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SECOND LANGUAGE WRITING
AND LITERARY READING IN UNIVERSITY
Three empirical studies

Phuong Nam T. Nguyen

Phuong Nam T. Nguyen *Second language writing and literary reading in university: Three empirical studies*



UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

SECOND LANGUAGE WRITING
AND LITERARY READING IN UNIVERSITY:
THREE EMPIRICAL STUDIES



UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM

Research Institute of Child Development and Education

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SECOND LANGUAGE WRITING AND LITERARY READING
IN UNIVERSITY

THREE EMPIRICAL STUDIES

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus
prof. dr. D.C. van den Boom
ten overstaan van een door het college voor promoties ingestelde
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Phuong Nam T. Nguyen

Born in Tra Vinh, Vietnam

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PREFACE

I came here on one autumn date in 2008 and since then I have been living in your warm support, the Vietnamese and Dutch people. I think I could never be able to say goodbye to you. The memories will be with me and the distance between Vietnam and Amsterdam will not be so large.

From Vietnam side, I would like to express my thanks to Dr. Pham Tiet Khanh, the Rector of Tra Vinh university, who gave me an opportunity to follow the PhD track in UvA. I also want to thank Dr. Le Viet Dung, director of Mekong-1000 Project who facilitates the study trip, Dr. Trinh Quoc Lap who helps with information about the research life in Amsterdam. I am grateful to Ms. Truong Kim Hong Ngoc, the official of Nuffic organization in Vietnam who listened and gave me professional counseling in the application. Chi Ngoc, you are my sister who gives me a warm encouragement during my time here.

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I do not think I could function well and reach today without my friends-colleagues, officers, and teachers in UvA. My daily friends are Jantina and Albert who everyday answer many questions from me. So many questions that we planned to collect them and write a guidance book for Vietnamese students in Amsterdam! My thanks go to Anne, Marrit, Hessel, Gerhard, Ellen, Bram, Annoesjka, Mayke, Jaap, Sonia, Mariska, Melanie, Sandra (Enschede), Isabel and Flori (Spain) for their warm support during my happy or troubled time. I will miss our dinner times at the Roester so much. I am deeply grateful to Talita, Saskia, and Marion for their academic help; without that I could never finish the experiments in good time and to a proper standard. In ILO, I also have a chance to know the teachers, researchers in the UvA, Michel, Mark, Marc, Natasja, Riny, Femke (Boesenkool), Helen, Marie-Therese and Karin. I want to thank you for your wonderful friendliness.

Between the two cultures with many different conventions expected in each culture I have perceived the warm help of the officials in UvA that stimulates me to function well in the UvA's working environment: to Luus Reijken who are always listening and try to find the best solutions, to Jelka Driehuis who spend so much time and efforts to arrange a good living condition for me, to Petra and Marielle who always give me the great encouragement and quick help and Rob, Anne-Martine, Peters, Dorien to answer many questions from me, and to Marc and Karin in the international office who always help when I am in need of many procedures for the residence status. In the latter two years I also received professional help from Jean-

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I will keep in my heart beautiful values I perceive from my teachers here. To my violin teacher, Jiska ter Bals, who not only gives me beautiful sound lessons but also is my spiritual mentor. I learn many lessons about Dutch and Dutch culture from my teacher Joke Olie. I was introduced to the concepts of self-study, autonomous learning from Thea Peetsma and minor processes of learning from Monique Volman. Thank so much Monique for the warm Christmas time with your family. I am indebted to Huub van den Bergh for his meaningful lessons of statistics in language research and for his spiritual support. I want to thank Marcel van Riessen and Martine Braaksma for their academic advices for the experiments. Finally I send my admiration to Tanja Janssen who inspires me with her study on self-questioning in literary reading.

To my three-generation family, Ong Noi, Ba Noi, Ong Ngoai, Ba Ngoai Tran Kim Dong, Ba Nguyen Van Phong, Me Cao Thi Thuy Duong, Van-Nam, Nhat-Nam, Vi-Nam, and Phan Qui Duc, I just want to state shortly that without you I definitely could not be here today.

The book could not come to reality without many days of long and continuous meetings, detailed comments of my supervisors during the four years. Professor Rijlaarsdam gives me the treasure that I put all my hope to reach in the study trip ó the confidence of a young researcher in language science. I am also grateful for his mental and moral counseling during the time. To Professor Wilfried Admiraal whom I admire for his intellectuality in science, his cross-cultural understanding, and the practical support when his student is in need, I feel so proud and fortunate to be your candidate.

When I look back I think I will appreciate more values from you, and from the friends who are not present in the preface because of my present shortage of memory. Last but not least, there are so many brightening values in the life that I receive in the study trip. Thank you!

We do not say goodbye, we say Tot Ziens!

THE STORY OF FINDING "MY IDEA" AND "MY VOICE" IN LEARNING TO WRITE AND READ IN ENGLISH OF VIETNAMESE STUDENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

In compliance with the essential requirements of Vietnam in the new era of an open, global-oriented economy¹, in academia, undergraduate Vietnamese students are required to reach the standard of writing and reading academically in one foreign language. The emphasis is mostly on English because of its role as the most popular lingual franca at present. In education, one might question that how a Vietnamese could at the same time be at their root with Vietnamese learning values/traditions, but also take full advantages of the Western/Anglophone innovative learning approaches for reading and writing communicatively in Global English.

For me and my colleagues as teachers who have been working with Vietnamese undergraduate students in learning to read and write in English, we recognize some of the challenges mostly caused by historical and cultural background of the Vietnamese students in learning English. In writing, for example, producing a meaningfully written discourse in English requires a high cognitive effort of the students. The challenges they face are far from English-L2² word or grammar-related difficulties, but mostly by L2 genre conventions which are different from what they are used to in their L1³. In their L1 writing, they are expected to respect socially accepted points of view, traditional values of their culture and express their personal thoughts in reference to what other people in their community might think. Asian/Vietnamese learners are reported "to understand information only contained within the text, or that which is supplied by their teachers" (Pham, 2011, p. 1). On the contrary, academic English writing requires them to set their own stance and support their stance with their own perspective. Some innovative writing and reading pedagogies from the West such as the ones encouraging students' personal potential, autonomous learning, sharing knowledge could be applied in Vietnamese setting. However, as teachers in Vietnam, we assumed that the Asian/Vietnamese students' cultural differences should be taken into account in the application of the pedagogies. The practical use of the pedagogies in Asian/Vietnamese setting will, in its turn, validate and enrich the Western pedagogies.

Many studies of Western and Vietnamese teachers pointed out that there are differences between Asian/Vietnamese and Western learning styles. Vietnamese students, embedded in a larger Asian community, are required to convey reproductive

¹ See discussions of Vietnam role "Towards a united, strong and open ASEAN Community" in *Vietnam Investment Review*, August 2012.

² L2 is an abbreviation of second language.

³ L1 is an abbreviation of mother tongue.

knowledge in academic writing and reading and therefore, they could not go beyond the declarative knowledge stated in their course-book (Pham, 2011). Students get used to the method of teaching that tends to emphasize the memory of commonly accepted knowledge, named as *rote* learning. This is obviously contrary to a Western pedagogy that emphasizes activating students to make sense of new subject matters via connecting to their personal experience and criticizing from a personal perspective. The Western/Anglophone pedagogy might be more towards fostering personal potential of an individual than the mastery of recognized knowledge. In the present research project, we take into account the Vietnamese students' history and cultural background to design courses to enhance the students' potential in idea generation, voice expression, and written responses to literature in EFL⁴ academic writing and reading.

In the four sections below, we will start with a closer look at students' cultural conventions that might affect their quality of writing and reading academically in English. We assume that making clear the specific conditions of students will provide a clearer justification of our experiments on activating personal content and voice in academic writing and reading in Vietnamese EFL students. The second section will deal with our hypothesis in designing interventions on idea generation for Vietnamese students. The third section is about the plan to stimulate writing voice expression. The fourth is about the plan to encourage student engagement with EFL literary reading.

We expect, with the three studies on learning pedagogies, to contribute to the sensitivity, validity and inclusiveness of pedagogy, methodology and theory of L1 and L2 writing and reading research in the way that we apply what research found out on students whose English is not a native language.

2. CULTURAL CONTEXT OF VIETNAMESE STUDENTS

From the perspective of teachers and researchers in second language education we examine aspects embedded in Vietnamese culture that might affect Vietnamese students in learning to generate content and express voice in academic writing in English.

“When I look at a new topic, I do not have any idea to write [about] the topic and consequently my text is a boring and not a persuasive text.” (Linh, participant numbered 28 wrote down her problems in L2 writing in the first meeting of the study).

Student Linh, a Vietnamese EFL student, shared her problem when facing the writing task “writing for or against a crime punishment”, a task which is extracted from her Anglophone text book in EFL writing. It is not that she does not know something about the topic, but she has not learned or experienced that what she thinks individually is worth putting into text. Why is that?

⁴ EFL is an abbreviation for English as a Foreign Language.

2.1 *Vietnamese academic writing*

In secondary education in Vietnam, writing is used as a means to test writer students' mastery of accurate content of a literary work. Writing is not a subject per se; it is embedded in literature teaching. Linguistic features of mother tongue writing and discourse essays in simple and short forms, such as narrative and descriptive essays, are taught in lower education (primary, lower secondary level). In upper secondary and tertiary level, writing about aspects of literary stories such as writing on character(s) or discussing thematic issues of a story is required. How to write those literature-related academic essays, yet, is not taught in schools (Phan, 2011, p. 33). For example, the following two writing tasks are elicited from the Vietnamese National Exam of Secondary Education Graduation in June-2011: Task 1: Analyzing character Trang in the short story *Vo Nhat*⁵ [Gathered Wife] of writer Kim Lan; Task 2: Analysing the character Fishing Village Woman in the literary work *Chiec Thuyen Ngoai Xa* [Far Boat] of writer Nguyen Minh Chau⁶. In the two tasks, a writer is assessed through her ability in memorizing, articulating the existing knowledge of the typical character traits of the literary work and to structure that content in a traditional text form. So, with this contextually-embedded specific notion of academic writing, writers are not required to set up their own stance in an issue and to newly create and support their stance with their own arguments, but to focus on exposing reproductive knowledge. On the contrary, L2 academic writing places emphasis on writer's uniqueness, such as the writing task for student Linh above requiring the writer's own stance and supportive arguments. In conclusion, the argumentative writing genre and the writing conventions expected of that genre, which is closely related to Western/Anglophone cultures or settings, are far from the Vietnamese students' experience in their mother language writing.

2.2 *Role of self-identity*

In Asian communicative settings, an individual must be connected, related, and adjusted to other people of the community (Kim, Hunter, Miyahara, A., Horvath, Bresnahan, & Yoon, 1996; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Communicators must adapt themselves to their addressees (with respect to age, gender, relative social position of and relationship to the addressees). As an example from Vietnam, the self-adjustment in communication is reflected clearly with the constraint of choosing an appropriate form of self-reference in more than 11 first-person singular subject pronouns in Vietnamese communication, compared to the only one *ö* equivalent in English. In communication between students and teachers, for instance, Vietnamese students use the first-person singular pronoun *ö* (first-person singular pronoun used in the case a speaker addresses themselves as in a lower position than their in-

⁵ The extract of the story located in the 12th Grade Advanced Literature, Book Part II, Vietnam Education Publishing House-2008.

⁶ The extract in the 12th Grade Advanced Literature, Book Part II, Vietnam Education Publishing House-2009.

terlocutor(s); the students will never use the first-person singular pronoun *đôi* (pronoun equal to *đôi* in English).

2.3 Voice

In Vietnam, voice in communication is expected to be a voice of *đôi*, instead of a voice of an individual self. Communicators, in general, follow the values that are highly respected in the group and fear being ostracized personally (see more analyses of collectivism-culture communication behavior in Adler, 1997; Bosley, 1993; Kim et al., 1996; Meyer, 2003). It is certainly not the case that the communicators in a collectivist-cultural setting do not have their own voice and their own judgment, but that the voice and the judgment should be related and closely attached to what the group emphasizes. This notion of voice can be observed in a comparative study of L1 Vietnamese and L2 English writing of Vietnamese students of Phan (2001, 2011). L1 Vietnamese writers were characterized with being indirect, writing from a distance towards the topic, and an intention of being less straightforward and more sophisticated, whereas Anglophone emphasized being clear in statement, theme-driven reasoning and a strong sense of self-author (Phan, 2011, p. 30-31).

2.4 Teaching English as a Second Language in Secondary Education

Teaching writing in English as a foreign language in secondary education in Vietnam places emphasis on language knowledge mastery rather than language knowledge transforming or language for communicative purpose. The English writing pedagogy and assessment do not focus on facilitating writers to use language as a means to create a meaningful discourse, but is grammar-oriented instead. Teaching English centers on memorizing grammar structures, identifying grammatical errors in provided sentences, using subordinators/coordinators to combine two simple sentences, and on recognizing sentences/phrases similar to each other in grammatical structures or meaning. So, learning to write meaningfully in written discourse like essays is not included in the English learning program in secondary education.

To conclude, the above differences might account for the problems that the Vietnamese learners in EFL writing face in finding their own voice when performing a L2 writing task that requires writer's self-authority in idea and voice towards a controversial issue. The question of how to facilitate the students to construct their text authority is a challenge for EFL-teachers in Vietnamese universities.

3. PERSONAL IDEA GENERATION IN ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING: EXPERIMENT 1

L1 research considers the importance of prewriting strategies for activating idea generation in learner-writers. Some prewriting activities were reported as effective for idea generation: using a computer prewriting outline to generate and organize information (Channon, 2004), learning to use a graphic organizer for generating

ideas prior to persuasive writing (Thanhouser, 1994), and learning to use a story web for generating ideas prior to writing (Zipprich, 1995). In L2 writing, the question of what pedagogical instruments might activate effectively L2 writers to generate ideas and to translate the ideas into a final text composition needs further research investment. Silva (1993) reported from an empirical research results that in spite of L2 writers' higher devotion to idea generation and more time spending for figuring out the topic in the prewriting stage, they still did not make progress in generating useful material; and many of the generated ideas have never found their way into the written text. In an overview study of Cumming (2001) which synthesized research of learning to write in a second language from 1980s to 2001, not one specific research with findings on idea generation of L2 writers' composition process was reported. In 2008, Leki, Cumming and Silva (2008) reported six studies on second language writing that were grouped under the category of idea generation (see studies of Albrechtsen, 1997; Hirose & Sasaki, 1994; Moragne & Silva 1989; Skibniewski & Skibniewska, 1986; Victori, 1999; Zamel, 1982, all cited in Leki et al., 2008). However, these studies were solely descriptive showing differences between skilled and less skilled L2 writers, how writers act differently when writing in their mother tongue and second languages, and the differences were related to idea generation quality. Very rare studies on interventions in idea generation were reported. In the recent review study of prewriting treatments of Byrd (2011), a study of Hornung (2000) on application of free writing as a prewriting activity for Italian students in L2-German writing indicated a greater number of important utterances, better coherence and more proper content, although not perfect German, in the students' summary texts. In general, little is known about what intervention facilitates the idea generation process of L2 writers.

Corresponding to Vietnamese culturally-embedded L2 writing challenges for Vietnamese undergraduate students in stance taking and idea generation towards an L2 argumentative writing task, we choose free writing as an activity to use in the prewriting stage. We take three main advantages of free writing as an idea generation activity. First, we assume this activity could probably boost ideas embedded in each person to come out. Therefore, the writers' personal stance, beliefs in an issue at stake, could be hopefully revealed through an act of personal free writing. Second, this unstructured, informal prewriting is expected to prevent as well as ameliorate writers' block caused by L2 formal language usage constraints. Further, research suggests positive effects of expressive writing on exploring personal knowledge of each individual: free writing as an explorative tool, activating knowledge embedded in each person (Elbow, 1973). Or, in other words, free writing might help to form new knowledge (see the discussion of Elbow, 1973, on free writing). However, in connection to the students' background that argumentative writing is a new genre, we assumed that before activating the free writing as an idea generation activity for argumentative composition, students need to be aware of the function and goal of the genre via a short analysis of function, goal, and approach of a sample text. Moreover, we expect this analysis could function as a framework to facilitate writers to select strategically ideas from the informal writing for setting up their own view-

point. The hypothesis is corresponding with the bonding tendency of text pattern knowledge and its efficacy in probing ideas and structuring text organization (Dymock, 2005; Englert & Hiebert, 1984; Reynolds & Perin, 2009). Finally, such analysis possibly helps writers to construct a strategy for relating their free writing to a formal later writing to enrich the quality of their persuasion. We expect that this phase of analysis will elaborate idea generation, as measured with (i) the length of free-writing text, (ii) the ideas in the free-writing text that writers perceived as relevant and important, and (iii) the real usage of the ideas in writing a more formal argumentative text. We enlarge the examination of effects of sample text analysis on productivity, quality of final text, and self-efficacy of students. The hypothesis corresponds to the findings of other studies on the positive effects of providing students with specific goal setting awareness on their writing quality (see studies of Ferretti, MacArthur, & Dowdy, 2000; Graham, MacArthur, & Schwartz, 1995; Page-Voth & Graham, 1999; Schunk & Swartz, 1993).

4. VOICE EXPRESSION IN ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING: EXPERIMENT 2

Writing researchers have been attempting to formulate specific concepts of voice and identity in writing. These conceptions range from *voice* as an attribute that captures the sound of the individual on the page (Elbow, 1981, p. 287) to a more sociocultural definition of Matsuda (2001) *voice* is the amalgamative effect of the use of discursive and non-discursive features that language user [appropriately], deliberately or otherwise, from socially available yet ever-changing repertoire (p. 40). Writing research on voice has been designed to address the question of how voice is revealed in writing. Hyland (2011) examined how scholars carved a sense of their self within disciplined discourse in writing academic homepages. Hyland (2010) compared the frequency of language features representing voice of the two leading researchers in applied linguistics, Debbie Cameron and John Swales, to trace back to their identity construction. Ivanic (1998) and Ivanic and Camps (2001) reported how voice of author, e.g., self-confidence, certainty or depersonalization, was revealed through analyzing lexis, generic reference, evaluative lexis, and syntax of students' texts. Tardy and Matsuda (2009) reported clues, e.g., breadth or depth of knowledge (or lack thereof), choice of topic, the author's representation of the field, and description of the research setting, that journal reviewers in a blind review process used in guessing who the author of an academic paper is (e.g., guessing the level of author's experience in the field, the author's language background or the author's nationality). Other researchers compared how L1 and L2 writers were different in the usage of rhetorical and linguistic features such as first person singular, transitivity, lexical choice, or deductive versus inductive organization (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003; Hinkel, 1999, 2002; Hyland, 2001, 2002b; Tang & John, 1999; Wu & Rubin, 2001). Although the studies reveal what voice is and how voice could be found in texts, it is unclear how authentic classroom instruction may stimulate voice expression of second language novice writers in a learning context where they

are mostly assumed to possess a different perspective on voice in their L1 native writing.

From research literature, two prewriting activities that might generate content and consequently enhance the quality of argumentation are free writing and group discussion. Free writing was reviewed as an effective tool for generating contents which were sometimes even new to L1 writers. So, in other words, free writing might help to form new knowledge (see the discussion of Elbow, 1973, on free writing and idea generation and Hillocks, 1986, on free-writing treatment and text quality). Group discussion and its positive effects on idea generation was discussed in various empirical studies: effects of text-centered discussion on higher-order thinking and critical literacy (Englert, Mariage, & Dunsmore, 2006), of classroom discussion on development of subject knowledge and understanding (Corden, 2001; Reznitskaya, Anderson, & Kuo, 2007; Weber, Maher, Powell, & Lee, 2008), and of discussion and arousing multiple viewpoints on complex issues and problems (Bielaczyc & Collins, 1999).

In a Vietnamese context, the two activities might not only affect the number and quality of ideas, but also the stance of an author towards his readers/addressees. As connected to the introduction above, de-emphasis of personal ideas and stance and respect of group values are conventional behaviors in Vietnamese communication. Therefore, we assume while free writing might facilitate writers to seek their own voice (Elbow, 1973), group discussion might soften the writers' personal voice in addressing an issue at stake. Two hypotheses were constructed. The first hypothesis is that free writing results in a more personal voice in argumentative text, compared to group discussion. However, in free-writing condition, arguments are generated by students individually, without being shared in a peer group; that might affect the author-content relation in students' texts. Therefore, we come to the second hypothesis: free writing results in more indirectness in argumentative text, compared to group discussion.

5. ENGAGEMENT WITH READING ENGLISH-WRITTEN FICTIONS: EXPERIMENT 3

ōStudents read but did not understand; most read and understood parts- not all. In brief, they mostly stop at the surface, not the deep meanings of the [literary] workō

Above is a comment of a teacher who has taught EFL in higher education in Vietnam for 20 years and the EFL literature introduction course for the recent 3 years. In an effort to activate reader-based making meaning of fiction story for Vietnamese students, we examined whether the learning activity of self-questioning could encourage students' engagement with reading literary fiction.

5.1 Context of students: text-based processing approach in native and foreign literary reading

In Vietnam, Literature is a compulsory, separate subject in secondary education in the public school system, from grade 6 to grade 12. In these classes students read Vietnamese authors and foreign ones such as *‘The Magic Brush’* of a Chinese author, *‘The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish’* of a Russian author, extracts of *‘Don Quixote’* from Spain, *‘The Little Match Girl’* from Denmark, and *‘The Last Leaf’* of North-American origin, Shakespeare drama, etc., all translated into Vietnamese. However, Vietnamese literary works take the most part in the program (about 80%), with Vietnamese prose fiction taking a larger portion than poetry. Students throughout the whole country, for each grade, have been using the same course book in the public education system. The major aim is that students master central themes of the major literary works, the Vietnamese canon. In classrooms, students read a short story individually with guiding questions provided in the course-book. Then the teacher leads the whole-class discussion in order to answer the guiding questions for exploration of the theme of the story. Testing consists of reproductive questions about background of the author and about the story, and a writing task in which students write around 250-300 words analyzing the central theme of the story. Assessment of the writing task is based on the students expressing the *‘right’* theme and providing sufficient and appropriate evidence from the story; most of them are provided in the classroom discussion and therefore reproductive.

When the students graduated from the secondary system, if they chose English as a foreign language (EFL) four-year training course at undergraduate level, they must take an English-written literary reading course, a compulsory subject in the last year of their Bachelor program. At this level of proficiency in English, students are assumed to be proficient enough to understand literary works written in English. The EFL literary reading program includes complete works or extracts from American, English literary canon such as *‘A Clean, Well-Lighted Place’* of Hemingway, or an extract from *Hamlet* of Shakespeare. The teaching approach is that teachers pose questions about story’s characters, theme and lead classroom discussions to answer the questions.

The students in the foreign literary reading context are reviewed as showing a notable lack of comprehension in foreign language literary reading. Students usually ask *‘Why don’t you tell me what I should grasp, what the main contents of the story [L2 story] are?’* (interview material, October, 2011). This attitude reflects the present status of foreign language literary reading at university level. Vietnamese students prefer to seek a *‘right’* answer from teacher as well as show a resistance to investing into exploring deeper layers of literary texts, like students in other places (Janssen, 2009). Testing consists of questions about basic characteristics of a story like time, place setting, intentions of characters, etc. and a writing task in which students write around 250-300 words responding to the story they read. For example, students are required to stand in the character’s situation and figuring out what they are going to do. Or students must interpret the global theme of the story, state what they learn from the story, and produce the *‘moral’* which is not only typical in Viet-

name literature education, but also in foreign language literary reading. Assessment of the writing task is based on students' quality of interpretation of a story, whether it is more or less valid and reasonable, and taking language use and language expression also in consideration.

We assume, at this level of reading and life experience of students, a teaching approach that encourages reader-based processing, in comparison to traditional approach of teacher-posed questions, might be more interesting, challenging and fostering personally cognitive and affective engagement of the readers. Learning to generate questions (self-questioning) is a good candidate to enhance involvement.

5.2 Self-questioning and students' cognitive and affective engagement in literary reading

Three theories underlie the integration of students' self-questioning as a reader engagement strategy in literature classrooms: narrative understanding, problem finding, and reader response (Janssen, 2002). In *narrative understanding* theory, a fundamental component is that readers ask themselves questions. These questions occur as inner speech (self-talk) or as thinking aloud (Olson, Duffy, & Mack, 1985; Trabasso, Van den Broek, & Liu, 1988; Graesser, Singer, & Trabasso, 1994). The theory of *problem finding* suggests that reading literary text is a *problem-finding* rather than *problem-solving* process. As in literary texts, the problem itself is unknown, ill-defined, and pleasurable to be sought: therefore, it involves discovering, envisaging, and delving into deeper questions (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Schraw, Dunkle, & Bendizen, 1995). In *Reader-response* theory, reading is a transaction process between reader and text (Rosenblatt, 1978). In the process, readers' genuine, knowledge-seeking question will promote their engagement, which in turn leads to higher levels of response to literature (Hynds, 1990; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991). In sum, students' generating questions while reading to create sense is the basis of all the three theories.

There are different approaches in engaging students in literary reading through intentional application of self-questioning strategies: corresponding to the theory of *narrative understanding* is the approach of story-grammar based self-questioning of Singer and Donlan (1982). They explicitly taught students common characteristics of the grammar of a story and students were encouraged to generate more specific questions about the story's grammar while reading. They found students generated the adjacent story-specific questions "Is this story going to be more about the officer or the barber?" in accompany to the schema-general question "who is the leading character?" Students who formulated story-specific questions showed a better awareness of the story characteristics than students who read to answer the schema questions posed by the teacher.

Commeyras and Sumner (1998), whose study was in line with *Reader-response* theory, investigated what process enabled the transfer of responsibility from teacher to students for creating a meaningful and interesting dialogical discussion towards a short story for second-grade students. They asked students to think of open-ended

questions for a story and bring up the questions for group discussion. They found that giving students opportunities to think of questions for discussion, instead of answering teachers' questions, created an active discussion. Students' questions were reported as leading to critical thinking and problem solving.

Janssen, Braaksma, and Couzijn (2009) showed that for Grade 10 students who were stimulated to generate questions and discuss questions in groups reported a higher level of appreciation of the story they read in the post-test than students who read with questions provided by teachers. These authors also reported that students who did not receive the good and weak examples of questions showed better quality of interpretation than students of the guided self-questioning groups.

In sum, self-questioning seems to be effective to engage students in reading literary texts. However, depending on the level of students, teachers should be aware of the authenticity of a self-questioning classroom; for example, questions students generated should be addressed or explored in classrooms. Although not all questions could be answered, the ones that students had should be discussed or explored in an exploration session.

With the present study, we developed two measures of readers' cognitive and affective engagement by (1) qualities of students' written response to literary fiction and (2) an inventory of perceived engagement with literary reading. The first is for teachers' measure of students' engagement; the second is for the students' measure of their own engagement in fiction reading. The two measures reached an appropriate level of reliability.

To facilitate student engagement with reading fiction texts, we designed an intervention with two approaches of self-questioning. Self-generation of questions and discussing the questions with peers or exploring the questions individually form the principal components of the interventions. We choose discussion and individual free-writing as two activities for exploring the questions generated by students. The positive effect of students' discussion of the questions they generate in group on a higher level of reading engagement or appreciation is reported in some studies (Health, 1991; Guthrie et al., 2004, 2012; Janssen et al., 2009). We also think that bringing the questions students formed while reading to group discussion might contribute to the authenticity of a self-questioning classroom: questions formed and addressed. Another approach is free writing, in which students write to answer one of the questions they generated while reading the texts. This is based on the concept of free writing as an explorative tool to activate knowledge embedded in each person (Elbow, 1973). Researches on writing reveal that writing does not only function as a way of communication but a tool for acquiring content knowledge, developing understanding, and improving thinking skills in a broad range of content subject from science to literature and at various educational levels (Rijlaarsdam et al., 2011). With the two self-questioning approaches, group discussion and free writing, we want to address the basic question whether students do engage more deeply in fiction reading with self-questioning while reading than with teacher-posed questions.

6. OVERVIEW

In the following three chapters we will report a series of three intervention studies on content generation, voice expression in argumentative writing, and on cognitive and affective engagement with fiction reading in English of Vietnamese students. Chapter 2 addresses the issue of activating students' brainstorming in argumentative writing (experiment 1). Chapter 3 reports the effect on voice of two prewriting strategies, free writing and group discussion (experiment 2). Chapter 4 deals with the activation of students' self-questioning while reading and effects on their cognitive and affective engagement with fiction reading (experiment 3). Chapter 5 is the overall discussion in which we summarize the main results from the three studies and connect these to a comprehensive assessment of their contribution to research on EFL writing and literary reading and implications for teaching.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 are each written as self-standing studies with the full problem statement, method, findings and discussions that might be an advantage when reading the chapters separately; however, for the other readers who read the whole book they might experience some repetition of the problem statements of Asian/Vietnamese students.

EFFECTS OF TEXT ANALYSIS ON IDEA GENERATION

Abstract

Producing a meaningful written discourse in a foreign language requires a high cognitive effort of EFL writer learners. The challenges they face are not only caused by L2 word or grammar-related difficulties, but also by L2 genre and genre conventions which are different from what they are used to in their L1. To support Vietnamese L2 writers to overcome these hindrances an intensive four-week writing intervention was designed and tested to examine whether encouraging genre awareness via a short session of sample text analysis could empower students to get rid of writer's block and conduct effective brainstorming for argumentative writing. In a pre-test post-test control group design with switching replications, scores of 66 EFL intermediate undergraduates on four indicators of L2 argumentative writing quality including idea generation, productivity, global text quality and self-efficacy were obtained. Effect of integration of sample text analysis into the written brainstorming stage was only observed on students' idea generation. Students created significantly longer self-expressive free-writing texts, perceived the ideas that they generated in written brainstorming stage as more useful, and used more ideas from the brainstorming for their argumentative text composition, compared to students from the control condition. No treatment effects were found for productivity, global quality of final text, and self-efficacy. Students in both control and treatment condition generally showed a significant increase in scores on these variables.

Key words: idea generation; sample text analysis; argumentative writing; second language writing; self-efficacy; text productivity

INTRODUCTION

University undergraduate students in Vietnam have specific problems in writing an academic essay in English. First, Vietnamese writers are not used to setting up their own stance in a writing issue and newly creating and supporting their stance with their own arguments: Vietnamese students are required in their L1-writing to focus on conveying the reproductive knowledge of a literary work. Secondly, embedded within a larger context of the Asian culture, Vietnamese inherit the Asian typical characteristics of avoiding the expression of their own thoughts towards an issue; they have learnt to express the socially accepted points of view. Thirdly, in Vietnam, the writing pedagogy and assessment of English inserted in the secondary education does not focus on facilitating writers to use language as a means to create a meaningful discourse, but it is grammar-oriented instead. So, Vietnamese students in academia need to be guided adequately on what is required when writing in English and how a good writing should look like for an Anglophone or global audience. Activity from Anglophone pedagogy like free writing might be an effective way for idea generation. However, it might only be effective for second language Vietnamese students if they are more aware of what is expected from them in a new writing genre. We assume to prepare students for generating ideas for writing about topics it is

necessary to introduce students to characteristics of a writing genre via a joint analysis of the function, goal, and approach of a sample text. This activity will in turn provide Vietnamese students with an understanding about a new writing genre, and therefore trigger their self-expressive brainstorming.

1. INTRODUCTION TO VIETNAMESE WRITING CULTURE

An argumentative writing task extracted from Mosaic, writing For or Against a Crime Punishment⁷, is an extremely challenging task for Vietnamese writers with a double load: First a self-choice stance towards the issue and second a self-authority of generating arguments. The two problems could be tracked back to the three main causes: the Vietnamese unique notion of academic writing, the Vietnamese assumption of self-authority of text voice, and the reality of teaching English in secondary education (the background before students move to university undergraduate level).

1.1 Vietnamese academic writing

In secondary education in Vietnam, writing is used as a means to test writer students' mastery of accurate content of a literary work. Writing is not a subject per se; it is embedded in literature teaching. For example, the two writing tasks are elicited from the Vietnamese National Exam of Secondary Education Graduation in June-2011: Task 1: Analyzing character *Trang* in the short story *Vo Nhat* [The Gathered Wife] of writer Kim Lan, the extract of the story located in the *12th Grade Advanced Literature*, Book Part II, Vietnam Education Publishing House-2008; Task 2: Analysing the character *Fishing Village Woman* in the literary work *Chiec Thuyen Ngoai Xa* [The Far Boat] of writer Nguyen Minh Chau, the extract in the *12th Grade Advanced Literature*, Book Part II, Vietnam Education Publishing House-2009⁸. In the two writing tasks, a good writer is assessed through her ability in memorizing, articulating the existing knowledge of the typical character traits of the literary work and structuring that content in a traditional text form. So, with this contextually-embedded specific notion of academic writing, writers are *not* required to set up their own stance in a writing issue and to *newly create* and support their stance with their own arguments, but to focus on exposing reproductive knowledge instead.

1.2 Self-authority of text voice

Embedded within a larger context of Asian culture, Vietnamese people inherit the Asian typical traditions of avoiding the expression of their own thoughts towards an issue. Cross-cultural studies (Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2009; Triandis, 1995) revealed communication issues that are typical for Asian collectivism culture which emphasize (a) the views, needs, and goals of the in-group rather than of oneself, (b)

⁷ Topic extracted from *Mosaic 1 Writing, Silver Edition 2007, Mc GrawHill, a popular commercial book used in EFL undergraduate training in Vietnam.*

⁸ These two writing tasks are literally translated from the *Vietnamese National Exam of Secondary School Graduation 2011*

social norms and duty defined by the in-group rather than pleasure, (c) beliefs shared with the in-group rather than beliefs that distinguish oneself from in-group, and (d) great readiness to cooperate with in-group members. In short, in communication writers are not expected to express directly and strongly their *I* attitude, intentions and positions, but seek conformity to what is socially shared. Therefore, in facing an L2 writing task like writing For or Against the Capital Punishment, Vietnamese writers must face an inner conflict between their culturally-embedded constraint of de-emphasizing their individual self-voice and the requirements of the L2 task emphasizing an original, strong, and individual self-thought towards the issue.

1.3 Teaching English as a Second Language in Secondary Education

Teaching writing in English as a foreign language in secondary education in Vietnam emphasizes *language knowledge mastery* rather than language knowledge transforming or language for communicative purpose. The English writing pedagogy and assessment does not focus on facilitating writers to use language as a means to create a meaningful discourse, but on grammar instead. Teaching English centers on memorizing grammar structures, identifying grammatical errors in provided sentences, using subordinators/coordinators to combine two simple sentences, and on recognizing sentences/phrases similar to each other in grammatical structures or meaning. So, learning to write meaningfully in written discourse forms like essays is not included in the English learning program in secondary education.

In summary, the specific experience with L1 literature-embedded writing class, with deemphasizing the *individual* voice in communication, and with the L2 writing background cause significant challenges in writing in English, especially in the genre that requires a personal *I* attitude and self-generation of supporting ideas.

1.4 Idea generation practice and research

In facing an L2 argumentative topic like writing For or Against Capital Punishment, the EFL writer learners definitely need instruments to trigger their self-thought towards the issue and self-generation of supporting arguments. Many writing activities closely embedded in L1 Anglo-American composition theory of process approach like free writing have been frequently suggested in L2 writing course-book for its function of activating students' self-thought. Searching through the whole writing course book for the undergraduate writer learners (Mosaic, Silver Edition, published 2008), we find that each chapter in the book that deals with one specific genre asks students to do free writing as a prewriting activity for content generation. For example, to prepare students for writing an essay arguing for or against an issue related to crime and punishment, a 15 minute free-writing task was suggested to writers: *Have you ever witnessed or been involved in a crime? Do you have a strong opinion on an issue related to crime or punishment? Choose one of these questions to answer and write for 15 minutes without stopping* (task extracted from Chapter 9, Mosaic). The free-writing activity in this case plays the role of an instrument to prepare students

for their personal stance taking and argument generation. However, as related to the students' specific traits embedded in their own cultural background, the prewriting activity with its specific requirements for personal involvement and self-autonomy of idea generation must be a frustrating challenge for the students. In working with the student writers we observe a reluctance towards free-writing activity. Students find it difficult to start writing and delay it. They also wonder why they have to do the free writing because the actual writing had to follow after the free writing and set other constraints. Students also show the intention to think carefully before writing, write very carefully and slowly and edit during the process of free writing although they are not encouraged by teachers to edit in the activity.

L1 writing research literature reveals some significant studies investigating the effect of an idea generation intervention on writing quality. Rogers and Graham (2008) reported in a meta-analysis of single subject design writing intervention research a few empirical research studies examining prewriting activities: using a computer prewriting outline to generate and organize information (Channon, 2004), learning to use a graphic organizer for generating ideas prior to persuasive writing (Thanhouser, 1994), and learning to use a story web for generating ideas prior to writing (Zipprich, 1995). Although these studies reported positive effects on improving writing quality, the effect sizes found were small. In another meta-analysis of experimental and quasi-experimental studies on writing instruction of Graham and Perin (2007), *study of models* was found to yield small improvements in writing quality, when compared with other conditions including free writing (Knudson, 1991), traditional language arts instruction (Thibodeau, 1964), and instruction in the process of communication in writing (Reedy, 1964). In general, the prewriting studies focused on investigating the effect of one particular prewriting strategy on the quality of text. However, these particular strategies of prewriting activities, such as encouraging planning before writing (Brodney, Reeves, & Kazelskis, 1999), group and individual planning before writing (Vinson, 1980), organizing prewriting ideas by means of a semantic web (Loader, 1989), prompting planning following a brief demonstration of how to plan (Reece & Cumming, 1986) were reported to have a positive, yet small impact on writing quality.

There is a special need for pedagogical instruments to activate L2 writers' self-generation of ideas and translation of the ideas into a final text composition. Silva (1993) reported from empirical research results that in spite of L2 writers' higher devotion to idea generation and more time spending for figuring out the topic in the prewriting stage, they still did not make progress in generating useful material and many of the generated ideas had never found their way into the written texts. An overview study that synthesized researches of learning to write in a second language from 1980s to 2001 reported not one specific research with findings on idea generation of L2 writers' composition process (Cumming, 2001). In 2008, Leki, Cumming, and Silva (2008) reported six studies on second language writing that were grouped under the category idea generation (see studies of Albrechtsen, 1997; Hirose & Sasaki, 1994; Moragne e Silva, 1989; Skibniewski & Skibniewska, 1986; Victori, 1999; Zamel, 1982, all cited in Leki et al., 2008). However, these studies were solely descriptive showing differences between skilled and less skilled L2 writers, how writers act differently when writing in their mother tongue and second languages,

and how the differences were related to idea generation quality. Yet, no report on the quality of an intervention into idea generation was published. Therefore, little is known about what intervention facilitates the idea generation process of L2 writers, especially less skilled or disadvantaged writer learners.

To facilitate students for idea generation, some brainstorming activities, such as free writing, were introduced in second language writing classrooms. However, free writing seems not to be effective. Students usually think for so long to write and the first draft tends to be the last draft (Harris, Santangelo, & Graham, 2008). The free-writing activity is neglected by students because they could not perceive it as an effective tool to generate ideas. We assumed that with a better understanding of the characteristics of a genre students will overcome the writer's block and invest in the brainstorming activity for ideas about a writing topic. There is no research that reports effects of genre awareness on written brainstorming (free writing). However, research found a bonding tendency of text pattern knowledge and its efficacy in probing ideas and structuring text organization (Dymock, 2005; Englert & Hiebert, 1984; Reynolds & Perin, 2009).

Further, if genre awareness is assumed to assist writers with more idea generation and self-expression in the free-writing stage, then writers are believed to propel to more writing in the final text. This hypothesis corresponds with the assumption of the generative nature of writing: writing will create more writing (Klein, 1999; Rijlaarsdam et al., 2011). The assumption is explained vividly with a writing experience of Colyar (2009, p. 426) when she recalled her experience of many unproductive hours sitting in a coffee shop with delicious peppermint tea to *öthink about writingö*, until when she stopped *öthink about writingö* or what she should write and just started writing *öThis is not the introduction to my paperö* and then she moved forward and generated further her text. In addition to text productivity, we assumed genre awareness possibly helped writers to construct a strategy for relating their written brainstorming to the formal later writing to enrich the quality of their persuasion. Research reported a strong impact of providing specific writing product goals on writing quality, compared to general goal setting (Graham & Perin, 2007).

Finally, we assumed with the potential effects of sample text analysis on idea generation, text productivity and quality, L2 writers must feel more comfortable, more confident in themselves about their writing ability.

Therefore, we formulated the following research question:

“Does sample-text analysis positively affect idea generation in prewriting stage, text productivity, text quality, and self-efficacy?”

2. METHOD

A pre-test post-test control group design with switching replications (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002) was used to examine the effects of text analysis on idea generation, the quantity and quality of the final text, and students' self-efficacy in writing (see Table 1).

Table 1. Research design

	Panel 1			Panel 2		
Group	Pre-test	Intervention	Post-test 1	Intervention	Post-test 2	
EC (n = 33)	O ₁	TF	O ₂	IF	O ₃	
CE (n = 33)	O ₁	IF	O ₂	TF	O ₃	

Note: TF = Text analysis and Free writing (experimental condition) and IF = Instruction and Free writing (control condition); EC = Experimental condition in panel 1 and Control condition in panel 2; CE = Control condition in panel 1 and Experimental condition in panel 2; O = measurement of idea generation, text productivity, text quality and self-efficacy.

2.1 Participants

Participants were 66 students of EFL intermediate level, of two age groups 19-21 and 22-27. The younger age group included the students who earn a seat in the university course after passing a national university entrance exam; they are in the mainstream of study from upper secondary education to university, without interruption. The older age group included students who finished part of the undergraduate program 2-3 years ago and then they came back to the university to complete their undergraduate program. Although there might be a difference in life experience, working experience and problem solving ability of the two groups, they were ranked by the university as at the intermediate level in EFL competence.

The younger age group was randomly divided into condition EC with 14 students and condition CE with 13 students, and likewise the older age group into condition EC with 19 students and condition CE with 20 students. Both conditions were taught by one teacher. All students showed a commitment to the learning activities. They attended the course regularly and actively, finished the writing assignments and completed the questionnaires.

All participants were from Mekong Delta Vietnam, sharing similar social, cultural, demographical and economic context. The proportion of girls (69%) was significantly higher than the proportion of boys, which is common for every language class in Vietnam. Of the subjects 14 % were from Khmer, which is an ethnic minority group in Vietnam. The number of Khmer people spread equally in both age groups in group EC and CE.

2.2 Course Specifications

Idea generation prewriting activity designed in the course is created from the concept of free writing as a learning tool. First, we assume this activity could probably boost ideas embedded in each person to come out. Therefore, the writers' personal stance and belief in an issue at stake, could be hopefully revealed through an act of personal free writing. Second, this unstructured, informal prewriting is expected to

prevent as well as ameliorate possible writing difficulties caused by L2 formal language usage constraints. Further, free writing might activate writers to generate content even new to themselves (see the discussion of Elbow, 1973, on free writing).

The experiment was carried out in four weeks (three meetings of 2.30 hrs. per week) in Tra Vinh University, Mekong, Vietnam. The instructor informed the students of the experiment's purpose and that data from the course would be used for research and treated confidentially. The instructor explained that all students would have exactly the same learning activities and writing assignments, however, in different sequence. The students were asked to participate fully in all sessions of the course.

In Table 2, the course program is summarized for both the experimental and control condition. After both groups swapped conditions, the same program was implemented.

Table 2: Course program and two conditions

	Experimental conditions: Text analysis and free writing	Control condition: Teacher's instruction and free writing
20ø	Orientation on argumentative genre: purpose of writing, audience, features/components expected	
30ø	Sample text analysis	Instruction on essay structure:
15ø	Free writing: Looking at some pictures of the issue at stake and write freely on the issue.	
15ø	Topic involvement: Identifying the standpoint revealed in the free writing; highlighting the ideas, details that students perceived as being important, relevant in talking about the issue.	
25ø	Rationale activation: students reasoned their level of agreement with pro and contra statements/arguments on the issue provided by the teacher	
30ø	Rhetorical training: instructions on citing authorities in sentences, paraphrasing ideas, and exposing weaknesses in opposing arguments	
60ø	Documentation: students reading information sources	
25ø	Writing preparation: Adapting the free writing draft in session 'Free writing' and using information from the other sessions to draw a framework for the final text composition.	
70ø	Writing: Writing a full argumentative text on the issue at stake	

Students of group EC started to serve as the experimental condition and examined an argumentative text sample provided. Under the teacher's guidance, they analyzed how ideas were organized in a hierarchical structure with topic sentences and supporting sentences, how the stance of the author was stated, and how those features were related to the intention of the text's author. They then did the free writing on the topic and built a text content structure for themselves using the ideas they highlighted as being worthwhile in their free writing. Students of group CE started to serve as the control condition with the teacher's instructions on essay structure. Students as a whole group reviewed the common knowledge of organizational structure,

cohesion and unity of essay writing with the guiding questions provided by the teacher, and then did the free-writing activity. After the first post-test, both groups swapped: group CE served as the experimental condition and group EC as the control condition. So, instead of an untreated control group in which poorer performance might simply be attributed to the lack of the treatment, in both conditions students received instructions to enhance essay writing, but the control condition with classroom recall and the experimental condition with sample text analysis.

2.3 Data Collection

Data were students' free-writing texts, final texts, and a self-efficacy questionnaire. As shown in Table 1, data were gathered at three moments: just before the start of the course (pre-test), just before the groups swapped conditions (first post-test) and at the end of the course (second post-test).

With respect to the free-writing text, students were provided with a blank paper, and a picture of the issue at stake as a writing prompt. Then they were asked to look at the picture, feel free to express what they think, write as fast as possible with no worry on structure, mechanics or organization of the language; just for words, ideas flowing out and running on the paper. All students were given 13 minutes for each time of free writing. Then from the free-writing text they highlighted the ideas, details that they perceived as valuable, important, and/or relevant in talking about the issue. Nine different students of both conditions did not submit their texts in the three moments of measurement. In total, 189 free-writing texts were collected and involved in the analysis: 62 in the pre-test session, 62 during the first post-test, and 65 in the second post-test.

With respect to the final text, all students were asked to write on an argumentative topic in 70 minutes. Six different students of both conditions did not submit their texts in the three moments of measurement. Totally, 192 texts were collected and involved in the analysis: 63 during the pre-test, 64 during the first post-test, and 65 during the second post-test. All handwritten texts were typed out to reduce the effect of handwriting quality on raters' assessment.

Finally, students completed a 19-item questionnaire on self-efficacy three times during the experiment. It took about 14 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Eighteen different students of both conditions did not submit their texts in the three moments of measurement. In total, 187 self-efficacy questionnaires were completed and involved in the analysis: 59 in the pre-test session, 64 during the first post-test and 64 during the second post-test.

2.4 Measures

Four dependent variables were measured: Idea generation, productivity, text quality and self-efficacy. *Idea generation* was measured with three indicators: (1) Length of the free writing text (2) Number of the ideas highlighted in the free-writing text, and (3) Number of the ideas that were highlighted and came back in a student's end text. All three indicators were measured by counting the number of words (with a range

from 0 to \hat{O}). Two raters counted the ideas highlighted and the ideas coming back in the end text with an inter-rater agreement of $r = .99$ and $r = .92$, respectively.

Productivity was measured by the length of the end text produced in terms of number of words with a range from 0 to \hat{O} .

Text quality was the quality of the end text. We adapted the scale for the measurement of text quality of Hamp-Lyons (1991). We revised the layout of the scale, deemphasized the language skills, such as grammatical structure and vocabulary, and focused on *position/stance support*, *complexity of arguments*, and *rhetoical features* which were the three main components of a good argumentative text that we expected the students to get improvement in. Each text was judged according to the rating scale, using an anchor text, a better and a worse text and scored between 0 and \hat{O} . We first organized one trial rating session to establish the clarity of the analytic description of the anchor text, the better text, and the worse text, as well as to clarify the scoring rule of judging a text in comparison to the anchor text and in reference to the rating scale. Then all 192 end texts were rated by 17 Master students in English. Each text was judged by three different raters. We used the mean score per text as the score for text quality although the inter-rater reliability between the 3 raters per text was high ($r = .80$).

Self-efficacy was measured with a 19-item questionnaire, using a 10 point Likert type scale with $0 =$ no confidence and $10 =$ high confidence. Some sample items: *øI think I could write an introduction in which I introduce the issue and my main points*, *øI think I could support my main points with strong supporting ideas*, *øI think I know the characteristics of a good writing piece*, *øI think I have developed the topic well*, *øI think I know the strategy for keeping the writing going*, *øI think I know the strategy for organizing the content of a written text*. The questionnaire reached an appropriate level of reliability through three times of measurement (Cronbach's $\alpha > .94$).

2.5 Analyses

The scores on three indicators of idea generation were highly correlated, especially the number of marked ideas in free writing and the number of marked ideas coming back in the final text (from $r = .66$ for pre-test scores to $r = .82$ for scores on post-test 2). The other correlations were from $r = .14$ to $r = .36$). To examine the effect of text analysis on idea generation, we therefore used multivariate analyses of covariance in both panels with condition (control vs. experimental) as independent variables, the three indicators of idea generation in post-test 1 as dependent variables, and the pre-test scores of the three indicators as covariates. In panel 2, this analysis was repeated with post-test 2 scores as dependent variables. Subsequently, we used paired samples t-tests to examine the differences between measurement times within conditions.

To examine effects on the other three variables (text productivity, text quality, and self-efficacy) we used univariate analysis of covariance and paired-samples t-test similar to the multivariate analyses described above.

3. RESULTS

In this experiment, we tested the effect of a four-week intervention of sample text analysis on the generation of ideas in free writing, on text productivity, global text quality and self-efficacy. The intervention was tested twice with a switching replication between post-test 1 and 2. Table 3 provides means and standard deviations of all variables and indicators in the two panels, separately for the control and the experimental condition.

Table 3. Means and (standard deviations between brackets) for three measurement occasions (T1-T3): Group EC: Experimental condition, then Control condition; Group CE: Control condition, then Experimental condition

Variable	Indicator	Group	Pre-test	Post-test 1	Post-test 2
Idea generation	<i>Length free-writing texts</i>	EC	140.52 (48.10)	176.28 (61.43)	175.37 (61.19)
		CE	156.55 (56.19)	165.1 (41.20)	232.73 (59.88)
	<i>Nr. of ideas marked in free-writing texts</i>	EC	3.16 (2.27)	5.62 (3.22)	3.53 (2.66)
		CE	3.97 (1.96)	3.23 (2.08)	3.82 (2.99)
	<i>Nr. of marked ideas used in final texts</i>	EC	1.68 (1.40)	3.62 (2.71)	2.29 (2.10)
		CE	2.39 (1.36)	1.27 (1.29)	2.39 (2.19)
Text productivity		EC	245.44 (77.46)	392.32 (98.58)	403.75 (103.16)
		CE	288.84 (71.40)	393.03 (96.99)	459.27 (154.13)
Text quality		EC	75.94 (42.55)	126.51 (50.50)	31.64 (62.31)
		CE	106.99 (63.56)	156.26 (102.94)	142.47 (75.17)
Self-efficacy		EC	5.31 (1.52)	5.50 (1.51)	5.94 (1.41)
		CE	5.47 (1.28)	5.56 (1.36)	6.28 (1.12)

3.1 Text analysis and generation of ideas

In panel 1, the multivariate covariance analyses with the three dependent variables showed a significant effect ($\lambda(3,48) = 8.58, p < .001, \eta^2 = .35$). Subsequently, the univariate results showed positive effects of text analysis on all the three variables. The experimental condition, in comparison to the control condition, wrote longer free-writing texts ($F(1,54) = 5.08, p = .029, \eta^2 = .09$), highlighted more ideas that they perceived as useful from the free-writing texts ($F(1,54) = 23.21, p < .001, \eta^2 = .32$), used more ideas from the free-writing texts for their composition ($F(1, 54) = 19.52, p < .001, \eta^2 = .28$)

Because at the end of panel 2, both groups participated in both the control and experimental condition, we did not expect differences between control and experimental condition. However, in panel 2 the multivariate covariance analyses with the three dependent variables also show a significant effect of condition on dependent variables ($F(3, 53) = 6.18, p = .001, \eta^2 = .259$). Subsequently, the univariate results

showed positive effects of text analysis on one variable *Length of free-writing text* ($F(1,59) = 12.01, p = .001, \eta^2 = .179$).

In order to test the development pattern of the three variables in panel 2 for the two conditions we did paired-samples t-test between post-test 1 and post-test 2. Students in EC condition reported a decrease in *Number of ideas marked in free-writing texts* ($t(30) = .19, p = .003$). The CE group showed a significant increase in two out of the three variables: *Number of marked ideas in free-writing texts used again in final texts* ($t(29) = 2.94, p = .006$) and *Number of words of free-writing texts* ($t(29) = 11.01, p < .001$). In sum, this means that we found an effect of sample-text analysis on *Number of marked ideas in free-writing texts used again in final texts* and *Number of words of free-writing texts*. These effects were maintained with the students of the EC group when they returned to the regular course. For *Number of ideas marked in free-writing texts* we found a sequence effect that showed that students who attended first the control condition and then the experimental condition, generally marked more ideas than the other students; these students (first experimental and then control condition) showed a decrease in number of marked ideas when they participated in the control condition.

3.2 Text analysis and productivity, quality of final text, students' self-efficacy

Univariate covariance analyses with text productivity at post-test 1 (panel 1) and post-test 2 (panel 2) did not show an effect of text analysis on productivity. In order to test for an effect in panel 2, paired-samples t-tests were performed on scores of post-test 1 and 2, for each condition. A significant increase in productivity was found for students in the experimental condition ($t(32) = 3.44, p = .002$), whereas student in the control condition did not change.

In panel 1 and 2, no effects of sample-text analyses were found on the quality of the final text. Paired-samples t-test between post-test 1 and post-test 2 to test the development pattern of text quality in panel 2 for each condition separately, did not show a statistical difference.

In panel 1 and 2, no effects of sample-text analyses were found on students' self-efficacy in text writing. Paired-samples t-test between post-test 1 and post-test 2 to test the development pattern of self-efficacy in panel 2 for each condition separately did show a statistical difference for both conditions: Control condition (group EC: $t(25) = 4.52, p < .001$) and experimental condition (group CE: $t(30) = 5.047, p < .001$).

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results confirm the hypothesis that genre awareness via a sample text analysis affects the generation of idea in the prewriting stage. We found improvement of students in idea generation in the three indicators: (i) length of free-writing text, (ii) the perceived usefulness of ideas in the free-writing text and (iii) the actual use of these ideas in the writer's final text. The maintenance effect was also reported in students' productivity of free-writing text and the usage of ideas they generated in free writing

for text composition. This finding consolidates the two functional benefits of genre awareness: a framework to help students to boost the self-expressive free writing, and to manipulate and capture strategically the free writing as a valuable source material for composing a more formal final text. We read from this finding an educational meaning of the intervention in facilitating the students to create a rich expression of their own positions and intentions towards an issue at stake. Sample-text analysis to introduce the writer learners explicitly of what is required of a particular genre could be a meaningful pedagogical tool to be included in the writing programs for EFL students. If students have practiced free writing, the additional introduction of function, goal, and approach of a genre via a joint analysis of a sample text could result in more productive free writing.

No effects of sample-text analysis were found on text productivity, text quality, and self-efficacy. That means integrating sample text analysis does not seem to contribute directly to the final text productivity, final text quality and self-efficacy. We would like to pose two explanations for this finding. The first explanation could be that the difference between the experimental and control condition might be irrelevant for producing large differences in quality and quantity of text, as well as in self-efficacy for writing. Both the experimental and the control condition received instructions on good quality writing and the experimental received further one short sample text for analysis which was quite effective for idea generation. The second explanation is that between the written brainstorming stage and text composition we introduced students in both conditions to other writing techniques such as rationale activation, rhetorical training, and documentation. These additional elements might have leveled out students' differences in text composition. The last issue we open up now for further consideration. For EFL writers, a formal final text composition is far more constraining than an expressive free-writing text in terms of language usage and rhetorical requirements like essay structure, balance between parts of an essay, word choice, and grammar appropriation. These constraints might limit the EFL writers in elaborating their final text. Therefore, students in the experimental condition, although found to be more effective in free writing, did not differ from their peers in the control condition in the length and the quality of the final texts, and self-efficacy. While many researches reply to the question of effects of prewriting on text performance, this research first focused on activating genre awareness in the prewriting stage and then examine the latter effects of that activation on text length, text quality and self-efficacy. The finding of positive effects of sample-text analysis on students' idea generation might enrich the understanding of L2 writing process and foster an appropriate pedagogy for L2 writing teaching.

EFFECTS OF THE TWO TYPES OF PREWRITING CONTENT GENERATION ACTIVITY ON VOICE IN ARGUMENTATIVE TEXTS

Abstract

A lack of individualized voice in writing performance of non-native writers is one common concern of the second language (L2) writing classroom pedagogy, especially in Asian cultures like Vietnam. In learning to write in English, Vietnamese students might face the clashes of the communication conventions of their mother tongue (L1), Vietnamese, and of L2 English that might affect their writing voice. Situated in a Vietnamese context, the two different types of prewriting content generation activity, Group discussion and Free writing, were stimulated in a four-week experiment with two switching panels to examine the causal connection between the prewriting activities and the voice construction of novice Vietnamese students in writing argumentatively in English. Group discussion might enhance the self-confidence about content, however, results in a less personal voice in argumentative texts. Free writing is assumed to enhance the individualized voice, however might affect the self-confidence about content. Participants were 66 EFL adult Vietnamese learners at intermediate level in English proficiency. Analyses of the first voice dimension, *personal voice*, of the argumentative texts students wrote indicated a significantly lower level of personally-authored voice as a result of Group discussion, compared to free-writing. Mixed results were found with the second voice dimension, *indirectness*, in students' texts.

Keywords: voice; group discussion; free-writing; argumentative writing; second-language writing

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing and the creation of an author's identity received concerns of researchers in the field of academic writing (Hatch, Hill, & Hayes, 1993; Hyland, 2010; Ivanc, 1998). The lack of *individualized voice*, a feature embedded in the native L1 individualism culture, is assumed in L2 writers from so-called interdependent cultures, like Vietnam, where collective values take precedence over individualism (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003, p. 246). From a sociocultural perspective, the lack could be traced back to the established norms embedded in the two different L1 and L2 cultures (Atkinson, 1997; Fox, 1994; Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003; Hinkel, 1999; Li, 1996; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999; Ramanathan & Kaplan, 1996a, 1996b; Wu & Rubin, 2001). In this introduction, we will examine the social norms expected of the Vietnamese students in their mother-tongue communication to provide a justification for an intervention in writing voice of Vietnamese EFL students. The second part reviews the recent studies investigating the voice in writing. The last part will be the assumptions of effects of the two experimental conditions, free writing and group discussion, on voice.

1.1 L1 Vietnamese social norms and L2 English writing expectations

“When I look at a new topic, I do not have any idea to write [about] the topic and consequently my text is a boring and not persuasive text.” (Linh, participant numbered 28 wrote of her problems in L2 writing in the first meeting of the study)

Student Linh, a Vietnamese EFL writer student, shared her problems when facing the writing task “writing for or against a crime punishment”, a task which is extracted from her Anglophone EFL writing text book. It is not that she does not know something about the topic, but she has not learned or experienced that what she thinks individually is worth putting into a text. Why is that? We try to locate three major cultural clashes of L1 Vietnamese writing and L2 Anglophone writing that might account for the lack of individualized voice in second language writing, specifically in the tasks that require an author’s own stance: 1) L1-L2 differences in requirement of academic writing, 2) role of self-identity, and 3) notion of voice.

L1-L2 differences. L1-L2 differences in what academic writing requires are reflected in genres and conventions. First, academic writing in mother tongue of Vietnamese EFL writer students is not a subject per se; writing is about literary fiction instead. Linguistic features of mother tongue writing and discourse essays in simple forms, like narrative letters, are taught in lower education (primary, lower-secondary level). In upper-secondary level, academic writing is writing about aspects of literary stories such as writing about the character(s)⁹ or discussing the thematic issues of a story. How to write those literature-related academic essays, yet, is not taught in schools (Phan, 2011). Second, writing in Vietnamese lessons is a means for Vietnamese students to show, and for teachers to examine, to what extent the students have internalized the transmittable traditions and values of their culture in a literary work and rearticulate them in a traditional writing form (see further discussions of Phan (2011) on Vietnamese writing). On the contrary, L2 academic writing places emphasis on writer’s uniqueness, such as the writing task for student Linh above requiring the writer’s own stance and supportive arguments. In conclusion, the argumentative writing genre and the writing conventions expected of that genre, which is closely related to L1 Anglophone cultures or settings, are far from the Vietnamese students’ experience in their mother language writing.

Role of self-identity. In Asian communication settings an individual must be connected, related, and adjusted to other people of the community (Kim et al., 1996; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Communicators must adapt to who their addressee is (with respect to age, sex, relative social position of and relationship to the address-

⁹ For example, the two writing tasks are elicited from the Vietnamese National Exam of Secondary Education Graduation in June-2011: Task 1: Analysing character Trang in the short story *Vo Nhat [The Gathered Wife]* of writer Kim Lan, the extract of the story located in the 12th Grade Advanced Literature, Book Part II, Vietnam Education Publishing House-2008; Task 2: Analysing the character Fishing Village Woman in the literary work *Chiec Thuyen Ngoai Xa [The Far Boat]* of writer Nguyen Minh Chau, the extract in the 12th Grade Advanced Literature, Book Part II, Vietnam Education Publishing House-2009.

ee). As an example from Vietnam, the self-adjustment in communication is reflected clearly with the constraint of choosing an appropriate form of self-reference in more than 11 first-person singular subject pronouns in Vietnamese communication, compared to the only one *öl* equivalent in English. In communication between students and teachers, for instance, Vietnamese students use the first-person singular pronoun *öm* (first-person singular pronoun used in the case a speaker addresses themselves as in a lower position than their interlocutor $\text{\textcircled{r}}$); the students will never use the first-person singular pronoun *öt* (pronoun equal to *öl* in English).

The notion of voice. In Vietnam, voice in communication is expected to be a voice of *ös* instead of a voice of an individual. Communicators, in general, follow the values that are highly respected in the group and fear being ostracized personally (see more analysis of collectivism-culture communication behaviour in Adler, 1997; Bosley, 1993; Kim et al., 1996; Meyer, 2003). It does not mean that communicators in collectivist-cultural setting do not have their own voice and their own judgment, but that these are related and closely attached to what their group emphasizes. This notion of voice can be observed in a descriptive study of L1 Vietnamese in L2 English writing of Phan (2001, 2011). L1 Vietnamese writers were characterized with *indirect, writing from a distance towards a topic, an intention of being less straightforward and more sophisticated*, whereas Anglophone emphasized *being clear in statement, theme-driven reasoning and a strong sense of self-author* (Phan, 2011, p. 30-31).

To conclude, the above differences might account for the problems that the Vietnamese learners face in finding their own voice in performing an L2 writing task, especially the tasks that require a writer $\text{\textcircled{r}}$ self-authority towards a controversial issue. This challenges EFL-teachers in Vietnamese universities to finding the practical support for L2 student writers.

1.2 Research on voice in writing

In L2 writing research, the connection between writing and identity has been a subject of academic interest for some time (Hyland, 2010; Ivanc, 1998). There is some agreement that identity is created from the texts writers engage in and the linguistic choices they make (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Hyland, 2010). Writing researchers have attempted to formulate specific concepts of voice and identity in writing. These conceptions range from *öVoice* as an attribute that captures the sound of the individual on the page $\text{\textcircled{r}}$ (Elbow, 1981, p. 287) to a more sociocultural definition of Matsuda (2001) *öVoice* is the amalgamative effect of the use of discursive and non-discursive features that language users choose, deliberately or otherwise, from socially available, yet ever-changing repertoires $\text{\textcircled{r}}$ (p. 40). Correspondingly, L2 writing research on voice has been designed to address the question of how voice is revealed in writing. Hyland (2011) examined how scholars carved a sense of their self in the disciplined discourse of academic homepages. Hyland (2010) compared the frequency of language features representing the voice of the two leading researchers in applied lin-

guistics, Cameron and Swales, to trace back to their identity construction. Ivanic (1998) and Ivanic and Camps (2001) reported how voice of an author, e.g., self-confidence, certainty or depersonalization, was revealed through analyzing the lexis, generic reference, evaluative lexis, and syntax of students' texts. Tardy and Matsuda (2009) reported the clues, e.g., *breadth or depth of knowledge (or lack thereof), choice of topic, the author's representation of the field, description of the research setting*, that journal reviewers in a blind review process used in guessing who the author of an academic paper is (e.g., guessing the level of the author's experience in the field, author's language background or author's nationality). Other researchers compared how L1 and L2 writers were different in the usage of rhetorical and linguistic features such as first person singular, transitivity, lexical choice, or deductive versus inductive organization (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003; Hinkel, 1999, 2002; Hyland, 2001, 2002b; Tang & John, 1999; Wu & Rubin, 2001). Although the studies reveal what voice is and how voice could be found in texts, it is still unclear how authentic classroom supports may stimulate the voice expression of second language novice writers in a learning context where they are mostly assumed to possess a different perspective on voice in their L1 native writing.

1.3 Classroom activities and effects on voice

From research literature, two prewriting activities that might generate content and consequently enhance the quality of argumentation are free writing and group discussion. *Free writing* was reviewed as an effective tool for generating contents which were sometimes even new to writers. So, in other words, free writing might help to form new knowledge (see the discussion of Elbow, 1973, on free writing and idea generation and Hillocks, 1986, on effects of free writing on text quality). *Group discussion* and its positive effects on idea generation was discussed in many empirical studies: effects of text-centered discussion on higher-order thinking and critical literacy (Englert, Mariage, & Dunsmore, 2006), of classroom discussion on development of subject knowledge and understanding (Corden, 2001; Reznitskaya, Anderson, & Kuo, 2007; Weber, Maher, Powell, & Lee, 2008), and of discussion and arousing multiple viewpoints about complex issues and problems (Bielaczyc & Collins, 1999).

In a Vietnamese context, the two activities might not only affect the number and quality of ideas, but also the stance of an author towards his readers/addressees. As connected to the introduction above, de-emphasis of personal ideas and stance and respect of group values is the conventional behaviour in Vietnamese communication. We assume while free writing might facilitate writers to seek their own voice (Elbow, 1973), group discussion might soften writers' personal voice in addressing an issue at stake.

We formulated the following research question:

“What are the effects of the two prewriting content generation activities, free-writing versus group discussion, on voice in Vietnamese EFL texts?”

Two hypotheses were constructed:

H1. Free writing results in a more personal voice in argumentative texts, compared to group discussion. However, in free-writing condition, arguments are generated by students individually, without being shared in a peer group; this might affect the author-content relation in students' texts. Therefore, the second hypothesis is

H2. Free writing results in a more indirectness in argumentative texts, compared to group discussion.

Both personal voice and indirectness in voice will be described in the method section.

2. METHOD

A pre-test post-test reversed-treatment control group design with switching replications (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002, p. 137) was implemented to examine the effects of content generation activities on voice in argumentative writing (see Table 1). The design allowed us to examine the effect of the two opposing conditions twice, at T2 and at T3, after the two groups swapped conditions.

Table 1. Experimental design

Group	Pre-test T1	Intervention 1	Post-test 1 T2	Intervention 2	Post-test 2 T3
GF (n = 33)	O ₁₋₂₋₃	Group discussion	O ₄	Free writing	O ₅
FG (n = 33)	O ₁₋₂₋₃	Free writing	O ₄	Group discussion	O ₅

Note. GF = Group-discussion group in T2 and then Free-writing group in T3; FG = Free-writing group in T2 and then Group-discussion group in T3; O = measurements_(1 to 5)

2.1 Course specifications

The study was carried out in four weeks (three meetings of 2.30 hrs/meeting for each group per week) in Tra Vinh University, Mekong, Vietnam. The teacher informed the students of the experiment's purpose and that the data from the course will be used for research and treated confidentially. She explained that all students would have exactly the same learning activities and writing assignments, however, in a different sequence. The students were asked to participate fully in all sessions of the course. They received credits and grades for completing the course, a compulsory part of their Bachelor's degree. Instead of a no-exposure/untreated control group in which the effect of intervention found in the experimental group is simply attributed to the lack of treatment operation in the control group, we implemented two treatments, in which all students participated in, but in a different sequence. Time, the level of input materials and types of activities for each parallel operation in the sequence of the two treatments were the same.

The first treatment was individual free writing; the second was group discussion. In this experiment, to reduce the problem of resistance to challenging each other's ideas in working in group of Vietnamese students (see the discussion of Meyer, 2003, on Asian learners and problems in group work), in group-discussion condition students were not required to place much emphasis on judging or challenging their group members' ideas, but on sharing individual ideas, knowledge and/or insights towards a controversial topic instead. In Table 2, the sequence of all learning activities is presented for both conditions. After both groups swapped conditions, the same program was implemented (panel 2).

Table 2. Six stages of the experimental course in two conditions
(differences are written in italics)

Group discussion	Free writing
1. Topic involvement (10 minutes)	
Looking at some pictures of the issue at stake	
<i>Jotting down the immediate thinking</i>	<i>Free writing</i>
2. Exploring pros & cons (20 minutes)	
<i>Sharing each member's own viewpoint and pro and/or contra of the issue in group</i>	<i>Forming a stance and figuring the rebuttals: examining pro and contra statements/arguments about the issue provided by the teacher, identifying the level of agreement to the statements and stating reasons</i>
3. Elaborating the topic (30 minutes)	
Reading documents (students read and select information from provided sources)	
4. Sample analysis (20 minutes)	
Reading and analyzing the context of writing, point of view of the writer, built-in audience, component and purpose of each component and what-could-be-improved of a sample text	
5. Writing preparation (20 minutes)	
Planning individually the organization and content frame of the essay on the issue at stake with a text-element schema provided by teacher (a 5-element schema with 5 blank spaces for one introduction, two arguments, one counterargument and one conclusion); students are free in adding more elements in the basic schema.	
6. Writing (60 minutes)	
Writing a full argumentative text on the issue at stake in 60 minutes, at the expected length of 250 words.	

Students in group discussion treatment were invited to look at two prompt pictures of their topic and note their immediate thinking (Stage 1. Topic involvement). Then they formed smaller groups of four members: each person shared his viewpoint and pros and/or cons of the issue in their group and noted the sharing on one large A3 paper (Stage 2. Exploring pros and cons). In the free-writing treatment, students were invited to be involved in an argumentative topic with looking at the two pic-

tures of their topic, and do the free writing on the topic through keeping on writing freely until time was up. After stage 2, both treatments were the same.

2.2 Participants

Participants were 66 students of EFL intermediate level and of two age groups (19-21 and 22-27) in a university in Vietnam. They were all from Mekong Delta Vietnam, sharing similar social, cultural, demographical and economic context. The proportion of girls (69%) is common for language classes in Vietnam. Of the participants, 14% were from ethnic minority group, Khmer, and they were equally represented in both intervention groups and both age groups. The younger age group included academic students who were full-time students of the undergraduate training program of the university; the older group included post-academic students who had previously finished a part of the university undergraduate training program and at the time of the experiment came back to the university, as part-time students in the evenings, to complete the undergraduate program. From the two age groups students were randomly assigned to Group GF (14 academic students and 19 post-academic students) and Group FG (13 academic students and 20 post-academic students). Although there might be a difference in life experience, working experience, and problem solving ability between the younger students and the older students, both groups were ranked by the university as at intermediate level in EFL competence. Both groups were taught by the same teacher.

2.3 Data collection

Data consisted of the final texts collected. As shown in Table 1, data was gathered at three moments: just before the start of the course (pre-test scores were based on three essays on three argumentative topics per student, see Table 3), just after the experimental round 1 (panel 1; post-test 1) and after the experimental round 2, when both groups had swapped, at the end of the course (panel 2; post-test 2).

There were six students absent at the pre-test and one student absent at the first post-test. In total, 192 texts during the pre-test, 65 texts during the first post-test and 66 during the second post-test were collected. All handwritten texts were typed to reduce the effect of handwriting quality on raters' assessment.

Table 3. Allocation of topic

Group	Pre-test	Post-test 1	Post-test 2
1 (n = 33)	Topic A, B, C	Topic D	Topic E
2 (n = 33)		Topic E	Topic D

To create a replication as exactly as possible, two argumentative topics were assigned randomly to post-test 1 and post-test 2 (see Table 3). The two topics which were considered as similar in the level of controversy included Animal Testing (topic D) and Capital Punishment (topic E).

2.4 Measures

Voice quality in the study was measured with two dimensions of voice. The first one was Personal voice, indicated by the two linguistic features: *Intensifier* (for example, *very, really, absolutely, terribly, always*) with its function of strengthening authors' claims (Crystal & David, 1980; Hyland 2010), and *First-person singular pronouns* (for example, *I, me, mine, my, myself*) which represented the confidence of writers to speak personally and authoritatively (Hyland, 2001, 2010). The second dimension of voice was Indirectness, indicated by the two linguistic features: *Hedges* (for example, *may, might, almost, to some extent*) functioning to soften writers' arguments, lessen their commitment to the certainty of the referential information they present in their writings (Hyland 2010; Lakoff, 1972), *Passive voice* functioning to save writers from mentioning agent(s) of an action in a statement (Dewart, 1979). The last grammatical indicator, *Passive voice*, might be assumed to characterize an indirectness of writers' accountability for the actions suggested in their statements. Passive usage is also a way of hedging (Hyland, 1998). However, because this linguistic feature was highly distinctive for concealing authorship, it was measured separately from other hedges.

These four indicators were judged by the two raters with Master's degree in language and education on the basis of 30 randomly sampled texts. Each rater judged each occurrence of the four linguistic indicators in each text. The inter-rater reliability in terms of Pearson's correlation was satisfactory (see Table 4). The other 293 texts were scored by one of the two raters. To correct for text length, the total number of each of the four indicators occurring in each text was divided by the total number of words of that text and multiplied by 100.

Table 4. Reliability of the four voice indicators ($n = 30$).
Correlations (r) between scores of the two raters

Indicator	r
Intensifiers	.91
First-person singular pronouns	.98
Hedges	.97
Passive voice	.96

Factor analyses, principal components analysis with varimax rotation, were used to extract the two voice dimensions underlying these four indicators. The factor analy-

sis resulted in two factors that explained 57% of the variance in the scores of post-test 1 and 67% of the variance in post-test 2. In Table 5, we presented the factor loadings.

Table 5. Results of the factor analyses

Voice indicator	Post-test 1		Post-test 2	
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2
Intensifiers	.682	-.014	.787	.152
First-person singular pronouns	.663	-.026	.822	.008
Hedges	.440	.659	.239	.762
Passive voice	-.311	.794	-.055	.850

The first factor was interpreted as the extent to which students explicitly expressed their *personal voice*, the second as the extent to which students expressed their *indirectness* in their writing. Personal voice in post-test 1 ranged from -1.81 to 2.31, and in post-test 2 from -1.48 to 5.16. Indirectness in post-test 1 ranged from -1.43 to 2.94 and in post-test 2 from -1.18 to 3.61. Both factors had a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.

2.5 Analyses

To observe an effect of the two experimental conditions in panel 1 and 2 separately, we applied univariate covariance analyses with condition as independent factor, the pre-test scores as a covariate, and the two voice dimensions, personal voice and indirectness, as dependent variables in time 2 (T2) and time 3 (T3), respectively. The pre-test scores included the four indicators of voice.

3. RESULTS

The results are presented in Table 6. We found an effect of condition on *personal voice* in both panels. In panel 1, students in the Free-writing condition generally showed higher scores on personal voice than students in the Group-discussion condition, controlled for the pre-test scores ($F(1,64) = 4.42, p = .04, \eta^2 = .07$). In panel 2, this effect was replicated ($F(1, 64) = 12.73, p = .001, \eta^2 = .18$).

For indirectness, we found an effect of condition in panel 2 with students in the Free writing generally showing more indirectness than students in the Group-discussion condition, controlled for the pre-test scores on voice ($F(1, 64) = 5.82, p = .019, \eta^2 = .09$). No significant effect of condition was found in panel 1 ($F(1, 64) = .03, p = .867$).

Table 6. Results for personal voice and indirectness with means and (standard deviations)

Variable	Group	Pre-test	Post-test 1	Post-test 2
Personal voice	GF	-.09 (1.08)	-.26 (1.02)	.32 (1.15)
	FG	.09 (.91)	.27 (.91)	-.32 (.70)
Indirectness	GF	.13 (.97)	-.01 (1.25)	.30 (1.17)
	FG	-.13 (1.02)	.01 (.67)	-.30 (.68)

Note. GF = Group-discussion group and then Free-writing group; FG = Free-writing group and then Group-discussion group

To illustrate the differences found in personal and indirect voice of students in the two treatment groups and how students changed their voice in the two different treatments, four examples were taken from the introduction part of four argumentative essays of the two students, Thien and Vi (see Table 7).

Table 7: Examples of students' writing (Introduction 1 was written in Group-discussion condition; Introduction 2 was written in Free-writing condition)

Student Thien

Introduction 1 (Group discussion): The effectiveness of animal experiments and the ethical questions raised when using animal o the closest living relatives of human for experiments are coming to the heated controversy in many countries in the world. There are facts one cannot deny is that animal testings have been vital in finding cures for human diseases.

Introduction 2 (Free writing): The law of death penalty was set for years and its effects remain obviously in every citizen's awareness. Time went by, but whenever we talk about death penalty, people think it's an issue of globally controversial [controversial]. In my very personal idea, I absolutely think that is a law of God and should be applied for all people whoever they are and wherever they live. This essay will let you know why death penalty should be accepted despite there are lots of ideas criticize [criticize] the law of death penalty.

Student Vi

Introduction 1 (Group discussion): It's time for us to change our mind on testing animals. It shouldn't continue anymore. There are some (its) advantages but the advantages are less than disadvantages of testing animals. So the human being must consider very carefully about the problem and choose the best for us. I mean that we must end animal testing.

Introduction 2 (Free writing): The Vietnamese has a very good saying "Do what, get what" [You will reap what you will sow]. I completely agree with the saying so I am satisfied with a death penalty for the murders. If you make people pain and suffer, you must be the same as them. It's fair. Moreover, death penalty is safe for good citizens and prevents social evils.

Introduction 1 of both students was written in Group-discussion condition and introduction 2 of both students was written in individually Free-writing condition. The

four linguistic indicators judged by raters were underlined. With all the four introductions, readers might recognize the writer's stance without much effort. However, the intensity of personal voice the students expressed was rather different. A lower level of personal voice in Group-discussion condition (introduction 1) of both students and a higher level of personal voice was found in Free-writing condition (introduction 2) of both students. Indirect voice was also expressed more in Free-writing condition of one of the two students. The examples are the original texts students wrote in the introduction of their full argumentative text in the classroom, without the teacher's revisions, and without consulting a dictionary or grammar book while writing.

Although *Student Thien* in *introduction 1* seemed not to disagree with animal testing when he ended his introduction with the statement "There are facts one cannot deny is that animal testings have been vital in finding cures for human diseases", his stance towards the issue was not expressed in a strong and definite way. In the whole paragraph, there are not many indicators of personal voice found. Readers also recognized an effort to include a counterargument "animal () the closest living relatives of human" in his short text. In general, although it is not very difficult to recognize his stance, his personal voice towards the issue is not revealed explicitly in the text. Differently, in *introduction 2*, more indicators of personal voice towards the issue were found in his text. Thien stated emphatically his personal viewpoint "In my very personal ideas, I absolutely think ()". Passive voice, found in his conclusion that *the penalty should be applied and accepted*, helped to avoid a directedness or a confirmed certainty, and therefore involved readers in his argument.

Student Vi in both *introduction 1* and *2* expressed her stance very clearly. Differently from student Thien's texts in which a clear discrepancy of personal voice in introduction 1 and 2 were noticed, in Vi's a strong personal voice was found in both introductions. In introduction 1, Vi mentioned the issue she concerned directly and definitely "I mean that we must end animal testing". However, in introduction 2, she stated even with more personal liability for her statement "I completely agree with () so I am satisfied with ()". Raters also noticed a lower level of personal voice indicators found in her introduction 1.

4. DISCUSSION

The effect of the two different types of content generation activity on *personal voice* was confirmed in both panels. In both panels, students who worked in individual free-writing condition showed a higher level of personal voice expression in their argumentative texts than students who discussed an argumentative topic in a small group before writing on that topic. The related indicators of this voice including intensifiers (e.g., *extremely, absolutely, terribly*) and first-person singular pronouns (*I, me, myself, mine*) were found significantly more often in writings of students in individual free-writing condition than in those of students in group discussion.

The effect of free writing and group discussion on level of *indirectness* was observed in panel 2 but not in panel 1. The related indicators of *indirectness* including passive voice and hedges (*may, seems, almost, to some extent*) were found more often in argumentative texts of students in free-writing condition than in those of students who wrote after group discussion. In other words, free writing was found affecting positively the level of indirectness in writing argumentatively of EFL writer students in the second panel.

We may conclude that some voice indicators seem to be more attached to the type or form of content generation activity in EFL writing classroom. With the results found of personal voice that changed in an exact treatment replication we might assume that *personal voice* (first-person singular pronouns and intensifiers) appears to be more sensitive, in comparison to *indirect voice* indicators (hedges and passive voice), to what type of content generation activity stimulated in class. In other words, for novice EFL writer students when there is a change in type, individual or group working, of content generation activity, we might expect to see clearly a change in the students' personal voice. From this finding we might infer that personal voice seems to be one of the clear indicators of EFL writing voice expression (see the discussion of Hyland, 2010, on the necessity of empirical studies on recognizing linguistic features related to L2 writers' constructing voice).

4.1 Limitations

Please note that random topic allocation was nested in condition to raise the level of replication. That is to say, we found an effect of content generation activity in two panels within one and the same topic on personal voice. For this design we opted to replicate the findings as fair as possible: both Free-writing conditions (in panels 1 and 2) were measured with the same writing task and same writing topic (topic E), and, similarly, both Group-discussion conditions (in panels 1 and 2) were measured with the same writing task and same writing topic (topic D). This choice for replication is at the cost of generalization. Although assignment of topics to condition was done randomly, we could not exclude that part of the experimental effect was due to topic. Further study must confirm the generalizability of the findings in our study. One counter finding that topic effect did not occur might be that global scores of the final text's quality were not different for both topics in post-test 1 and post-test 2 of Group GF and FG (respectively $t(32) = .60, p = .553$; $t(31) = .15, p = .882$). Global quality of each text was judged by three different raters using the quality scale for argumentative texts of Hamp-Lyons (1991). We used the mean score per text as the score for text quality while the inter-rater reliability between the three raters per text was high ($r = .80$).

Another limitation to mention is the choice of indicators of voice in the study. Voice was measured from a micro-linguistic perspective with four linguistic indicators. This might be not 'global' enough to show the picture of voice in argumentative writing. For example, we indicated 'indirectness' quality of voice with two indicators 'passive voice' and 'hedges'; however, other indicators like 'to be' and evaluative language (e.g., adjective) might also be good indicators signaling authors'

assertiveness and directness in proposing arguments (see the discussion of Hyland, 2010, on function of *õto beõ* and evaluative language as authorial positioning assertiveness, p. 169). Nevertheless, the way we measured voice in the current study clearly formed the two dimensions that showed to be sensitive to our treatments.

4.2 Conclusion

We could now conclude that writing classroom activities do affect voice expression of writers, at least at this level of students (EFL novice writers), for this argumentative writing genre and in this cultural learning context.

First, individual free writing, in comparison with group discussion, was found to result in a higher level of personal voice expressed in a written text. In other words, an EFL classroom condition that encourages students to brainstorm personally a controversial topic before writing on that topic will increase the presence of writers as personal authors in their writings; and the other way around, the level of authorial presence in text will be reduced if the students share their different viewpoints around the topic in groups. This result might be interesting in the Vietnamese/Asian context because, as analyzed in the introduction, in social communication the communicators in the context are expected to respect a group voice and deemphasize a personal voice. In this L2 writing experiment, we also see a direction of low personal voice of EFL students in effect of discussion in groups: a transition of mother-tongue cultural values in performing an L2 writing task.

Second, individual free writing was found resulting in a higher level of indirectness, compared to group discussion, in one of the two experimental panels. We propose from this result that individual working might affect writers in stating their arguments in texts with more indirectness. We might assume that individual free writing is different from normal practice in L1 Vietnamese writing; therefore it might result in less self-confidence about the writing content. On the contrary, a classroom condition where sharing individual ideas, knowledge and/or insights towards a controversial topic is encouraged, students will be more certain towards an issue, therefore be more direct in proposing their arguments. However, we need to check the stability of this finding with further experiments because the effect of group discussion on *indirectness* was not replicated. Although the result needs to be confirmed through further research, it may be interesting if we relate the finding of group discussion on reducing indirectness voice of students to what cross-cultural studies revealed of communication characteristics of Asian students: Asian students are reported to feel confident, certain in what is valued, suggested by group, rather than what is individually valued and originated (see discussions on Asian learners and group work in Carson & Nelson, 1994; Meyer, 2003). We see that students brought into L2 text performance their L1 communication practice when L2 classroom was activated by group activity.

EFFECTS OF SELF-QUESTIONING ON STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN LITERARY READING

Abstract

Two self-questioning interventions were set up to increase students' cognitive and affective engagement in literary reading. These interventions featured (1) students generating and formulating questions while reading individually and then exploring their questions in small-group discussions, and (2) students generating and formulating questions while reading individually and then reflecting individually through a free-writing activity. A pre-test post-test control group design with switching replications was set up with these two experimental conditions and a regular condition in which the teacher generated the questions and led the discussion on the questions. Participants were 59 EFL Vietnamese undergraduate students in a university in Mekong, Vietnam. On five measurement occasions student engagement was measured by (1) a written response to a work of fiction and (2) an inventory of perceived engagement. Results showed that both experimental interventions positively influenced students' engagement in reading literary fiction, compared to the regular course pattern with questions provided by the teacher. The maintenance of the intervention effects was also observed. No different effect was shown between the two experimental conditions. An implication of the findings is that a literary reading classroom with students' self-generation of questions combined with reflective discussions or free writing positively promote the cognitive and affective reading engagement, especially in the initially low-engaged readers.

Key words: self-questioning; foreign language; literary reading; literature engagement; self-perceived engagement.

1. INTRODUCTION

Literacy educators emphasize the central role of fostering engagement with reading in the classrooms for students' literacy achievement (Meiers, 2004). Engaged readers are defined as possessing desires to learn and using their best strategies for understanding and interpreting reading texts to enhance that learning (Guthrie, Alao, & Rinehart, 1997). Students who are disengaged in reading simply read the information on a surface level over and over again for their literacy tasks (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Guthrie et al., 1997). Classroom instructions might trigger engagement in reading, but how this can be empirically tested is largely unknown. In this paper, we test two student-centered classroom instructions, in addition to a regular course pattern with text and questions provided by the teacher.

1.1 Native and foreign literary reading

Research has classified two types of literary (fiction) reading in school: Text-based processing and reader-based processing. *Reader-based processing* means that reading begins with the reader making hypotheses about the author's intentions. Readers read to verify or refute their hypothesis and do so by selecting words or passages to validate their thoughts (McCoy, 2007). *Text-based processing* explicitly focusses

on linguistic complexity of a text and text structures, for example, settings, characters, conflicts, and an end for stories or cause-effect or problem-solution for expository texts (McCormack & Pasquarelli, 2010; McCoy, 2007). As students become more proficient with the relative low-level strategies of text-based processing, most will advance to the level of figuring out meanings. If classroom contexts give them an opportunity they will move back and forth between the high- and low level reading strategies (McCoy, 2007, p. 183).

1.2 Text-based processing in Vietnamese literary reading

In Vietnam, literary reading is a compulsory subject in secondary education in the public school system, from Grade 6 to Grade 12. In these classes, students read Vietnamese authors and foreign ones such as *“The Magic Brush”* by a Chinese author, *“The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish”* by a Russian author, extracts of *“Don Quixote”* from Spain, *“The Little Match Girl”* from Denmark, and *“The Last Leaf”* of North-American origin, Shakespeare drama, etc., all translated into Vietnamese. However, Vietnamese literary works take about 80% of the program, with a larger portion of prose than poetry. Students throughout the whole country, for each grade, use the same course-book in the public system. The major aim is that students master the central themes of the major literary works, the Vietnamese canon. In classroom, students read a short story individually, accompanied by the guiding questions for the story provided in the course-book. Then the teacher leads the whole-class discussion towards answering these guiding questions to explore the theme of the story. Testing consists of questions about the background of the author, the story line, and a writing task in which students write around 250-300 words analyzing the central theme of the story. Assessment of the writing task is based on students’ expression of the *“right”* theme and sufficient and appropriate evidence in the story. Most of this information is provided in the classroom discussion before the test and learning is, therefore, reproductive.

1.3 Text-based processing reading in foreign literary reading

When Vietnamese students graduated from the secondary system and they chose English as a foreign language (EFL) four-year training course in undergraduate level, they must take an English literary reading course at the end (year 4) of the study in most universities. At this level of proficiency in English, students are assumed to be proficient enough to understand short fictional texts written in English. The teaching approach is teachers posing questions embedded in the texts about characters, theme and teachers leading the classroom discussion to answer the questions.

Teachers feel that many students in the foreign literary reading context show a notable lack of comprehension in foreign language literary reading.

“Students read but did not understand; most read and understood parts- not all. In brief, they mostly stop at the surface, not the deep meanings of the [literary] work.”

This is a comment of a teacher who has taught EFL in higher education in Vietnam for 20 years and an EFL literary introduction course for the recent 3 years (from the

interview material of the current study). The students she refers to are undergraduate EFL students who are sufficiently proficient in English language to read the stories listed in their program. From the students' side, the common question to their teacher is "Why don't you tell me what I should grasp, what the main contents of the story [L2 story] are?" This attitude reflects the present status of foreign-language literary reading at the university level. Vietnamese students prefer to receive a "right" answer from the teacher as well as show a resistance to invest into exploring deeper layers of literary texts, like students in other places (Janssen, Braaksma, & Couzijn, 2009). Testing consists of questions about basic characteristics of a story, such as time, place setting of the story, intentions of characters, etc. and a writing task in which students write around 250-300 words responding to the story they read. For example, to the story "In Another Country" of Hemingway, students are required to "write a short essay in which you [students] illustrate the sense of isolation or loneliness which life in modern urban society can bring." (Le, 2007, p. 146). The task seems to be more reader-based, not only task-based, but the present teaching that fosters many text-based comprehension questions does not facilitate effectively the students to complete the writing task. Or students must interpret the global theme of the story, stating what they learned from the story, producing the "moral" which is not only typical in Vietnamese literary education, but also in foreign-language literary reading. Assessment of the writing task refers to the quality of students' interpretation of the story, whether it is more or less valid and reasonable, and taking language use and language expression into consideration.

We assume, at this level of reading and life experience of students, an approach encouraging *reader-based* processing in foreign language literary reading might be more interesting, challenging and fostering cognitive and affective engagement of the readers. Learning to generate questions ("self-questioning") might be a good way to put reader-based processing into practice.

1.4 Self-questioning in literary reading classroom

Three theories underlying the integration of students' self-questioning as a reader engagement strategy in the literature classroom are *narrative understanding*, *problem finding*, and *reader response* (Janssen, 2002). In narrative understanding theory, a fundamental component of narrative understanding is that readers ask themselves questions, both as inner speech or "self-talk" or as thinking aloud (Graesser, Singer, & Trabasso, 1994; Olson, Duffy, & Mack, 1985; Trabasso, Van den Broek, & Liu, 1988). The theory of *problem finding* focuses on reading literary texts as *problem-finding* rather than *problem-solving* processes. As in literary texts, the problem itself is unknown, ill-defined, and pleasurable to be sought and therefore, involves discovering, envisaging, and delving into deeper questions (Schraw, Dunkle, & Bendixen, 1995). *Reader response theory* suggests that reading is a "transaction" process between readers and text (Rosenblatt, 1978). In the process, readers' genuine, knowledge-seeking questions will promote their engagement, which in turn leads to higher levels of response to literature (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991). In essence, stu-

dents generating questions while reading to create sense is the basis of all the three theories.

There are different approaches to engaging students in literary reading through intentional application of self-questioning strategies reported: the approach of story-grammar based self-questioning (Singer & Donlan, 1982) and of self-questioning towards dialogical-thinking reading discussion (Commeyras & Sumner, 1998). The studies that investigated the effect of implementing these approaches report positive results on students' investment in digging for full comprehension of the stories or for meaningful discussions about the stories. In the study of Singer and Donlan (1982), in accordance with the theory of *narrative understanding*, students were taught explicitly the characteristics of a grammar of a story with a plan, a goal, actions, obstacles, and outcomes that represent success or failure. They provided students with general text-based questions about common characteristics of a story such as "Who is the leading character?", "What is the leading character trying to accomplish in the story?" and students were taught to use the general questions to generate questions more specific to the story they read. They found students generated the adjacent story-specific questions (e.g., "Is this story going to be more about the officer or the barber?") in accompany to the schema-general question "who is the leading character?" Students who formulated story-specific questions based on their knowledge of general schema questions showed a better awareness of the story characteristics than students who read to answer the schema questions posed by the teacher.

Commeyras and Sumner (1998), connected to the theory of *reader response*, investigated what process enabled the transfer of responsibility from teacher to students for creating a meaningful and interesting dialogical discussion towards a short story for second-grade students. They asked students to think of open-ended questions for a story and bring up the questions for group discussions. They found that giving students opportunities to think of questions for discussion, instead of answering teacher questions, created an active group discussion of questions around a story. Students' questions were reported as leading to critical thinking and problem solving because they were authentic, for example, students asked "Why did the girl throw the doll in the fire?" compared to the teacher's question "Did the story character do the right thing?". Students were also eager to pose questions, created numerous and varied questions, as well as willingly participated in discussing questions presented in groups. But although the questions and discussions changed, effect on comprehension was not examined in the study.

In line with the two above studies, Janssen et al. (2009) showed that Grade 10 students who were stimulated to generate questions reported a higher level of appreciation of the story they read than students who read with questions provided by teachers. Both conditions discussed the questions in groups. These authors also reported different effects of the two experimental interventions: guided and unguided self-questioning. Unguided self-questioning means that students were completely responsible for generating questions to bring up to discussions; whereas guided self-questioning means that students received additional modeling of good and weak questions. Students from the unguided self-questioning groups showed better quality of interpretation than students who did receive the good and weak examples of ques-

tions. In sum, self-questioning instructions seem to be effective to engage students in reading literary texts. However, a self-questioning classroom should foster students' authenticity and respect their spontaneous responses in making questions, rather than telling students what a good/bad question is or having judgment on their questions.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To facilitate student engagement in reading fiction texts, we designed a literary fiction reading intervention. Self-generation of questions and exploring the questions with peers or individually formed the principal components of the intervention.

We assume students exchanging questions and sharing their thoughts with their peers will increase literary engagement (see discussions of Health, 1991; Guthrie et al., 1997, on students' raising questions that they are excited at, discussing the question and the increase of engaged reading). Janssen et al., (2009) reported a higher level of appreciation of literature in the students who generated questions and explored the questions through discussing with peers. Students were assumed to read deeply when they knew that they would share their questions in a group discussion (Guthrie, 2004). Discussing questions with peers might contribute to the authenticity of the self-generation of question in a self-questioning classroom: questions asked and addressed

An alternative to discussion of questions that we examine in the study is self-generation of questions and exploring the questions with expressive free writing. We refer to the concept of useful function of expressive free writing as an explorative tool to activate knowledge embedded in each individual (Elbow, 1973). Research on writing revealed that writing did not only function as a way of communication but also as a tool for acquiring content knowledge, developing understanding, and improving thinking skills in a broad range of content subject from science to literature and at various educational levels (Rijlaarsdam et al., 2011). Different mechanisms in writing processes were assumed to stimulate thinking (Klein, 1999). One of these is called *Spontaneous Text Production*, which means that in the process of expressive writing writers spontaneously make their tacit knowledge explicit. This is what free-writing activities in education aim at.

With the two alternatives of self-questioning classroom (self-questioning supported by group discussion versus by free writing), we are seeking to address the basic question whether students do engage more deeply in fiction reading with self-questioning while reading than with teacher-posed questions.

Our research questions are:

“Does reading with self-questioning (SQ), compared to regular reading with teacher-posed questions (TQ), influence student engagement in literary reading positively?”

“Do the two approaches of self-questioning, one supported by discussion (SQ^D) and one by free writing (SQ^F), result in different effects on reading engagement?”

In connection to a study of Janssen et al (2009) in which student-readers' variation like reading experience was found influencing their scores of quality of reading interpretation, we come to the third question.

“Does the self-questioning approach produce different effects on students with different initial level of engagement with literary reading?”

3. METHOD

3.1 Research design

A pre-test post-test control group design with switching replications (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002), was implemented to examine the effects of self-questioning on student engagement (see Table 1). A nested design was implemented to test the effects of the two versions of the experimental intervention.

Table 1. Research design

Group	Panel 1				Panel 2				
	T1	Panel-1a	T2	Panel-1b	T3	Panel-2a	T4	Panel-2b	T5
ST1	O ₁	SQ ₁	O ₂	SQ ₂	O ₃	TQ	O ₄	TQ	O ₅
ST2	O ₁	SQ ₂	O ₂	SQ ₁	O ₃	TQ	O ₄	TQ	O ₅
TS	O ₁	TQ	O ₂	TQ	O ₃	SQ ₁	O ₄	SQ ₂	O ₅

Note. SQ₁ = Self-questioning condition with group discussion; SQ₂ = Self-questioning condition with free writing; TQ = Teacher-posed question condition; ST = SQ in panel 1 and TQ in panel 2; TS = TQ in panel 1 and SQ in panel 2; O = measurement (1 to 5)

Instead of an untreated control condition in which the effect of the intervention found in the experimental group might be attributed to the lack of an intervention operation in the control condition, we implemented a regular reading course with teacher-posed questions for the control condition, using exactly the same literary texts. All students participated in both the intervention and conventional courses, albeit in a different sequence.

Panel 1 (T1-T3) was used to test the difference between the two self-questioning conditions and the teacher-posed question condition. Panel 2 (T3-T5) allowed us to replicate this. Panel 1a (T1-T2) was used to test the difference between the two self-questioning conditions. Panel 2a (T3-T4) allowed us to see whether the replication of the effect of students' self-generation of questions (SQ) vs. teacher-posed ques-

tions (TQ) was already reached after one session after students swapped conditions (T4).

3.2 Course specifications

Table 2 details the learning activities in the experimental and control condition. After students swapped conditions, the same program was implemented in the subsequent learning phases. In the case that students prefer one story in one condition more than another story in another condition, this might lead to the problem that the effect found was not triggered by condition but by stories' content. To avoid this text-based bias, four stories were used in a counterbalanced design in the four learning phases, and five other ones were used in a counterbalanced design in the five measurement occasions. We select the nine stories that could fit the experiment, in reference to the length of the stories, the ability of reading of students, the topics of the stories that might suggest interest and thoughtful attention of the students. Most of the stories are taught in the existing literary reading course of the Vietnamese EFL undergraduate program.

Description of an SQ learning session

Each learning session lasted for five periods which was normal for Vietnamese students (45 minutes/period). The session started from 1 pm and ended at round 5.15pm, with 20-30 minute break in between. There were 20 students participating in the session. First, the teacher had an introduction talk in which students were informed of what they were expected to do as well as what they might expect from the teacher. The first learning activity was modelling reading with self-questioning by the teacher. There were one extract of the story 'A Rose for Emily' and the full story 'The Story of An Hour' used for the modelling. With the first story, 'A Rose for Emily', the teacher provided a hand-out of an extract of the story as well as showed the story on a projector. The teacher encouraged students to maintain the same reading speed with her and she read aloud the story. She usually stopped in between and posed her questions aloud as well as noted them on the blackboard. She encouraged her students to form questions or predictions with her in reading. The students participated actively and they formed many questions as well as made different or opposite predictions about the story's events and characters. The teacher noted quickly all of the questions on the board as an acknowledgement of their contribution as well as to link their questions to other students' questions. Some of the questions noted on the blackboard were discussed openly, as a whole-class activity, in reference to the story's details and to the students' experience.

After the introduction of self-questioning while reading (Stage 1 of Table 2), students were divided into groups of three or four students and received a story's word-guidance sheet of around 30-40 words with explanations and examples. Students would ask each other in their groups the words that they might not know or asked the teacher if no one in the group knew (Stage 2). After a group thought that they were fine with the words, they received their stories, read individually, and

wrote their questions in a question-writing hand-out. Students needed some periods to finish reading and writing down questions (Stage 3). Then they brought two or three questions that they liked best to their group and talked about the questions in their group for around 20-30 minutes. This is the only stage different for the two experimental groups: Group ST1 talked about their questions with their peers while group ST2 explored their questions with free writing (Stage 4). Then each student wrote individually a response text (with the requirement of around 200-250 words) about the story in 60 minutes (Stage 5). In sum, many questions students made in the self-questioning reading are meaningful and interesting (see Appendix A for questions students generated).

Table 2. Course program and the three conditions

Self-questioning (SQ)		Teacher-posed questions (TQ)
with group discussion	with individual free writing	
<p><i>1. Illustration of self-questioning-45 minutes</i> Students observed an example reading with an expert reader illustrating her forming questions, wonderings, and predictions while reading a literary text: students were visualized that there was thinking while reading. Students were invited to form questions with her. Their questioning was encouraged and not evaluated.</p>		<p>Students received the questions for the story they were going to read from the teacher and had questions if they did not understand the questions</p>
<p><i>2. Before reading-30 minutes</i> Students received background information and vocabulary explanation for a story that they were going to read</p>		
<p><i>3. Individual reading process-60 minutes</i> Students were instructed to form questions individually while reading a story: They used the pencil to mark in the text when they stopped for thinking. Note: they could stop whenever they liked in between Students wrote down their questions and their initial responses or predictions to stories in a worksheet. Students were reminded that there were no right or wrong responses, no interesting or irrelevant questions and responses, just what was REALLY from their first impression, what made them feel puzzled or interested. Appendix A illustrates the questions students formed in the processing of reading. Students were encouraged to write down as many questions as possible.</p>		

4. *Exploration-30 minutes*
With group discussion

4.1 Students chose two or three questions that they felt the most challenging, and/or interesting, and/or inspiring/deep for a discussion.

4.2. Students would explore in groups of three possible answers/solutions and note down three questions of their groups and main ideas involving each question that had emerged from the discussion in a worksheet

With free writing

4.1 Students chose a question for themselves that they felt the most challenging, and/or interesting, and/or inspiring/deep.

4.2 Students then wrote down their question in a worksheet and developed that into a paragraph with their question as the first sentence.
 Note: students were reminded that (i) Just write their mind, do not stop to think too much as they write, do not weight up every word, just tell their mind; (ii) Forget grammar, just write in English and/or Vietnamese; (iii) Remove the pressure of quality and focus purely on the quantity of writing.

With classroom discussion led by teacher

Teacher led a classroom discussion for the answers to the questions the teacher provided.

5. *Measurement (Response text)*

Students worked on the writing task in approximately 60 minutes

Prompt 1: Imagine you are going to write a letter to your friend about your views after reading the story (a new story which is different from the story in the intervention stage). You might also explore what the story means to you and/or how the story makes a difference in your thinking.

Prompt 2: Now write a letter to yourself. Talk to the person in you something important you get from the story.

For both prompts, the most important thing is getting your message across.

6. *Measurement (self-report)-6 minutes*

Students answered a 10-item questionnaire on the engagement that they perceived towards reading the story.

3.3 *Participants*

Participants were 59 Vietnamese undergraduate students of EFL intermediate level within the age group of 21-25. They were all from Mekong Delta Vietnam, sharing similar social, cultural, demographical and economic context. At the time of the experimental course they were all in the last year of a bachelor 4-year EFL training program in Tra Vinh University, Vietnam. The proportion of girls (79.7%) is common for language classes in Vietnam. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the three groups: Group ST1 with 19, Group ST2 with 19 and Group TS with 21 par-

ticipants. Female/male ratio appeared not to differ across conditions. All participants were taught by one teacher.

The study was carried out in four weeks in Tra Vinh University, Mekong, Vietnam. Each week students attended one instructional session of 4 ó 4.30hrs and one test session of 2.30-3hrs, with a pre-test session at the start of the four-week period. The schedule of the sessions is normal for Vietnamese students. The teacher informed the students of the course's purpose and explained that data from the course would be used for research and treated confidentially. Students were told that they would have exactly the same interventions and learning activities, however, in a different sequence. The students were asked to participate fully in all sessions of the course. They were going to get credits and grades for completing the course, a compulsory part of their Bachelor's degree.

3.4 Data collection

Data consisted of response texts students wrote and responses to an inventory of perceived engagement in the five testing sessions. In all the five moments, all students of all the three groups were tested in the same location and at the same starting time.

In pre-and post-test, students were asked to write a letter to their friends or themselves sharing their personal thoughts after reading the story, what the story meant to them and/or how the story made a difference in their thinking. Their text (letter) should contain at least 200 words. Students wrote their text with pen and paper. Students in this university are generally not used to writing on a computer at the university. After writing a response text, students gave responses to an inventory of their perceived engagement. In total, there were 295 final texts collected (5 texts per student; 59 students) and 292 questionnaires collected and involved in analyses. Three different students did not submit their inventory, one at measurement time 2, 3 and 4. All handwritten texts were typed to eliminate the effect of handwriting quality on raters' assessment of the texts.

Before and after the course, we also interviewed teachers and students about expectations of learning outcomes, learning contents of literary reading, and students' assessments of the literary reading achievement for their personal, cognitive, and emotional development that they perceived. This interview data would not be reported upon in the current study.

3.5 Measures

Students becoming *engaged readers* might be a meaningful learning goal that attracts interest and investment of teachers in literary reading. However, no empirical research on measuring the quality of engagement in fiction reading of student-readers has been reported.

Three sources were used to guide the construction of the two measures of engagement with fiction reading in the study. The first was the three-component conceptualization of learning engagement of Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004).

Behavioral engagement is direct involvement in a set of activities, like reading activities, and includes positive conduct, efforts, persistence, and participation in extra-curricular activities. Emotional engagement covers both positive and negative affective reactions (e.g., interest, boredom) to activities, as well as to the individuals with whom one does the activities. Cognitive engagement means willingness to exert the mental effort needed to comprehend challenging concepts and accomplish difficult tasks in different domains, as well as the use of self-regulatory and other strategies to guide one's cognitive efforts.

A second source we used is from Guthrie and colleagues (Guthrie, Wigfield, & You, 2012, p. 602) who described attributes of an engaged reader. An engaged reader is a person who is motivated to read, strategic in their approach to comprehending what they read, knowledgeable in their construction of meaning from text, and socially interactive while reading. In other words, highly engaged readers read deeply and frequently used many comprehension strategies to gain meanings from texts (Wigfield et al., 2008).

A third source is the report of strategies that effective adolescent readers used in exploring literary texts; for example, making inferences, expressing diverse responses (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Janssen, Braaksma, & Rijlaarsdam, 2006). Researchers demonstrated a strong relation between high-engaged readers and deep reading: the more engaged in reading, the deeper cognitive processing a reader performed (Guthrie et al., 2012).

In the current study, we measured students' engagement with literary reading in two ways. The first one was based on a written response task (with 200-250 words) and referred to the way students verbally responded to reading a story. The second one related to the perceived engagement of students in literary reading and was measured by an inventory.

3.5.1 *Written response task*

There were five different stories used for five measurement moments (O_{1-5}). In each measurement, students were provided with a story and a written response task. The written response task offered a choice of the two prompts for all the students in all measurement moments: (1) "Imagine you are going to write a letter to your friend about your views after reading the story. You might also explore what the story means to you and/or how the story makes a difference in your thinking." (2) "Write a letter to yourself. Talk to the person in you about something important you get from the story." Students could choose one out of the two prompts. We assumed both prompts encouraged reader-based responses and were not different in promoting reading engagement from the students.

Six variables, from students' written response texts, were used to measure student engagement with literary reading. The coding unit for each variable is the entire written response text of a student at a particular measurement moment (for the reliability between two raters for the variables in students' written response texts, see Table 3).

Table 3. Inter-rater reliability for the variables of reading engagement in students' written response texts. Inter-rater reliability in terms of Pearson's correlation

Variable	Measurement	<i>r</i>	Min-Max value
Inference	Valid predictions and inferences about character(s)	.60	0-0
Emotion towards characters	Occurrence of emotional expressions towards character(s)	.61	0-0
Variety of response	Types of responses occurring in students' response texts	.77	0-9
Personal voice	First-person singular pronouns (<i>I, me, my, myself</i>) and Intensifiers (<i>extremely, absolutely, very</i>)	.74	0-0
Global interpretation of theme	Students' evaluative response of the central theme of the whole story, in connection to their personal life.	.62	0-5
Productivity of response text	The number of words counted in each response text		0-9

The first variable was *inference*. From an emotional perspective, inferences about characters were made through the personal involvement of readers in interacting to the textual information of a literary text (Kneepkens & Zwaan, 1994). To make explanatory inferences about characters of a literary text required a high level of cognitive effort because students had to go beyond the surface understanding of that text (Janssen et al., 2006). This also reflects a deep cognitive processing of the readers in digging into full comprehension of a complex text (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Romer, 1993; Guthrie et al., 2012; Janssen et al., 2006; Kneepkens & Zwaan, 1994). Inferences were measured by the occurrence of the valid predictions and inferences towards character(s) in students' response texts. The inferences might be signaled with thinking verbs like *understand*, *wonder*, *suppose*. An example in a student's text: *When his heart beats louder and louder, we understand that he regrets [regretted] how he acted.*

The second variable was *emotion towards characters*. Literary research revealed that readers especially experienced emotions when they were willing to be immersed and/or involved in the reactions of the characters (Kneepkens & Zwaan, 1994, p. 132). *Emotion* towards characters was measured by the occurrence of the emotional expressions towards character(s), which were signaled with adjectives and/or verbs such as *excited*, *apprehensive*, *proud*, and *angry*, or verbs like *admire*. Two examples of (dis)empathy expressions in students' texts: *I admire her so much because she overcomes [s] herself by [with] the mother's love* and *The main character of [in] this story make[s] me confused and scared.*

The third variable was *variety of response*. We located nine types of response based on the concepts of F-emotions (fiction-based emotions) and A-emotions (artifact-emotions) of Andringa (1996) and Kneepkens and Zwaan (1994). We assumed the more types of response included in a text were found, the richer feelings the

readers have experienced towards a literary story were revealed (Earthman, 1992; Janssen et al., 2006, 2012; Peskin, 1998). Variety of response was measured by the types of response occurring in students' response texts including (i) story-based prediction, (ii) empathy or (iii) dis-empathy towards characters, (iv) comprehensibility or (v) incomprehensibility, (vi) literature appreciation or (vii) depreciation, (viii) novelty, (ix) local interpretations (see Appendix B for illustration of these types of response from students' texts).

The fourth variable was the *personal voice* of readers in expressing their attitude towards a story. This indicator was measured by the two linguistic features: The occurrence of First-person singular pronouns (*I, me, my, myself*) and of Intensifiers (*extremely, absolutely, and very*). In our earlier study of the writing voice of Vietnamese students, these two linguistic features proved to be reliable and valid indicators of personal voice in writing from a micro-linguistic perspective. We assumed that the more personal voice was found in a student text, the more strongly the writers express their feelings about the story. Therefore, this indicator might stand for affective engagement. The occurrence of this indicator was measured only in inferential (indicator 1) and emotional sentences (indicator 3) because most texts of the students included some parts rephrasing or retelling a story's content. In that particular part, the occurrence of this variable would not really reflect the writers' attitude.

The fifth variable, *global interpretation of theme*, was students' evaluative response of the central theme of a whole story, in connection to their personal life. We assumed the more engaged a reader is the more significant, explicit, and personal-connected he is in expressing his understanding of the theme of the story he read, and vice versa, for low-engaged students, the less clear, vague, and less personal-connected interpretation of theme. Global interpretation of theme was measured by the general quality of students' personal exploration of the central theme of a story. It was coded from 0 (= no interpretation) to 5 (= explicit and personally connected interpretation). An example of the text with a high score for explicit, clear, personal-connected interpretation of theme is given in Appendix C.

Finally, the sixth variable, *productivity of response text*, referred to the effort students made in fulfilling a reading task. We assumed the longer a written response to a work of fiction is the more effort a student showed in being involved in reading the fiction. Productivity of a response text was measured by the number of words counted in that text, using the word-count function of Microsoft Word.

A selection of the texts, including all five measurement occasions and all literary works of fiction was rated twice, by independent working raters. Inter-rater reliability in terms of Pearson's correlation varied from $r = .60$ for *Inference* to $r = .77$ for *Variety of response*.

3.5.2 Inventory of perceived engagement

The instrument consisted of 10 items indicating four aspects of engagement: self-confidence in understanding (Guthrie et al., 2012; Wigfield et al., 2008), interest (Fredricks et al., 2004; Kneepkens & Zwaan, 1994), involvement (Duke & Pearson,

2002) and imagination (Van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). Four items referred to self-confidence in understanding (I understood the story, Reading the story changed my mind, I made up a meaning of the story myself, The story taught me something), two indicated students' level of interest towards a story (I felt interested in reading the story, I like to read more from this author), three items of involvement (The more I read the story, the deeper I get into it; The more I read the story, the more I became involved; I felt very active when I was reading), and one on imagination while reading (The story created scenes, people, and actions in my mind while reading). All items were answered on a Likert-type scale, with 1 = does not apply and 5 = does apply to a great extent. Reliability of the 10 items of the questionnaire through five times of measurement is high (ranging from Cronbach's $\alpha = .84$ to $.90$).

3.6 Analyses

To answer the research question 1 we used multivariate analyses of covariance in two panels. In panel 1, condition (SQ vs. TQ) was the independent variable, and the seven variables of engagement in post-test 2 (T3) were the dependent variables, with the pre-test scores of the seven variables (T1) as covariates. This analysis was repeated for panel 2 (T5), with the same pre-test scores as covariates. Subsequently, we used paired-samples t-tests to examine the differences between the measurement times within a condition.

To examine the differences between the two versions of the experimental intervention (Self-questioning supported by Group discussion vs. by Free writing), we, first, applied multivariate analysis of covariance in panel 1a with condition (SQ^D and SQ^F) as independent variable, the seven indicators of reading engagement in post-test 1 (T2) as dependent variables, and the pre-test scores of the seven indicators (T1) as covariates. Second, we repeated these analyses twice, with condition SQ^D and TQ and SQ^F and TQ, respectively.

To examine differences between students with an initial low engagement in literary reading and those with an initial high engagement, the multivariate analyses and paired-samples t-tests as described above were repeated for these two groups of students separately.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Self-questioning and engagement in literary reading

In panel 1, the multivariate covariance analyses with the seven dependent variables showed a significant effect ($\lambda(7, 42) = 2.57, p = .027, \eta^2 = .30$). Subsequently, the univariate results showed positive effects of intervention on four out of seven variables: *inference*, *variety of response*, *productivity of response text*, and *self-perceived engagement*. The SQ-condition generally scored higher than the TQ-condition in making *more inferences* ($F(1, 56) = 4.38, p = .042, \eta^2 = .084$), showing a *greater variety of responses* ($F(1, 56) = 7.77, p = .008, \eta^2 = .14$), producing *longer response texts* ($F(1, 56) = 7.92, p = .007, \eta^2 = .14$), and expressing a *higher level of perceived*

engagement in reading works of fiction ($F(1, 56) = 4.85, p = .033, \eta^2 = .09$; see Table 4).

Table 4. Means and (standard deviations) of the two groups:
Self-questioning-then-Teacher-questions condition (group ST, $n = 38$),
and Teacher-questions-then-Self-questioning condition (group TS, $n = 21$)

Variable	Group	Pre-test		Panel 1		Panel 2	
		O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	
Inference	ST	0.28 (0.38)	.95 (1.14)	1.00 (1.06)	1.31 (1.4)	0.79 (0.77)	
	TS	0.31 (0.43)	.36 (.45)	0.50 (0.59)	.88 (.97)	0.90 (1.03)	
Emotion towards characters	ST	0.62 (1.00)	.93 (1.59)	1.49 (1.57)	1.64 (2.29)	1.37 (1.33)	
	TS	.41 (0.60)	.4 (.75)	1.21 (1.58)	1.4 (2.23)	1.28 (1.52)	
Variety of response	ST	2.05 (1.29)	2.55 (1.41)	2.89 (1.41)	2.84 (1.58)	2.92 (1.55)	
	TS	2.24 (1.26)	1.76 (.99)	2.05 (1.66)	2.67 (1.35)	2.57 (1.32)	
Personal voice	ST	1.2 (1.40)	2.05 (2)	2.47 (2.76)	2.37 (2)	2.59 (2.45)	
	TS	1.71 (1.89)	1.26 (1.21)	2.14 (2.56)	2.45 (1.98)	2 (1.45)	
Global interpretation of theme	ST	1.63 (0.81)	2.76 (1.18)	2.95 (1.08)	3.09 (.96)	3.07 (0.74)	
	TS	1.02 (1.10)	1.76 (.93)	2.77 (1.03)	2.88 (.97)	3.14 (1.05)	
Productivity of response text	ST	297.68 (86.21)	402.58 (134.18)	473.08 (143.89)	460.68 (148.41)	404.47 (124.17)	
	TS	302.62 (156.31)	379.29 (142.56)	395.57 (113.14)	436.81 (110.23)	426.48 (114.89)	
Perceived engagement	ST	3.74 (0.52)	3.8 (.49)	3.75 (0.60)	3.76 (.6)	3.77 (0.50)	
	TS	3.30 (0.57)	3.44 (.64)	3.44 (0.50)	3.75 (.64)	3.63 (0.59)	

In panel 2, the multivariate covariance analyses with the seven dependent variables did not show a significant effect of condition on dependent variables ($\lambda(7, 43) = .72, p = .659$). This was what we expected because at the moment (T5) all students had approached all the interventions on reading engagement in the experiment. There-

fore, all groups were expected to reach the same level at the final moment of the experiment.

However, we found that students from the experimental condition in panel 2 did not differ significantly between T3 and T5 for any of the dependent variables.

Inspection of the development curves of both conditions seemed to indicate that the hypothesized effect might already been reached at T4. Therefore, we repeated the multivariate analysis of covariance for T4 instead of T5. As expected, there was no effect. Paired-samples t-tests for all variables within the experimental condition showed higher scores for the three variables *variety of response* ($t(20) = 2.15, p = .044$), *productivity of response text* ($t(20) = 2.12, p = .046$), and *self-perceived engagement* ($t(19) = 2.45, p = .024$). This might mean that in general only one session of self-questioning was enough to reach an effect. Therefore, we repeated all analyses for T2 instead of T3. However, we did not see an effect of condition.

In sum, this meant that we saw an effect of self-questioning on the four variables *inference*, *variety of response*, *productivity of response text*, and *self-perceived engagement* in panel 1 after two sessions (T3) and three out of the four variables in panel 2 after one session (T4).

4.2 Maintenance effect of Self-questioning

To test the maintenance effect of Self-questioning in panel 1, we performed paired sample t-tests between T3 and T5 for ST-group for the four indicators of engagement that were found significantly increasing in panel 1. There was no significant difference for any of the variables, except for *productivity of response text*. That means a maintenance effect was found for *variety of response*, *inference*, and *self-perceived engagement*. For *productivity of response text*, no maintenance effect was found, students in group ST wrote shorter response texts at T5 than at T3 ($t(37) = 2.94, p = .006$).

4.3 Self-questioning with Group discussion versus with Free writing

The second research question was about differences between both experimental conditions. The multivariate analysis of covariance in panel 1a did not show any significant differences in engagement as measured by the seven indicators, between both conditions ($\lambda(7,23) = 2.08, p = .087$); between the conditions self-questioning group discussion and teacher-posed questions ($\lambda(7,24) = 1.624, p = .177$) and between the conditions self-questioning free writing and teacher-posed questions ($\lambda(7,24) = 1.735, p = .148$). That meant the two versions of self-questioning, self-questioning with free writing or with group discussion, were not different in effect.

4.4 Differences between initially low and high engaged readers

Connected to literature on literary reading research that indicated an influence of students' initial quality in processing reading, and the relatively high standard deviations of the four variables, we divided students into initially low-engaged students

(low) and initially high-engaged students (high), depending on their mean scores of the four variables at the pre-test. Grouping low and high engagement groups was based on the mean score at the pre-test for each variable and condition separately. This might mean that different mean scores were used for the four variables and the two conditions. Then the paired-samples t-tests as described above were repeated for the low and higher engaged student groups. In Table 5 we summarize the results.

Table 5. Effects on low and high engaged readers

Variable	Group	Panel 1		Panel 2	
		SQ	TQ	SQ	TQ
Inferences	Low	+	+		
	High				
Variety of response	Low	+			
	High				
Productivity	Low	+	+		
	High	+		+	-
Perceived engagement	Low		+		
	High				

Notes. + = significant increase; Blank = no change; - = significant decrease; TQ = Teacher-posed question condition; SQ = Self-questioning condition; Low = Low initial engagement with literary reading and High = High initial engagement

In reference to *Inference*, students with an initial low engagement generally increased in both conditions, SQ and TQ. However, in the SQ-condition the increase was significantly larger than in the TQ condition ($F(1, 33) = 5.26, p = .028, \eta^2 = .137$). The high engaged students generally did not change. For *Variety of response*, we only found an increase in score for the group of students with an initial low engagement. For *productivity of response text* both low-engaged and high-engaged students in the self-questioning condition increased their scores as did the group of students with low engagement in the teacher-posed question condition. Finally, for *perceived engagement*, we found significant improvement for the low-engaged students in the control condition.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Results showed that students reading with self-questioning, compared to reading with teachers' questions, produced a beneficial effect on students' engagement. Students produced *more valid inferences* towards characters in the stories; were *more diverse in response* towards the stories; and wrote *longer response texts*. Students of self-questioning condition also showed a *higher level of perceived engagement* with literary reading. No difference was found between the two types of self-questioning:

self-questioning supported by discussion or by free writing. Students maintained the quality of *inference*, *variety of response*, and *self-perceived engagement* in time. Three out of the four main effects, *variety of response*, *productivity of response text*, and *perceived engagement*, were observed again in a replicated test.

We did not find an effect in students' empathy to characters, personal voice and global interpretation of theme. In this study, we defined emotions towards characters in fiction stories through explicit and "surface" expressions of emotion, such as *excited*, *apprehensive*, *proud*, and *angry* or verbs like *admire*. However, there might be other indirect ways of expressing students' judgment about characters like the statement "He committed the crime, not because he was desperate for money of the old man. One more time, it is difficult to understand the human's nature." (Student numbered 13, post-test 4). In this expression, we might infer some puzzlement of the reader towards a criminal character. However, these indirect ways of expressing emotions towards characters in a story were not coded in the present study as it might be difficult to measure the indirect expressions in a reliable way. Similarly, the personal voice was based on two local-leveled linguistic features, first-person singular pronouns and intensifiers, located in the inference and emotion statements. Although these two features were the most explicit indicators of how personally the writer-readers revealed themselves in their response texts, there should be more comprehensive ways of measuring the *personal voice* of the writer students. It might be because of the deficits in defining the two variables, we did not observe an effect of self-questioning. The global interpretation of theme emphasized students' quality in interpreting the global theme of a work of fiction and connecting the theme to their personal experience. We assumed the Vietnamese students are sufficiently experienced, through their mother tongue literary learning, in writing about the central theme of a fiction story and expressing the connection of the themes embedded in a fiction story to their life ideals. It should be noted that to get a seat in the university course, the students had to pass two examinations in Literature. The first one is the public National Baccalaureate Exam where they were expected to meet the qualifying standards of comprehension and appreciation of Vietnam Literature set by the Vietnam Ministry of Education. The second one is the University Entrance Exam where the competition among exam participants is intense because of quota limited seats of the university. We could think that, at this level of literary reading, they reached the quality of making a clear and explicit interpretation of a story's theme, connecting that to their personal experience, as well as drawing a lesson for themselves from what they read.

There was no difference in the two variations of self-questioning used in this study: whether the questions generated by the students were explored in group discussion or in free writing did not make a difference in their engagement with literary reading. We might infer from this result a broad generalization of effects of self-questioning for classroom application. Self-questioning could be combined successfully with two different types of exploration, group discussion or individual free writing. This result corresponds to other comparative studies on self-questioning instructions. Different instructional approaches proved equally effective: for example, self-questioning with or without a teacher's modeling and self-questioning with or without teacher's assistance, did not make a difference in students' comprehen-

sion (see for a review of research on effective self-questioning instructional approaches, Janssen, 2002).

The effect of self-questioning could depend on learner characteristics. The initially low-engaged readers were positively influenced by self-questioning: they made *more inferences about* and *expressed more types of response* to the story they read. Meanwhile, the initially high-engaged readers did not make progress in inference or in variety of response.

The effect of self-questioning could depend on amount of practice in writing responses to fictions. When students have had some practice in writing responses to fictions, it takes less time for self-questioning intervention in classroom. The experiment showed that when students are inexperienced in writing responses to fictions, the effect of self-questioning intervention on students' reading engagement was observed after two times of self-questioning practice. The effect, however, could be reached faster, after one time of self-questioning practice, in students with more practice in responding to fictions. Teacher might judge the experience of responding to literary texts of students to decide the time period of self-questioning training in classrooms.

A reading classroom encouraging autonomy of readers in seeking out meanings for themselves from what they themselves had lived through in reading literature might be a common aim for many researchers and practitioners in the field, no matter what language (L1 or L2) readers read (see discussions on an effective literary reading classroom of Agee, 2000; Janssen et al., 2009; Rosenblatt, 1983). However, creating a self-questioning classroom is a challenge for both teachers and students when students expect a domineering or controlling approach from teachers and prefer a right answer from them (Janssen et al., 2009). It should also be noted that in the process of the study we observed the active participation of students in self-questioning activities. We started the course with explaining to the students the function of questions in reading and interpretation of literary texts. We experienced this as an important activity.

The study might provide some information on using self-questioning in classrooms, especially EFL literary reading classrooms. We examined the effects of self-questioning on reading engagement of students within the age group of 21-25. They read English fictions and wrote response essays in English. Two versions of self-questioning approach, self-questioning in combination with group discussion and with free writing, were also tested to examine the generalizability of the approach.

The study confirms that a reader-based classroom with students' self-generation of questions while reading results in a higher level of cognitive and affective reading engagement. It seems that students who are initially low-engaged readers particularly benefit from self-questioning, although the group of students also benefit from teacher-posed questions. Further research on operational efficiency of the use of self-questioning might be an interesting line of research.

IMPLICATIONS

For English teaching pedagogy, language research and theory development

1. THE CONTEXT OF SECOND LANGUAGE WRITING AND READING INTERVENTIONS

In Vietnam, most students start to learn English in secondary education. In higher education, most universities set the standard that a bachelor must be able to read and write academically in English. However, the standard is not met in general at the moment (quality assessment at the Vietnam conference on carrying out a project to improve the quality of teaching and learning English at the university level on 23-12-2011¹⁰). There are many cultural background-related issues involved in the process of learning English of Vietnamese people. If the English teaching pedagogy is not tailored and not sensitive to the students' specific traits, the effects of instruction devices might be not far-reaching, or even negligible. For example, the learning activities originated from the Anglophone pedagogy that encourages autonomy, personal voice, and individual perspectives of learners pose a challenge for Vietnamese students. It is not because the students do not have their own individualized voice or ideas or are not autonomous. It is just that they have a different notion of stance taking, voice expression, and the role of individual, as a student in learning and as a member of the Vietnamese society.

In the position of second language teachers and researchers who have worked with the Vietnamese students for many years, we feel the need to take into account the students' specific problems in facilitating them to meet the requirements in L2 academic writing and reading in Global English (see also the introduction of context of usage, participants of Global English in Rijlaarsdam et al., 2011). Based on the problems that we will elaborate below and the learning advantages reported from reading and writing research literature, we designed three experiments to test interventions for idea generation and voice stimulation in writing argumentatively in English and for engagement stimulation in reading English-written literary fictions for Vietnamese students. In general, the three experiments give positive results.

Obviously, to create a meaningful discourse in English in the global world, Vietnamese students, on one hand, need to keep their own self-value. However, on the other hand, they also need to make themselves understood in a new context of communication in Global English. In reference to what we understand about the students' own experience in learning like demonstrating the mastery of reproductive

¹⁰ *The assessment was noted in the national newspaper review of the conference. Retrieved from <http://tuoitre.vn/Giao-duc/470754/Ngoai-ngu-day-mai-sinh-vien-van-kem.html>*

knowledge, respecting common values required by the society, we identify the pressing problems confronted by the students in writing and reading in English. We reply to the problems by exploring the research topics of idea generation and voice expression in argumentative writing, and engaged reading stimulation. Dealing with the specific problems of Asian/Vietnamese students will contribute to our understanding of an effective and meaningful pedagogy for teaching and learning second language writing and reading in higher education in the Vietnamese context. It might also contribute to the validity of L1 Western teaching pedagogy by providing insights of the application of the pedagogy in students whose English is not a native language. The research designs and the newly-created measures for each of the three experiments might also contribute to the theory and methodology of writing and literary reading research. We clarify in this chapter the three experiments with respect to the context of each study, the educational interventions, the main findings and their contribution to teaching pedagogy, to language research and theory development.

2. EXPERIMENT 1: IDEA GENERATION

Vietnamese students have a different notion of writing from that of Anglophone cultures, of the position of each individual in communication, and of experiences in learning English. In collectivism cultures, students' learning to write is to show how much they have internalized the transmittable traditions of their cultures, rather than to present an original, strong individual self (Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999).

For Vietnamese, first, their notion of writing is oriented to moral and traditional values. Writing in Vietnamese lessons is a means for Vietnamese students to show, and for teachers to examine, to what extent the students have internalized the transmittable traditions and values of their culture in a literary work and rearticulate them in a traditional writing form (see further discussions of Phan, 2011, on Vietnamese writing). Academic writing in Vietnam is not a subject per se; it is, instead, embedded in literary teaching. From lower secondary school there is no subject named writing. But students read Vietnamese (80 percent in the secondary program) or foreign literary stories and write about the stories. For example, the two writing tasks were elicited from the Vietnamese National Exam of Secondary Education Graduation in June-2011: Task 1: Analyzing character *Trang* in the short story *Vo Nhat* [The Gathered Wife¹¹] of writer Kim Lan; Task 2: Analysing the character *Fishing Village Woman* in the literary work *Chiec Thuyen Ngoai Xa* [The Far Boat¹²] of writer Nguyen Minh Chau. With the two tasks students are expected to express a mastery of the knowledge and human values embedded in the story. Students are supported by their teachers to master the theme-driven, factual, and moral knowledge of a literary text. Like elsewhere in EFL Asian students, writing is about *what to write*. Students are really sure of the *writing content* before writing it

¹¹ The extract of the story located in the 12th Grade Advanced Literature, Book Part II, Vietnam Education Publishing House-2008.

¹² The extract in the 12th Grade Advanced Literature, Book Part II, Vietnam Education Publishing House-2009.

down on a paper and, therefore, the first drafts are often the last drafts (Harris et al., 2008).

Second, in communication, Vietnamese are expected to avoid expressing directly and strongly the *I* attitude, intentions and positions, but seek conformity to other people and to what is socially shared (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Kim et al., 1996).

Third, the secondary English program in secondary school is grammar-oriented and how to write a meaningful discourse is not included in learning and testing in secondary education.

In summary, the specific experience with L1 literature-embedded writing class and Vietnamese communication conventions of de-emphasizing the *individual* voice in communication might cause significant challenges for Vietnamese students in writing argumentatively in English, as the subject requires a personal voice and self-generation of supporting ideas. Therefore, for an open two-sided issue like Capital Punishment in their Anglophone-oriented course book that requires their stance towards the issue and a self-authority of supporting arguments, Vietnamese students face challenges. They are not used to setting up their own stance in a writing issue and to creating and supporting their stance with their own arguments. Writing pedagogy that requires writers' incorporation of their personal exploration of an issue with their personal voice causes serious troubles for L2 learners (Carson & Nelson, 1994; Hyland, 2003). Free writing in Asian/Vietnamese setting is such a pedagogy and, therefore, is usually ignored by both teachers and students.

2.1 Intervention to stimulate stance taking and idea generation in argumentative writing

The concept of writing has changed from writing as merely a tool to express an author's ideas to writing as a learning tool: writing is also the very process of discovery. It is not only transcription but more importantly the process of writing is the process of invention and the writers work out the meaning of what they are writing about in the process of writing (Berlin, 1987). Writing is a kind of becoming: only writing itself will generate more writing (Colyar, 2009; Klein, 1999). Composition pedagogy has, accordingly, changed into the direction of emphasizing written brainstorming and free writing (Knepler, 1984; Taylor 1981). Writers should start writing at the very beginning and before they know what they are writing (Elbow, 1973). We take the advantages of (free) writing as a prewriting activity to encourage the knowledge personally embedded in each student as a unique individual (see the discussion of Rijlaarsdam et al., 2012, on function of writing as a learning and explorative activity). This written brainstorming activity might propel stance taking and idea generation for an argumentative composition. However, with a different concept of writing Vietnamese students usually delay this activity or are not really committed to the kind of writing.

To facilitate students to start with free writing for stance taking and idea generation, we assumed that they should be introduced to the specific genre and how an argumentative topic could be approached. This might answer the questions students

have, such as what an argumentative text looks like, what other people did with the writing, and what the function of this writing could be. We want to examine whether this understanding might empower students to move their writing block and start free writing. Introducing students to what the end writing product should look like might help to prepare the students for their own independent construction of text (Graham & Perin, 2007). We assumed that genre awareness could function as a framework for fostering the free writing.

First, in connection to the students' background, argumentative writing is a new genre. We thought that before activating the free writing as an idea generation stage for argumentative composition, students needed to be aware of the function and goal of the writing genre via a joint analysis of the function, goal, and approach of a sample text. Moreover, we expected this analysis could function as a framework to support writers in selecting strategically ideas from the informal writing for setting up their own viewpoint. The hypothesis corresponds to the bonding tendency of text-pattern knowledge and its efficacy in probing ideas and structuring text organization (Dymock, 2005; Englert & Hiebert, 1984; Reynolds & Perin, 2009). Building an awareness of genre before free writing might not take a lot of instruction time in the case of one short sample text for analysis. The result of including two sub-stages in the prewriting stage, genre awareness and written brainstorming, might enlarge our understanding of how genre awareness might help students to overcome the resistance to free writing on a controversial issue.

2.2 Main findings

We found that supporting students' awareness of function and goals of argumentative writing via a short analysis of a text of that genre affected the generation of ideas in the prewriting stage. We also found a consistent pattern of improvement of students in idea generation for all three indicators: (i) length of free writing created, (ii) the perceived usefulness of ideas in the free-writing text, and (iii) the actual use of these ideas in the students' final texts. This finding consolidates two functional benefits of genre awareness: a framework to help students to boost the self-expressive free writing, and to manipulate and capture strategically the free writing as a valuable source material for text composition. An integration of a short text analysis to introduce writer learners explicitly to what is required and what a good writing is seems to be a meaningful pedagogical tool for activating the idea generation process. In short, we suggest using text analysis in EFL writing programs.

3. EXPERIMENT 2: PERSONAL VOICE

In line with the above experiment on stance taking and idea generation, the question on voice expression of students in argumentative writing is the second important issue. Argumentative writing requires beyond representations of objective knowledge, but mainly judgments, opinions, beliefs, desires, and all subjective preferences of writers (Coirier, Andriessen, & Chanquoy, 1999). Students need to show their own perspective in the issue at stake. That must be a challenge for Asian-

Vietnamese students because to give opinions is one especially difficult task for students in Asia (Biggs, Lai, Tang, & Lavelle, 1999, p. 301). Research on Asian language learners pointed out that the learners' language behaviors in this culture were determined, contingent on, and organized by what they perceived to be thoughts, feelings, and actions of others in the context they are communicating (Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999). In Asian communication settings, an individual must be connected, related, and adjusted to other people of the community (Kim et al., 1996; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Communicators must adapt to their addressees (with respect to age, sex, relative social position of and relationship to the addressees).

As an example from Vietnam, compared to the only one *I/i* for self-reference in English, there are more than 11 first-person singular subject pronouns in Vietnamese communication. In communication between students and teachers, for instance, Vietnamese students use the first-person singular pronoun *em* (first-person singular pronoun used in the case a speaker addresses themselves as in a lower position than their interlocutor); the students will never use the first-person singular pronoun *tôi* (pronoun equal to *I/i* in English). The notion of voice, in Vietnam, is expected to be a voice of *us*, instead of a voice of an individual self. Communicators, in general, follow the values that are highly respected in the group and fear being ostracized personally (see more analyses of collectivism-culture communication behavior in Adler, 1997; Bosley, 1993; Kim et al., 1996; Meyer, 2003). It does not mean that communicators in collectivist-cultural setting do not have their own voice and their own judgment, but that the voice and the judgment should be related and closely attached to what their group emphasizes. This notion of voice can be observed in a comparative study of Vietnamese and English writing of Phan (2001, 2011). L1 Vietnamese writers were characterized with indirect approach, writing from a distance towards a topic, an intention of being less straightforward and more sophisticated, whereas Anglophone emphasized being clear in statement, theme-driven reasoning and a strong sense of authority (Phan, 2011).

To conclude, the above differences might account for the problems that Vietnamese learners in EFL writing face in finding their own voice in performing an L2 writing task that requires their self-authority towards a controversial issue. The question of how to facilitate the students' construction of text authority effectively challenges EFL-teachers in Vietnamese universities.

How voice is revealed in L2 writing has received special attention of (second) writing researchers. Hyland (2011) examined how scholars carved a sense of their self within disciplined discourse in writing academic homepages. Hyland (2010) compared the frequency of language features representing voice of two leading researchers in applied linguistics, Cameron and Swales, to trace back to their identity construction. Ivanic (1998) and Ivanic and Camps (2001) reported how voice of an author, e.g., self-confidence, certainty or depersonalization, was revealed through analyzing lexis, generic reference, evaluative lexis, and syntax of students' texts. Tardy and Matsuda (2009) reported clues, e.g., breadth or depth of knowledge (or lack thereof), choice of topic, author's representation of a field, description of a re-

search setting, that journal reviewers in a blind review process used in guessing who an author of an academic paper is (e.g., guessing the level of author's experience in a field, author's language background or author's nationality). Other researchers compared how L1 and L2 writers were different in the usage of rhetorical and linguistic features such as first person singular, transitivity, lexical choice, or deductive versus inductive organization (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003; Hinkel, 1999, 2002; Hyland, 2001, 2002b; Tang & John, 1999; Wu & Rubin, 2001). Although the studies reveal what voice is and how voice could be found in texts, it is unclear how authentic classroom practices may stimulate voice expression of second language novice writers in a learning context where they are mostly assumed to possess a different perspective on voice in their L1 native writing.

3.1 *Intervention to stimulate voice expression*

A main argument in the past decade or so has been that the principles and practices of developing an authorial voice laden with the Western ideology of individualism are problematic for L2 writers, especially those with a cultural background that is collectively oriented (Zhao & Llosa, 2008, p. 155).

We set up two prewriting conditions for facilitating voice expression: Free-writing and Group-discussion. In a Vietnamese context, the two activities might not only affect the number and quality of ideas, but also the stance of an author towards his addressees. Effect of free writing was assumed to be different from group discussion on writing voice. We assumed that free writing might facilitate writers to seek their own voice (Elbow, 1973), however decreased the writers' confidence in putting forwards the arguments concerning a controversial issue. Meanwhile group discussion might soften writers' personal voice in addressing an issue at stake because, as connected to the introduction above, de-emphasis of personal ideas and stance and respect of group values are conventional behaviors in Vietnamese communication. Group discussion might also encourage a higher confidence in the writing content.

3.2 *Main findings*

The effect of the two different types of content generation activity, free writing versus group discussion on *personal voice* was confirmed. In two subsequent experiments, students who worked in individual free-writing condition showed a higher level of personal voice expression in their argumentative texts than students who discussed an argumentative topic in a small group before writing on that topic. The indicators of personal voice including intensifiers (e.g., extremely, absolutely, terribly) and first-person singular pronouns (I, me, my, myself, mine) were found significantly more often in the writings of students in individual free-writing condition than in those of students in group discussion. The effect on the second voice dimension, *indirectness*, was also observed in the experiment. The two results on two voice dimensions mean that discussion about an issue at stake in group before writing individually about that will increase writers' self-confidence about content, however, result in a less personal voice in argumentative texts. Conversely, free

writing about an issue for idea generation will enhance writers' individualized voice, however might lower their self-confidence about content.

4. EXPERIMENT 3: PERSONAL RESPONSE TO LITERARY TEXTS

The third experiment dealt with a practical issue of engagement with fiction reading in higher education in Vietnam. EFL students in undergraduate training in Vietnam have to read and respond to fiction stories in English. However, investment for full understanding in literary reading has not been observed in the students.

Students read but did not understand; most read and understood parts- not all. In brief, they mostly stopped at the surface, not the deep meanings of the [literary] work, commented a teacher who has taught English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in higher education in Vietnam for 20 years and Introduction to EFL Literature course for the recent 3 years. The students she refers to are undergraduate EFL students who are sufficiently proficient in English language to read the stories selected in their program. From the students' side, the common question to their teacher is "Why don't you tell me what I should grasp, what the main contents of the story [L2 story] are?" (interview material, October, 2011). This attitude reflects the present status of foreign language literary reading at university level. Vietnamese students prefer to seek a "right" answer from the teacher as well as are not willing to invest in exploring deeper layers of literary texts, something which might be similar for students in other places. Testing consists of questions about basic characteristics of a story like time, place setting of the story, intentions of characters, etc., and a writing task in which students write about 250-300 words responding to the story they read. For example, students are required to stand in a character's situation and figure out what they are going to do or students must interpret the global theme of a story, stating what they learned from the story. Moral education, which is a primary focus in Vietnamese literature education, is also a focal point in foreign language literary reading. Assessment for the written text responding to a story refers to students' quality of interpretation of the story, whether it is more or less valid and reasonable. Language use and language expression are also considered for the global assessment of the text. This means that something has to be done to facilitate Vietnamese students' process of finding meanings of literary fictions for themselves.

We assumed, at this level of reading and life experience of students, a learning approach encouraging reader-based processing in foreign language literary reading might positively affect cognitive and affective engagement of the readers.

4.1 Intervention to response to literature

Theories of literary reading proposed that self-questioning while reading was a natural response to story reading that helps readers make sense of that story (Graesser, Singer, & Trabasso, 1994; Rosenblatt, 1978; Schraw, Dunkle, & Bendixen, 1995). Research reported effects of self-questioning while reading, rather than teacher-posed questions, on students' comprehension and appreciation of literature

(Commeyras & Sumner, 1998; Janssen, Braaksma, & Couzijn, 2009; Singer & Donlan, 1982). However, still little is known about how self-questioning might influence students' engagement with fiction reading. We designed a literary reading intervention study based on the theories. Self-generation of questions and exploring the questions with peers or individually formed the principal part of the intervention. The results found in the current study might stimulate a changing pedagogy of reading Global English fictions in a Vietnamese context.

4.2 Main findings

The results showed that reading fiction stories and generating questions while reading, compared to reading with teachers' questions does affect students' level of engagement positively. The engagement was measured by students' written responses to works of fiction and an inventory of perceived engagement in literary reading. From the response texts, students who generated questions themselves while reading made more valid inferences about characters in the fictions, showed wider variation in responses towards the fictions and produced longer response texts. Additionally, self-questioning seemed to particularly enhance engagement in literary reading of students who initially showed little engagement; although, low-engaged students also benefitted from teacher-questions.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

5.1 Experiment 1: Personal ideas

The finding that genre awareness could result in richer self-expressive free writing and effective translation of the self-expressive materials into a final text composition contributes to our understanding of an appropriate pedagogy for facilitating idea generation. The prewriting stage for personal idea generation should include the two sub-processes: genre awareness via a short analysis of function and approach of a sample text and free writing.

This finding consolidates two functional benefits of text analysis: a framework to help students boost the self-expressive free writing, and to manipulate and capture strategically the free writing as a valuable source material for composing a more formal end text. This finding is especially meaningful for the students who are not getting used to expressing their personal ideas explicitly. In short, introducing students explicitly to the function and approach of a target genre via a short analysis of a sample text might facilitate students to brainstorm more ideas for an independent composition. In other words, integration of a short class discussion of the common questions of a specific genre such as what is required in the target genre, what its function is and what a good writing is via a sample text analysis might stimulate free writing.

5.2 Experiment 2: Personal voice

For novice EFL writer students when there is a change in classroom activity, individual exploration or group work, in writing classroom, we might expect to see clearly a change in the students' personal voice. The personal voice (I-You relation in a written text) will be the most expressive when students do not work with other peers, but the least expressive when they are in a group, like what they are expected in their culture with *ōourō* voice, rather than *ōmyō* voice. In other words, EFL classroom practice that encourages students to brainstorm personally about a controversial topic before writing on that topic will increase the presence of writers as personal authors in their writings. Meanwhile, the level of authorial presence in texts will be reduced if the students share their different viewpoints around a topic in groups. This result might be interesting in the Vietnamese/Asian context because, as exposed in the introduction, in social communication the communicators in this context are expected to respect a group voice and de-emphasize a personal voice. We also found a lower *Indirectness* voice in writing as an effect of discussion in groups. This result corresponds to what we understand about Asian/Vietnamese students who might feel more confident in representing a group's ideas, rather than an individual's ideas. Therefore, when organizing idea generation (prewriting) activities for students, teachers should be alert to how their pedagogy aligns with, or strengthens the cultural norms of the students they teach.

5.3 Experiment 3: Personal response

The aim towards a literary reading classroom encouraging autonomy of readers in seeking out meanings for themselves from what they themselves had lived through is a common aim for all researchers and practitioners in the field, no matter what language (L1 or L2) readers read (see discussions on an effective literary reading classroom of Agee, 2000; Janssen, Braaksma, & Couzijn, 2009; Rosenblatt, 1978). The finding of positive effects of self-questioning on students' cognitive and affective engagement might be interesting for fiction reading pedagogy. Students' higher level of cognitive and affective engagement in reading might be expected in fiction reading classroom when teachers encourage students' responsibility for their reading process with their self-perpetuation of questions and bring the questions to group discussions. It also makes clear to the self-questioning approach that *self-questioning* could be combined successfully with two different types of exploration, group discussion or individual free writing. This might mean that the use of self-questioning is quite a robust option of instruction, no matter how it is combined with other instructional activities.

6. CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH METHODS

6.1 Replications as part of the research design

A pre-test post-test control group design with switching replications (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002) was used to examine the intervention effects in the three experiments. Although in the second experiment a slightly different research design was used, the method of research allows us to test the same intervention in two different experimental panels. In the first panel, experimental group will receive the intervention while the control group is in a regular learning condition. In the second panel, both groups swapped in which experimental group in the first panel will become control group in the second panel and control group in the first panel will become experimental group in the second panel. With this method we could test three issues: (1) test a hypothesis twice, (2) test within-group effects, and (3) test a maintenance effect of the intervention for the experimental group in the first panel.

However, the replication of effects found in this way also poses a dilemma for evaluating the results reported because the control condition in the second panel might be different from the control condition in the first panel as participants in the control condition in the second panel already experienced the experimental intervention in the first panel. The question could be whether there is an interaction effect of condition and time in panel 2.

After the three experiments, we get a better insight into determining the intervention effects in repeated measures. If we would have set up one-panel experiments without the second repeated measures, in all cases, more effects of experimental conditions on dependent variables were observed. Specifically, in experiment 1, the effect of text analysis on written brainstorming was found in all three dependent variables in one time of testing. However, in repeated measures, the effect was reduced to two out of the three variables. In experiment 2, the intervention of free writing and group discussion for voice was found effective for the two dependent variables, *personal voice* and *indirectness*, in one time of testing. However, when tested two times, only one variable was affected by condition. In experiment 3, four out of six variables of reading engagement were found influenced by the intervention of self-questioning, but three out of the four were reported in the second repeated measures. If there was just one time of testing, we might have come to different conclusions, which triggered the question of reliability of conclusions that were based on one-time test.

Moreover, all the three studies in the research project were in the form of a training course. We think it would be ethical if all students could have received the same preferential treatments, albeit in different sequences.

6.2 Replication versus generalization

Topic is a question for generalizability of experiment one and two because the same identical topic is attached to one identical condition. For the two experiments, we opted to replicate the findings as fair as possible: both experimental groups (in pan-

els 1 and 2) were measured with the same writing task and same writing topic, and, similarly, both control groups (in panels 1 and 2) were measured with the same writing task and same writing topic. This choice for replication might be at the cost of generalization. Although the assignment of topics to condition was done randomly, we cannot exclude that a part of the experimental effect was due to topic. Further study must confirm the generalizability of the findings in our study. One counter indicator that topic did not bring about the effects on idea generation and on voice is that global scores of argumentative text quality were not different for both topics in all the post-tests of experiment one and both topics in all the post-tests of experiment two.

In experiment 3, the stories were counterbalanced and therefore not one specific story was nested in one specific condition. We assumed students might prefer one story in one condition more than another story in another condition which might lead to the question that the effect found was not by condition but by stories/content effect. To avoid text-based bias, four texts were used in a counterbalanced design in the four learning phases, as five other texts were used in a counterbalanced design in the five measurement occasions. Therefore, replication as part of the research design in this study did not have negative consequences for the generalizability of the results.

6.3 *Measurements*

To measure how effective the interventions in the three studies on personal idea generation, personal voice expression in academic writing, and engagement with literary reading, we developed measures of usefulness of idea generation activity, of personal voice in academic writing, and of cognitive and affective engagement with literary reading. The below part will summarise our concepts underlying the construction of the measures, advantages and disadvantages experienced in applying the measures.

6.3.1 *Measurement of idea generation in experiment 1*

Most of the studies on prewriting activities focus on exploring the causal relation of the activities and effects on global text quality. What we tried to assess is the effect of genre awareness on the quality of the activity of idea generation, not the effect on global text quality. Although in the literature on free writing, usefulness of ideas generated in expressive free writing is not a main issue, free writing is suggested in (second language) writing pedagogy as a learning activity to prepare writers for idea generation for text composition. If a student selects from the free writing for their text composition just one out of twenty ideas, but a very rich/good one, we might see the free-writing activity as an effective idea generation activity. Coming from a cultural context with a different notion of writing, with the habit of the first draft being also the last draft, Asian/Vietnamese students think of free writing as an irrelevant and useless activity. Therefore, our concept of the measure of effectiveness of

idea generation activity in classroom is framed in the students' self-evaluation of the usefulness of the ideas they generated in their free writing for their text composition. In other words, if genre awareness leads to better free writing, in our definition, there should be more ideas generated and more ideas perceived as useful by writer students in their free-writing activity. From the concept of free writing as an idea generation activity for text composition, we measured the quality of free-writing text with three indicators: (1) Length of free writing created, (2) Number of ideas highlighted in the free-writing text, and (3) Number of ideas that were highlighted and came back in writer's end text.

We found that measuring the quality of self-expressive free writing with the three indicators showed an adequate level of reliability. The issue here is that with the measure, although we found positive results in the qualities of free writing, these qualities were not related to the global quality of final texts. So, in the preparation phase there was an effect of genre awareness on written brainstorming; however, not on the final text. This could be seen as discarding the contribution of free writing to text production. However, this might be not the case, provided that the whole writing process was supported by various activities between free writing and full text composition including rationale activation in which students are provided with a list of pro and contra statements/arguments on the issue at stake, state their level of agreement to the statements and reasons of their decision; and documentation when students read information sources and do reading tasks to elicit information.

6.3.2 *Measurement of self-efficacy in experiment 1*

Students' perceived self-efficacy for their academic achievement will influence the performance accomplishments both directly and indirectly through its influence on self-set goals (Bandura & Wood, 1989). In literature on self-efficacy measures, there are scales for measuring children's perceived efficacy for dimensions of self-regulation for academic achievements; for example, resisting distractions and motivating themselves to complete school work (Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992). In this study, we do not assess the direct effect of students' self-efficacy for their writing capacity on writing performance. We explore self-efficacy as a criterion variable, in the context of students who generally receive their capacity assessment from their teachers rather than from themselves. We are more interested to examine the causal role of classroom's self-explorative learning activities (expressive free writing) on students' self-efficacy for their capacity in second language writing. In sum, the questionnaire on self-efficacy for second language writing is to serve the purpose of measuring the effects of classroom writing instructions on self-efficacy for writing capacity.

We developed a questionnaire of self-efficacy for argumentative writing with 19 items, using a 10-point Likert-type scale with 0 = no confidence and 10 = high confidence. Some example items: "I think I could write an introduction in which I introduce the issue and my main points", "I think I could support my main points with strong supporting ideas", "I think I know characteristics of a good writing piece", "I

think I have developed the topic well, I think I know the strategy for keeping the writing going, I think I know the strategy for organizing contents of a written text). The measure reached a satisfactory level of reliability through three measurement times (Cronbach's $\alpha > .96$). However, with this questionnaire, we only measured a general conception of self-efficacy for writing. It might be also useful to measure different aspects of self-efficacy, such self-efficacy for text structure, content, argumentation, and language use in argumentative writing.

6.3.3 Measurement of voice in experiment 2

Many studies on examining voice of (second language) student-writers or graduate writers have been reported. However, in general the studies are mostly descriptive studies: for example, comparison of language use of linguistics scholars (Hyland, 2010) or comparison of rhetorical and linguistic features of L1 and L2 writers (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003; Hyland, 2001, 2002). Therefore, we found it is necessary for an empirical study on recognizing voice features related to L2 writers constructing voice and related to teaching instructions. Based on the concepts of linguistic features and their function, we listed four linguistic indicators that might involve personal voice expression: *First-person singular pronouns* (for example, *I, me, mine, my, myself*) which is defined as representing the confidence of a writer to speak personally and authoritatively (Hyland, 2001, p. 224; Hyland 2010, p. 175), *Intensifier* (for example, *very, really, absolutely, terribly, always*) with its function of strengthening authors' claims (Crystal & David, 1980, p. 188; Hyland 2010, p. 177), *Hedges* (for example, *may, might, almost, to some extent*) functioning to soften writers' arguments, lessen their commitment to the certainty of the referential information they present in their writings (Hyland 2010, p. 177; Lakoff, 1972, p. 195), *Passive voice* functioning to save writers from mentioning agent(s) of an action in a statement (Dewart, 1979; Hyland, 1998).

With factor analysis (using principal components with varimax rotation), two dimensions of voice underlying these four voice indicators emerged clearly. The factor analysis resulted in two factors that explained 57% of the variance in the scores of post-test 1 and 67% of the variance in post-test 2. The first factor, including *Intensifier* and *First-person singular pronouns*, was interpreted as the extent to which students explicitly expressed their *personal voice*. The second including *Hedges* and *Passive voice* was interpreted as the extent to which students expressed their *indirectness* in their writing. The inter-rater reliability of measurement of voice dimensions was satisfactory, from .91 to .96.

A limitation is that voice was measured from a micro-linguistic perspective with four linguistic indicators. This might be not global enough to show the picture of voice in argumentative writing. We might think of another kind of measuring voice which should include more features. For example, we indicated indirectness as a quality of voice with two indicators passive voice and hedges. However, other indicators like tone and evaluative language (e.g., with adjectives) might also be

good indicators signaling assertiveness and directness of writers in proposing arguments (see the discussion of Hyland 2010 on function of *ōto beō* and evaluative language as authorial positioning assertiveness, p. 169). Nevertheless, the way we measured voice in the current study clearly formed two dimensions that showed to be sensitive to our treatments.

6.3.4 *Measurement of literary engagement in experiment 3*

Measures in reading research in general, not only specifically literary reading, needs necessary investment of researchers. Literary reading measures are known with single forms of reading comprehension questions; inference questions or questions of level of appreciation. Based on ideas about the construct of engagement (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris (2004), description of the attributes of an engaged reader of Guthrie, Wigfield, and You (2012) and cognitive strategies effective adolescent readers used in exploring literary texts (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Janssen, Braaksma, & Rijlaarsdam, 2006), a comprehensive form of testing literary reading engagement was developed in the study. We constructed a set of six indicators of reading engagement from students' written response text. The indicators include inference, emotions towards characters in a story, variety of response, global interpretation of theme, personal voice, and productivity of response text. In addition, we measured students' self-perceived engagement with an inventory of perceived engagement.

With the first measure, excluding productivity of response text, the other five indicators of reading engagement reached an appropriate level of reliability through five times of measurement. The second measure, the inventory of perceived engagement with 10 items, reached also a satisfactory level of reliability through five times.

Although we did find an effect of self-questioning on students' making more valid inferences about characters, showing a greater variety of responses, producing longer response texts, and expressing a higher level of self-perceived engagement in reading works of fiction, we did not find such an effect on students' empathy to characters, personal voice and global interpretation of theme. In this experiment, we defined emotions towards characters in fiction stories through explicit and *ōsurfacedō* expressions of emotions, like *excited*, *apprehensive*, *proud*, and *angry* or verbs like *admire*. However, there might be other indirect ways of expressing students' feelings about characters, for example, the statement *ōHe committed the crime, not because he was desperate for money of the old man. One more time, it is difficult to understand the human's nature.ō* (Student numbered 13, post-test 4). In this expression, we might infer a puzzlement of the student towards the criminal character. However, these indirect ways of expressing emotions towards characters in the story is not recorded in the present study. Similarly, the personal voice is based on two local-leveled linguistic features, first-person singular pronouns and intensifiers, located in the inference and emotion statements. Although these two features are the most explicit indicators of how personally a writer-reader revealed themselves in their response text, it might not be global enough to examine the *personal voice* of the author.

7. CONCLUSION

Vietnamese students with their Asian-oriented culture possess their own concepts of academic reading and writing in Vietnamese language which are different from what is expected in reading and writing in English. With this context-based research we expected to inform second language writing and reading pedagogy with empirical results found from the specific learning tools including model analysis, free writing, group discussion, and self-questioning. The results might also enhance the validity of first language theories of writing and reading by providing them with the practical application of the specific learning tools on learners whose English is a foreign language.

In sum, the pedagogy tools proved to address the students' real challenges and encourage the potential of students as individual learners. The effects found on more ideas generated in brainstorming stage, more personal voice expression in academic writing and more affective and cognitive engagement in reading fictions from the three interventions contributed to clarifying effective learning tools for Global English reading and writing in higher education in Asian cultures like Vietnam.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: EXAMPLE OF STUDENTS' QUESTIONS GENERATED IN SELF-QUESTIONING SESSIONS

<p>In reading "Cat in the rain" of Hemingway- Student My_Ngoc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What does it [the cat] mean? What does she truly want? - Is she really happy now? Or she only wants her husband to realize something - Why does she want this cat but not another cat? <p>student Thanh_Thuy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - She wants to have a happiness, independence, she would like to return [to be] a young girl as before? - I think she is sad, she thinks that she is not [a] beautiful girl, why does her husband not care about her? - Why does the woman like a cat?

APPENDIX B: ILLUSTRATION FROM STUDENTS' TYPES OF RESPONSE

Story-based prediction	<u>I think</u> that if the time came back, he will have the right decision and he will not make his mother sad.
Empathy	I <u>admire</u> her so much because she overcome [s] herself by [with] the mother's love.
Dis-empathy	The main character of [in] this story make[s] me <u>confused and scared</u> .
Comprehensibility	Maybe, I <u>understand</u> what the writer implies in the name of this story.
Incomprehensibility	The story is <u>hard for me to understand</u> .
Appreciation of literature	Through the story, I learn some experiences that might be very <u>useful</u> to me in my future life.
Literature depreciation	I can't describe, it is a <u>terrible</u> story
Novelty	To be honest, the story is <u>strange</u> with [to] me: it is a story <u>different</u> from what I have been reading
Local interpretations	From that evidence, I see that she is also a(n) intelligent woman. Scoresby not only has luck; he must try.

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE OF A STUDENT'S RESPONSE TEXT

A sample of a student's response text; this is the original writing of a student and it is not corrected or edited by the authors of the study.

In response to A Clean, Well-Lighted Place - Hemingway

Dear Minh -Thu !

After I read the story of "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" of Hemingway, the first thing makes me think is money doesn't make human be happy, money isn't everything in life. The old man in the story is very poor, he is rich but lonely. It's very clear that money can not warm up his lonely heart, therefore he likes going to the café for drinking, he wants to be drinks so that he can forget his loneliness. The old man even tried to kill himself last week but he did not succeed. People said that there is no reason for his suicide because he doesn't has anything sad or pain. However I think that the old man doesn't has anything which is meaningful to him he is too dissatisfied with the life. He can not find a purpose to live anymore. The only thing he needs is to be drunken in alcohol. The old man represents for a group of people who experienced the life deeply. Maybe the old man was young, he had everything, especially a beautiful purpose. He tried to live meaningful for his nice purpose but when he achieved his beautiful dream, he realizes that life is nothing and has no meaning at all

The present of the old man makes one of the water unhappy because it is too late and his wife is waiting for him. This waiter has every thing good and necessary for life youth; confidence and a job. He enjoys his life, with the younger waiter the life is so beautiful and meaningful. In contrast the older waiter sympathizes with the old man, he likes to stay late at the café with all those who need a light for the night. He is a man with no confidence and no youth, the only thing he has is work. I have feeling that three main characters in the story represent for every period of human life and the older waiter will be the next generation of the old man. Now he is also lonely, so the light of the bar can warm his lonely soul he wants to stay late at the café to share the loneliness with the others. He understands that drinking at home is totally different from drinking in the bar because he understand how terrible when a person has to face lonely in their house without a light. The older waiter begins to aware of his fate, he aware that he nearly has nothing he thinks he is another crazy one after the old man

Minh-Thu, although the story is not really a happy story, it is a meaningful story. I don't like the setting of this story at all because it is so sad. Hemingway is too pessimistic about life but through this story I realize that youth, confidence are very important to human's life. It is a light which leads human life. I don't know If I would be a old woman in the future I thought life is "nothing and then nothing" or not, but now I has youth and confidence I will try to work hard in order to finish my purpose in life.

SUMMARY

In the project, we set up three experiments to stimulate the Asian/Vietnamese students' idea, voice, and response generation via learning activities like written brainstorming, genre awareness, discussion, and self-questioning. The experiments were in the form of training courses that lasted for four weeks. We summarize in the below part the cultural contexts of the students (Chapter 1), the research question, methodology, and results of the study on idea generation via written brainstorming and genre awareness in argumentative writing (Chapter 2), on voice expression in argumentative writing via free writing and group discussion (Chapter 3), and on response to reading literature (Chapter 4). Finally, we summarize the contribution of the studies to (second language) teaching pedagogy, language research and theory development (Chapter 5).

Chapter 1 introduced the whole research project. First, we presented the cultural context of the Asian/Vietnamese undergraduate students. We assumed that the problems that Asian/Vietnamese might face in becoming competent in communication in English, a requirement for young Vietnamese academics in a global-oriented era of the country, could be traced back to their cultural background. From the perspective of teachers and researchers in foreign language training in Vietnam, we analyzed aspects of Vietnamese culture in communication that might affect personal stance taking, idea generation and voice expression of Vietnamese students in academically writing in English and in responding to English literary texts.

Second, we justified the problems that the three studies aimed to address and presented a theoretical framework. We presented, shortly, our observations on students' specific problems in argumentative writing and literary reading, and a review of literature on the problems. The first study was on activating students' idea generation in argumentative writing via written brainstorming, driven by a genre model. The second study was on stimulating students' voice expression via two different types of prewriting content generation activities: group discussion and free writing. In the third study, we tried to stimulate students to read literary fictions with self-questioning elaborated by group discussion and free writing for a higher cognitive and affective engagement.

Third, we introduced in the chapter the research design and measures used to examine the effects of the interventions on idea generation, voice expression in writing, and engagement in reading.

Chapter 2 detailed a study on the effect of written brainstorming and genre awareness on learner-writers' idea generation. Both L1 (first language) and L2 (second language) writing research emphasized the importance of facilitating idea generation in learner-writers because problems in idea generation might lead to writers' problems in developing rhetorical goals, and organization of text (Graham, 2005).

We presented the context of Vietnamese students. Vietnamese students have a notion of academic writing which is different from Anglophone/Western writing. Academic writing, in Vietnam is a tool to express students' mastery of knowledge, morals, and traditions embedded in literary texts. Vietnamese learner-writers possess a different concept of self-authority of text voice in which personal/individual voice ranked below group voice. Teaching English as a foreign language in secondary education places an emphasis on mastery of language knowledge rather than on language knowledge transforming or language for communicative purpose.

We reviewed the literature on the effects of interventions in idea generation of writers for a theoretical framework for our study and the hypothesis of prewriting activation and idea generation quality.

To answer the research questions whether prewriting activity with written brainstorming and genre awareness via discussion could influence positively idea generation, productivity, composition quality and self-efficacy of Vietnamese learner-writers, we chose a pre-test/post-test control group design. We tested the intervention of text analysis two times in two experimental panels. In the first panel, one group was in sample analysis and free-writing condition (experimental group) and another group in free-writing condition (control group). In the second panel, both group swapped the learning conditions. The design allowed us to examine the repeated effect of the intervention, and the effect of the sequence of condition, Experiment-then-Control or Control-then-Experiment. In the chapter, we introduced the newly created measures of quality of written brainstorming text with three indicators: (1) productivity of free writing created (2) the perceived usefulness of ideas in free-writing texts and (3) the actual use of these ideas in writers' final text. We also designed a 19-item questionnaire which proved to be reliable to measure students' self-efficacy for writing argumentatively in English. The course which lasted for four weeks with the participation of 66 students was detailed in the chapter. We found positive effects of text analysis on idea generation in written brainstorming texts. In short, a prewriting stage with two sub-processes including genre awareness via a short analysis of goal and function of argumentative writing genre and free writing would bring positive results in all the three indicators: (1) productivity of free writing created (2) the perceived usefulness of ideas in free-writing text and (3) the actual use of these ideas in writers' final text. Issues on why sample text analysis did not contribute directly to text productivity, text quality and self-efficacy were discussed.

Chapter 3 reported a study on the effect of two different types of prewriting content generation activity, individual free writing versus group discussion, on voice expression in argumentative writing of Vietnamese learner-writers. Issues of voice in writing, like development of concept of voice and investigation of voice expression of learner-writers have been receiving major concern in the field of academic writing

because of the possible connection between writing voice and authors' identity (Hyland, 2010; Ivanic, 1998). In this chapter, we started clarifying some cultural characteristics of Vietnamese communication that might affect Vietnamese students in expressing their voice in writing.

We reviewed studies on writing voice in L1 and L2 to form a theoretical framework for designing interventions in the stimulation of voice expression of Vietnamese students. It is noted here that although many studies investigate what voice is and how voice could be found in texts, it is still unclear how authentic classroom supports may stimulate voice expression of second language novice writers.

To answer the research question on effects of content prewriting activities on voice, we chose a pre-test post-test reversed-treatment control group design with two conditions. Two conditions were implemented: (1) idea generation via individual free writing and (2) idea generation via group discussion of individual lists of ideas. The design allowed us to examine the repeated effect of each content activity on voice. In the experiment, we found a valid and sensitive way of measuring two dimensions of voice: the distance between the author-I and the reader-You (Personal voice) and the distance between the author-I and the writing content-It (Directness) in argumentative writing from micro-linguistic perspective. The course which lasted four weeks with the participation of 66 students was detailed in the chapter.

We observed effects of the differences between the prewriting activities and voice construction of novice Vietnamese students in writing argumentatively in English. Group Discussion enhanced the self-confidence about content, however, resulted in a less personal voice in argumentative texts. Free writing stimulated individualized voice, however affected the self-confidence about content negatively. The discussion of effects found on designing an effective EFL classroom in the Asian/Vietnamese context was provided in the chapter.

Chapter 4 reported a study on the effect of self-questioning on cognitive and affective engagement in literary fiction reading. Reading and responding critically and creatively to English-written fiction and literary stories is required in EFL academic education in Vietnam. However, the pedagogy emphasizing text-based reading and teacher-supported reading seems not to be effective in facilitating the students to meet the requirement. Students are reported as reading on the surface and not really investing in finding meaning of the literary texts even if the stories are appropriate for their language level and age.

In this chapter, we reviewed reading theories, studies on engaging students with self-questioning on reading comprehension and appreciation to form the theoretical framework for designing a reader-based experimental course to increase students' engagement in reading. We facilitated students to read and generate questions while reading and later addressing the questions with group discussion/free writing. The effect on cognitive and affective engagement was measured in students' written response essays and an inventory of students' perception of their own engagement. To answer the research questions we chose a pre-test post-test control group design with switching replications with two different types of experimental conditions and one

control condition. The design allowed us to examine the repeated effect of each version of self-questioning on cognitive and affective engagement, the development pattern of each sub-group, and the durability of effect.

We found a valid and reliable way of measuring students' cognitive and affective engagement with reading via two channels: teachers' assessment of students' engagement via qualities of the students' response essay and students' assessment of their own level of engagement via an inventory of 10-item engagement questionnaire. The course which lasted for four weeks with the participation of 59 students was detailed in the chapter.

We found that both approaches of self-questioning positively affected students' engagement with literary fiction, compared to the teacher-led condition. This effect was different for low and high achieving students: self-questioning positively affected the engagement with literary fiction of low achievers, but did not show an effect on the engagement of high achievers. The maintenance of the intervention effects was also observed. No different effect was shown between the two experimental conditions. Implication of the findings is that, for second language undergraduate learner-readers, a literary reading classroom with students' self-generation of questions combined with reflective discussion in group or individual free writing positively results in cognitive and affective engagement observed by teachers and self-perceived by students.

Chapter 5 discussed the major results reported in the three studies in connection with the cultural and educational context of the Asian/Vietnamese students. We, first, discussed the contribution of the findings towards building an effective language education program for Asian/Vietnamese students. We emphasized that an effective pedagogy must be the one being sensitive to the students' historical/cultural backgrounds, addressing the students' real challenges and encouraging potential of students as individual learners. Second, we discussed the contribution of the three experiments to research methodology and theory in (second) language training. We suggested that repeated measure of intervention effects was necessary in testing the effects because that would validate and ensure reliability of the effects found. We might also contribute to Anglophone/Western theories of language education in making the theories sensitive and inclusive by applying the theory on the learners whose English is not the first language.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Phuong Nam T. Nguyen, who is called Nguyen T. Phuong Nam in the Vietnamese naming order that starts with a last name, a T. standing for the female gender, and a given name, was born in 1979 in Tra Vinh, Mekong Delta, Vietnam. She studied English Language and Literature at the Open University in Ho Chi Minh city (1997-2003). Then she continued her Master's study in English Teaching Pedagogy, University of Canberra, Australia (2003-2004) with a partial grant for young academics from the Vietnam government. She was interested in exploring the problems of foreign language learning from cultural and contextual perspectives. Her Master's thesis is about learning strategies that students from different backgrounds used in their language acquisition. Then Phuong Nam had five years working as a teacher in English Language Department, Tra Vinh University (2003-2008). During the time, she helped students to write foreign language academic essays, read academic texts and fictions, and to do small-scale researches in language learning.

In December 2006, in a conference on educational research methodology in Mekong, Vietnam, she met Professor Gert Rijlaarsdam, Wilfried Admiraal, and Huub van den Bergh. She was given an award for the best research plan from Professeur Rijlaarsdam in the conference. In 2007, she was awarded a grant from Mekong-1000 (Vietnam) and Nuffic (The Netherlands) for doing her PhD study in the University of Amsterdam. In August, 2008, she started the PhD track of the University of Amsterdam, under the supervision of professor Rijlaarsdam and Admiraal. She had carried out three empirical studies on facilitating foreign language academic writing, writing voice, and literary reading of Asian/Vietnamese students. After 28 November 2012 she will come back to Vietnam and work on setting up a Foreign Language Master Training program in Tra Vinh University, a young university founded by the Vietnam government for the development of Tra Vinh, Mekong area, Vietnam.

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