develop new rewards to meet the specific needs of a subordinate.

Exhibit 13.8 illustrates four examples of how leadership behaviour is tailored to the situation. In the first situation, the subordinate lacks confidence; thus, the supportive leadership style provides the social support with which to encourage him or her to undertake the behaviour needed to do the work and receive the rewards. In the second situation, the job is ambiguous and the employee is not performing effectively; directive leadership behaviour is used to give instructions and clarify the task so that the follower will know how to accomplish it and receive rewards. In the third, the subordinate is unchallenged by the task; thus, achievement-oriented leadership is used to set higher goals, clarifying the path to rewards for the employee. In the last situation, an incorrect reward is given to a subordinate, and the participative leadership style is used to change the matter. By discussing the subordinate's needs, the leader is able to identify the correct reward for task accomplishment. In all four cases, the outcome of fitting the leadership behaviour to the situation produces greater employee effort by either clarifying how subordinates can receive rewards or changing the rewards to fit their needs.

In some organizations, such as Goodis & Sharabura, leaders display complementary leadership styles to meet subordinates' needs.

Appendix B

The Assignment Questions

Assignment 1

1. What type of multinational corporate strategy did McDonald's choose to enter the Soviet market? What important environmental factors are evident in this case? Discuss.
2. What were the key strategy implementation factors for success of the Moscow McDonald's venture? Explain.
3. What elements of intrapreneurship contributed to the success of the venture? What is the impact of this entrepreneurial venture on the Soviet economy? Discuss.
4. How should Mr. Cohon measure the success of Moscow McDonald's? What factors should be considered when measuring the performance of the venture? Discuss.

Assignment 2

1. Which leadership models describe Henry Quadracci? Which describe Bill Graushar, Manager Finishing R&D, who is seen in the video?
2. How do you account for the extraordinary motivation of Quad/Graphics employees? Can this level of motivation be explained by the models in Chapter 14?
3. Quadracci seems to emphasize the individual over the team, yet the whole organization is a team. Discuss.
4. Can Quad/Graphics maintain the same level of motivation as it grows ever larger?

Appendix C

Sample Assignment:

Assignment 1

Question 1

McDonald's chose the direct investment strategy to enter the Soviet market. This strategy was applied because of the country's instability, if at any time a riot or a revolution occurred as it is very common in a capitalism country; and the political risk whereby acts of violence of the Soviets or the employees against the company could occurred. Therefore, to prevent the loss of assets and earnings, this strategy allows a 51 to 49 percent Soviet-Canada partnership. The success of McDonald's entry to the Soviet, was also part of its grand strategy; determination and confident of Mr Cohon to expand the McDonald's business internationally whereby the geocentric approach was applied; building trust with the Soviets government i.e. assured the government that quality product such as beef will be deliver to the restaurants; which means that both parties have to agree on all the conditions written in the contract.

The important environmental factors that are evident in this case are:-

i) Economic environment

The Soviets spent about a quarter day's pay for a Big Mac. This indicates that Soviet is facing a recession and because it observed the capitalism ruling, the per capita income for most of the Soviets are low.

Quoted by the Dutch agricultural consultant: "because of the McDonald's venture, it may not take the Soviets twenty years to catch up to Western production methods". Even though the Soviets acquired many lands, however the agricultural equipments and technics were behind the Western technologies. Hence, modern technologies were imported into the country i.e. modern equipment increase the yield of the production of quality of potatoes and modern agricultural training was provided to eager farmers.

Before the set up of McDonald's in the Soviet Union, there was no long distance telecommunication line that connects the country to Canada, however the line was installed eventually. Hence, we can see a change in the infrastructure of the country.

ii) Socio-cultural

It is evident that the taste of the nations have changed. The indication of 500m long of anxious and hungry Soviets queued during the first opening day of McDonald's restaurants. Moreover, an anticipation of McDonald's to serve between 10,000 and 15,000 customers per day, had turned out to be 30,000 per day. The concept of fast food restaurant enable to the Soviets to enjoy a luxury and fast meal and yet less spending is involved. Thus, McDonald's fits in between a luxury restaurant and the vendor machine.

[Mark: 6/10]

Question 2

The key strategy implementation factors for the success of the Moscow McDonald's venture are the:-

i) Conceptual Skills - Mr Cohon was able to look into the long-term perspective and good organization i.e. to ensure that supplies are delivered to the processing plant.

ii) Human Skills - One good example of this is, the company created an entirely new, vertically integrated structure for this operation, but the end products look and taste the same. A fully accessible entrance to the restaurants was built to accommodate the handicapped. Also the success of its entry to the Soviet's market is the patient of Mr Cohon in terms of his 12 years of negotiations.

iii) Ability to adapt - One example is the lack of technology in Russia encouraged quick decisions to be made where international consultants such as the Dutch were brought in to train the farmers to use the modern agricultural equipment which was imported from all over the country. International joint venture led to globalization where in this case trades were made with the farmers for quality potatoes and beef; negotiations with prospective sellers to purchase property for the restaurants.

iv) Proaction is one of the key strategy for success such as, personal and corporate commitment to the community by Mr Cohon. Half of the first day earnings of the McDonald's went to the Soviet Children's Fund and families of new employees were taken for a tour of the new restaurant and invited for a meal. This helped to foster a good relations within the management and the employees so that they can work much harder. A good public relations are achieved here and this leads to the good preview of McDonald's action through advertisement.

v) Human Relations Movement - One of the assumptions of theory Y by McGregor, could said to be true whereby most of the new employees were eager to seek and accept

responsibility under proper guidance. Trainings were provided by the company to all involved in the McDonald's business.

[Mark: 6/10]

Question 3

This entrepreneurial venture brought some impacts on the Soviet economy. They are:-

- a) Creation of jobs in the country. More jobs are available in the construction industry (i.e. building of restaurants and processing plant), trucking industry, farming, and employments with the McDonald's industry itself.
- b) The building of restaurants, and new imported technologies had brought in foreign construction workers as well as foreign consultants. These people will increase the revenue of the government through their spending. Overall the increased in employment will lead to an increase in the revenue of the government.
- c) There is definitely no lack in modern agricultural technologies. Agricultural training provided to the farmers did not only help in the production of the products for McDonald's but also help the farmers in their other crop production. Modern machineries were brought in for the production and distribution plant thus this increased the skilled personnel. Some of the McDonald's employees at the management level were given training in Canada thus increased their management skills.
- d) There a change in the infrastructure of the country. The long distance communication line was installed.

[Mark: 7/10]

Question 4

The success of Mr Cohon could be measured by the large turned out during the opening day and the increase of 20,000 customers per day of the initial 10,000 to 20,000 customers prediction.

The publicity that the company get through the media with the reporters queuing outside the restaurants during the day.

The successful negotiations with the Soviets' government is already the first step of success. Approximately 25,000 job applicants were received by the McDonald's company and 10,000 were employed which is the largest crew for McDonald's in the world.

The development of a 10,000m² food production and distribution centre was an international effort and it met the rigid standards of Mcdonald's. It employed more than 250 workers from the Soviet Union and at full capacity the meat line produced 10000 patties per hour.

The factors that should be considered when measuring the performance of the venture are the requirement of the effective and efficiency management through the four management functions which are planning, organizing, controlling and leading where Mr Cohon and his management team in Canada made full use of this organizational resources.

[Mark: 6.5/10]

Appendix D

Student Interview

Researcher: How easy or how difficult was [the first] assignment? What did you find hard about it and what was easy about it? Here's the questions, I don't know if you want to look at the questions to remember. Just in general, when you were doing this assignment, what was easy and what was hard?

Student: Because in this assignment they just didn't give us a very clear outline. Sometimes I just thinking about is it that one? Is the one I need to answer and or something or the other one? Sometimes I just got mix up. So in order to answer the questions maybe I just do one or two, I think is bad one, and then [inaudible].

Researcher: So did you find the questions difficult to understand?

Student: It's easy to understand. But the answer is a bit spread apart just to have a basic understanding and also -- how you say -- I didn't know how to answer the questions because I got several things to think about. And then I don't know how to put those things in one question.

Researcher: How well did you understand the information in that case and in that chapter -- whatever information you had to use to answer the questions?

Student: Is better for understanding but sometimes I can't do it very well for the case study in order to put it in the case. I just know how to learn the strategy about that but sometimes I have no idea which case is apply those strategy in there.

Researcher: Okay, what are the strategies that you're talking about? You said you know

the strategies.

Student: Just the strategy from the book. Just the points. Sometimes they have got some management. On this management there are points under that and also there's several kinds of management for that and then sometimes they just give for the case and I have no idea which management [inaudible] because there are several of types and sometimes I just don't familiar so I have no idea about that sometimes.

Researcher: Okay, so you said you understood the questions pretty well, right?

Student: I know what is it actually they ask about but sometimes I have no idea how to express my thinking -- is worse.

Researcher: Okay, is that because the language is difficult? Or because the ideas are difficult to organize?

Student: Sometimes it's the ideas difficult to organize.

Researcher: So how did you find it with these questions -- did you have that in a lot of the questions -- difficult to organize the ideas?

Student: Because it's a bit -- it's many information for that. I don't know which one is very relevant for that.

Researcher: Okay. How did you write this assignment? What did you do from the beginning to the end? You got the questions, you read them, then what did you do?

Student: To find some important items for that in order to answer the questions.

Researcher: So can you tell me what you did? Did you work on your own, by yourself? Tell me from the beginning to the end what you did.

Student: Probably first one I just looking through the questions and then I just studied

the article and then just begin to start with the book, the chapters -- the chapter which is talking about this. And then I start writing.

Researcher: And what did you do? How did you write your essay?

Student: The first one, I need to make drafts for that and I need to correct several times, one or two, and then I just type.

Researcher: Did you work with anybody else?

Student: Probably not. Maybe some of them just ask somebody to help me to check it. Is it the grammar stuff is a bit [inaudible] or something.

Researcher: Now, when you wrote your first draft -- you said you corrected it a couple times -- what did you correct?

Student: Grammar. And some missing ideas.

Researcher: Did you reorganize anything?

Student: Maybe sometimes. Because the way I thinking and I just write it and sometimes the step is not right. I need to organize the whole paragraph maybe and just move it into the first one or the second one.

Researcher: Did you do a lot of that?

Student: Not really. Probably just one or two for that stuff.

Researcher: I wanted to ask you some things about [the first] assignment. For the second one, here, apparently, the answer was supply. And so I asked the TA to look at all of your papers and to comment on them and here he said the answer would have been supply and that you had the right idea but you didn't say it directly, so I'm just wondering -- did you have that idea in your head -- supply -- and you just didn't put it down? Or did

you not think of that?

Student: For the supply -- for the Soviet -- sometimes I didn't think about it, didn't think about if the whole thing is belong to the one thing. The whole stuff, just like this one -- I didn't think about it is the supply. I just think about coming up with one of those ideas for that one.

Researcher: What do you mean exactly?

Student: So this paragraph is about supply, so I

Researcher: Is it about supply? Is that what you meant?

Student: Yeah, it's like the TA say. But I'm just thinking about the some ideas, but I didn't know how to group it into one thing. That's what.

Researcher: Why didn't you know how to group it into that one thing?

Student: Because I think this is the way and I didn't think about if all those stuff is belong to one thing.

Researcher: Okay -- so you hadn't made that grouping in your mind.

Student: Yeah.

Appendix E

Interview with the Evaluator

Evaluator: Yeah, see here he's just listing stuff. You know, this kind of stuff here, when they run into a sentence that's just a total run-on sentence and he's hitting like a whole bunch of points, he just like flipped through his textbook, found something in one of the chapters and goes okay this is the stuff and say okay just copy out the headlines, you know, that's all he did. No interpretation there. Yeah, you can also see like what he understands what "on the other hand" means, when he uses it to make another point, like an additional point, you know, with another subject, and he doesn't know how to break into that new idea, so he just kind of goes "on the other hand," which when you're reading it makes you think that it's a counterpoint, like on the one hand it's good because, and on the other hand it's bad, but that's not what he's saying, you know, and I didn't screw him for it, but it's obvious that he doesn't really know. Like he knows what he's talking about in terms of the answer, but just in terms of grammar he's not laying it out well, and if you really interpret it strictly, you would lose marks for that. He does it twice, though; that's how you can tell he doesn't know what "on the other hand" means. There's another thing you see in there that he used a lot of times -- "moreover" -- you see "moreover" all the time, and it's not really used in the right context. Like tons of "moreover" and I don't know if somebody was selling them on that word [laughs], and it's in some kind of literary guide. But I get the impression that people don't really know what it means, and they use it like "additionally," like to further my argument they just

use "moreover," and that's not really what it means. It's kind of an associated idea that they want to work into the sentence or into the paragraph, so they just throw in a "moreover" when it's not really an all-encompassing kind of idea, you know, just an equal idea. They use it all the time. Yeah, see this is a mistake too that they do all the time -- "labour supply," comma -- like they just start a sentence with like a title, like this is what they're talking about is labour supply, and then they go into something, you know, a sentence explaining the point, and it's really bad English, but I don't mind it, because it's easier for me. It's like okay he's talking about labour supply; like it gives a context to the upcoming series of words. A lot of the really bad ones, it's just a series of words. Those ones are really really -- there's no structure at all; it's just a series of words. But that I like. Even though it's bad I kind of like to see it.

Researcher: Maybe you can say also what they should have done, because all of these students got -- I put them on here at the end -- they all got between 25 and 30 out of 40. They're all around there, so maybe you could say what they should have had, what detracted from the mark.

Evaluator: Well this guy didn't get the answer is his big problem. Like he got the wrong strategy is what killed him. I wanted a joint venture strategy and he got a globalization strategy -- here's what he opens it -- corporate strategy, growth and globalization. And he doesn't go on to say a whole lot about what it is. You know, he goes the purpose is to move into expanding -- I mean, globalization, what else could it mean besides going into other countries, you know? I don't know, McDonald's is already kind of global, you know, you just -- I think he just kind of power-read through what the categories that were

provided of strategies and said okay I'll put that one. You know, he didn't apply it as much as he could have -- the case to -- I mean, the people who came up with the joint venture, it's obvious what it is, because with globalization you're looking at just going into other markets independently, you know, setting up companies in different countries, whereas the joint venture that somebody else owns half of it and strategically that's a huge difference, right? Either you're on your own, or you've got a partner whose goals may or may not be the same as yours, that's just a big strategic difference, and when you miss that -- I mean as much as he explained the rest of this question, sort of adequately, you just couldn't give him a good grade if he doesn't get the answer, you know? And there's the points that were looked for in terms of legal/political sector, economic stuff that we won't even talk about, labour supply, he talks about labour supply, yeah, this is another thing you see a lot is fluff. Like "as a result, from the above strategies, an environmental factor which gave a big first step for McDonald's success to enter the Soviet market." So, that's not the question; it's just kind of -- like I get tired reading them, so when I see the fluff, it's kind of like, you know, it doesn't help them at all. And you look at it and maybe an eighth or like twelve per cent of his answer is just fluff that he could have just not put and got the exact same grade, wastes his time and his effort on something that's of no value. There's another "moreover." Yeah, okay this was a pretty good example of a screwed-up question, where he hit pretty much the main points, but still didn't do that well. Okay you're talking "managerial leadership," long-term perspective," "cooperation with the international," even if he doesn't really specify what kind of all this means, like "international experts," "technological innovation," I guess is

what it's supposed to say -- "innovation?" -- "production," okay so "quality control," "customer service," "employee training" -- where he goes "public service" what he means is and then he goes "charities" he means like community, being with the community, taking up a leadership role in the community, I read into his answer, and he's pretty much listed the points, you know, and all he's got to do now is extrapolate and maybe prioritize them, you like tell me what things are important and why.

Researcher: So the information's there, but it's not

Evaluator: Basically he's listed it, but listing is not gonna do much for me.